

A tall, narrow rock spire dominates the center of the image, reaching towards a clear blue sky with some light clouds. A climber is visible near the top of the spire. In the foreground, a climber wearing a red jacket, a white helmet, and a backpack stands on a rocky ledge, looking towards the camera. The surrounding landscape is rugged and rocky, with patches of snow visible on the lower slopes.

**YORKSHIRE
RAMBLERS'
CLUB**

**JOURNAL
2019**



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

FRONT COVER:

**Richards Smith approaching
The start of the Wolf's Head
climb, Wyoming**

BACK COVER:

**Packhorses bringing the
gear to Lonesome Lake,
Wyoming meet**

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CONTENTS

4	Doctor in the hills
6	Mapping through the ages
10	Meet: Wind River, Wyoming
37	Teidi but strange
43	Flora of Tenerife
45	Meet: LHG, Lake District
48	Meet: Rhyd Dhu, North Wales
51	Meet: Dalwhinnie, Scotland
55	The Pamir Road
72	Meet: Sierra Nevada, Spain
81	Meet: LHG, Lake District
84	Meet: Elphin, Scotland
90	Chronicles of a retired man
94	Bob Graham Round
97	Meet: Norway
103	Meet: Llanberis
105	Denny Moorhouse
106	Archives - Majorca
109	Chartreuse Massif
112	Snowshoeing in France
126	Meet: Lundy
130	Poets Corner
132	Meet: North York Moors
134	Meet: Lowstern with Wayfarers
138	South Africa
143	Thoughts of Coolridge
144	Meet: Dolomites
153	Meet: Strontian, Scotland
156	Learning the other way
157	Four men on a train
158	History repeating
160	Chippings
167	Club proceedings
173	Meet: Settle
175	Introductory meet
178	Meet: Lowstern, Christmas
182	Obituaries



In the latest of the series of articles reminiscing and commenting on changes seen, our President shares his thoughts. We had three such contributions in the last edition and they are always interesting.

“I was interested by Mick Borroff’s article in a recent YRC journal about modern GPS and mapping, and it really got me thinking about changes during my mountaineering lifetime. I’m now looking at my uncle’s ice-axe, dating from about 1950. It’s rather a beautiful object (in the way that many good tools are also beautiful) with a slim wooden handle, and iron head and spike. It was made by Francois Simond et Fils, of Chamonix, and endorsed by Gaston Rebuffat.

I have tried using it: it’s OK as a walking axe, though a bit longer in the handle than the one I would usually use, its balance is good for cutting steps on steep ground, but for anything approaching vertical ice, the handle is too long and the pick at the wrong angle.

I have also tried his old iron 8-point crampons (no front points); again fine for walking, ok-ish on steep ground (really better with cut steps), but I found almost impossible to use on more vertical stuff – I’m unsure how they climbed really steep ice in the earlies, presumably with endless step-cutting, as climb it they did.

I don’t quite go back to nailed boots, though my father used them, but on my first rock-climbing trip

(to Stanage aged about 14) I tied a hemp rope onto an iron karabiner which attached to a hemp waist loop, and climbed in boots or gym-shoes. “PAs” were just coming in, and within a couple of years I was using these and single 11mm Perlon rope (tied directly round my middle); some of the real hard men and women (not so many of the latter in those far-off days), were using double 9mm ropes, and harnesses, which I thought very sophisticated. By then we had alloy karabiners, with tape and rope slings and some nuts on rope or tape for protection – nuts on wire came a year or two later; many leaders still carried pitons and a peg-hammer.

Eventually a 40-foot free-fall which ended with me dangling in front of Sue as my second on the climb, convinced me that a harness would be a good investment (she said “are you all right?” and I said “URRK” as I was too winded to get anything more sensible out).

Climbing walls did exist, but they were all outdoors, and all made by chipping holds in the brickwork on disused bridges and suchlike. The development of actually building walls for climbing, and especially doing this indoors, has made huge changes to standards, as it’s now possible to train, and practice hard moves safely in bad weather....although some of the outdoor epics do live in the memory: Main Wall in Snowdonia in increasing rain, Ardverikie Wall in the Highlands ditto, Tower Ridge on Nevis in unexpected snow (we set off in sunshine) – all a bit interesting at the time, but I wouldn’t swap them for 3 indoor climbing days.



Wife Sue with that axe

Walls have also made it possible to play some different games: a few years ago I had a medical student to stay who enjoyed rock-climbing. He was happily working his way up the “E” grades (to which I have never aspired) – all on indoor walls; he had never led, and was looking forward to his first trip to an outcrop to experience outdoor climbing.

On the YRC 1995 expedition to Nepal, at our base camp we were 3 days by runner from the nearest telephone. It seems amazing now that this was so only 20 odd years ago. On all the more recent trips where I’ve been expedition doctor, a timely medical evacuation would have been possible (weather permitting), or at least I could have got some expert advice; for the Nepal trip I took a stack of heavy-duty medication – these days I would be arrested for trying to import/export this – with the thought that I might have to try to keep somebody alive for four or five days before help arrived, or even if they clearly were not going to make it ‘ease their passing’.

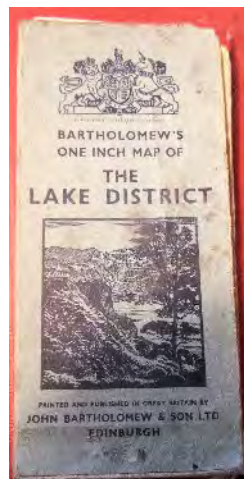
I didn’t discuss this with the other expedition members at the time – sorry lads, but thought it might be a bit of a downer – but fortunately we had no disasters.

Mobile phones, and satellite phones in the real backwoods, have made expedition doctoring a lot less alarming (though I think they can also make us a bit less self-reliant – is it TOO easy to yell for help now?). Which brings me back to where I started, and to what for walkers at least is perhaps the biggest advance: GPS. I can think of a number of sweaty moments, trying to navigate in thick fog or white-out, estimating distance walked for a bearing-change with no landmarks, mostly with reasonable success (though Sue and I never did find the summit of Ben Alder in white-out and deep snow – or at least if we did we didn’t recognise it – and had to go back in Summer and try again). Contrast this with a more recent trip onto the Greenland icecap, where we could safely leave camp in poor visibility, secure that with satellite mapping we would actually be able to find it again.

I am now (of course) a grumpy old man, but I think all of these advances are on the whole good things. There are YRC members (say it quietly) even older than me, whose mountaineering experience goes back even further; I wonder how they see some of the changes? And I would enjoy an account of how caving has changed, if anyone would write one.”

Axes were not the only thing very different in the early days.

Right is Rory’s battered old map with 250’ contours, which has brought to mind changes in mapping over the years



The President's article has triggered my thoughts in the direction of maps I have used over my three score and ten. I was shown a mysterious sheet of paper when I was four by my mother who had been a keen cyclist and had started taking me for local walks, mostly around Styal and Alderley Edge.

In the misguided belief that I had a clue what she was talking about I later realised she was trying to show me how contours could warn of dangerous edges. Something must have stuck as I have been hooked on maps and geography in its wider sense ever since. O level geography was a shoe-in and I have the almost certainly unique achievement of having passed one geography exam five times. My professional qualifications came in 10 modules and you had to pass three of the first five at the same time to move on. The English module was fairly straightforward and I kept passing that and the Commercial Geography but the other three eluded me especially economics which I could not understand, much like today's economists.

Anyway back to maps; when I moved down to the Midlands, a long way from any higher hills I took up orienteering to keep fit between YRC meets and trained myself to produce highly detailed and very accurate maps for them. I also did some simple ones for local authorities showing country parks and the ways to walk to them.

To mind are the Harvey's Superwalker Maps which were themselves born as orienteering maps. Harveys were commissioned to produce maps of the classic areas when needed for a major event like the Karrimor Mountain Marathons and they maximised their return on their detailed surveying by then marketing a map of that area to walkers. This coincided with technical advances to aid mappers with satellites playing a major part. They initially gave us reasonable accurate locations and GPS but more importantly later gave us LIDAR scanning, giving a very accurate maps of the surface even looking underneath tree cover.

These new maps employed this new technology and although I doubt they will ever admit it, I think it showed the unreliability of OS mapping in one important area. Using a compass is a good idea but in dense woodland or on a moor riven by deep gullies it is not easy. The top of Kinder if trying to strike across on a bearing is not easy and I suspect that the contours on the early OS maps reflecting the terrain on the top were just an indicative screen

Another area where I doubt the accuracy is on hillsides. I suspect that accurate contour lines were created every 25 or 50 meters and then infill drawn to reflect the image rather than being strictly accurate. Quite helpful actually most of the time.

To my mind OS maps have become less helpful over the years despite getting more accurate with fine detail. In trying to expand their market they now include so much information that the maps are a bit cluttered. As more use is made of electronic versions various screens can be switched on and off to make the information more relevant to the purpose in hand.

It is fascinating to compare and contrast generations of maps. I am working on researching ancient rights of way and am looking at maps from the Enclosure Acts and Railway Acts when the first lines were proposed.

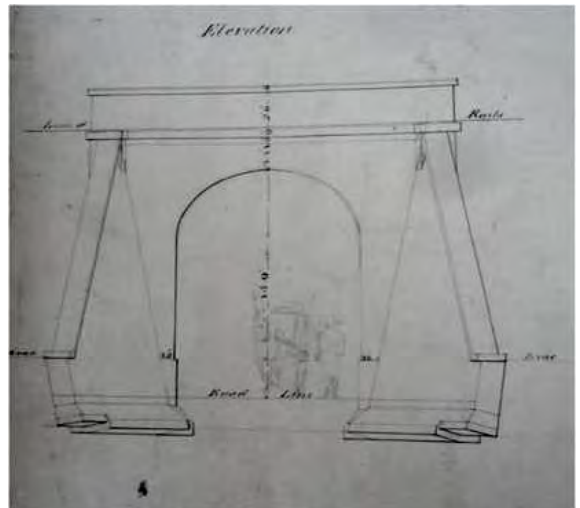
As things jump forward to the early part of the 20th century the Bartholemew's maps, OS and other producers were getting more sophisticated.

Rory's old map gave contours of a sort, as shown in the extract on the right showing Elterwater.

Poring over old maps is of course also fascinating in seeing how much has actually changed on the ground. Communities expand, new towns are created, roads built and of great concern, pubs close.



A 1901 estate map which shows a road not on current maps but which it appears has never been legally extinguished



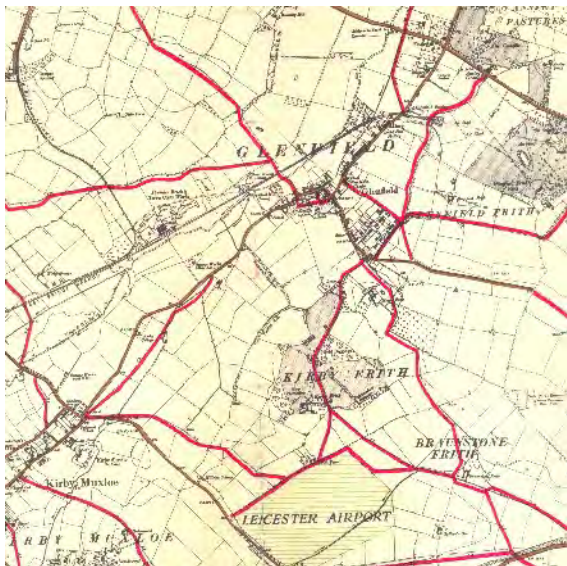
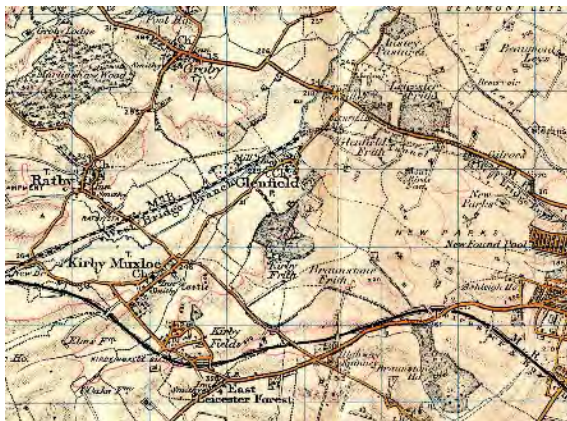
Part of a Railways Act showing dimensions which must have meant there was a carriageway going underneath it



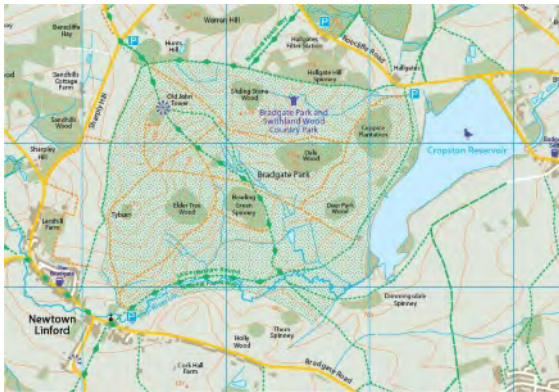
A Turnpike map

Page eight shows a series of extracts from maps over a longish period showing the village where I live which now has a population of close to 12,000.

These maps show that the sophistication of mapping increases almost as fast as green spaces vanish but explain why working with maps is so informative. The maps are of 1835, 1901, 1921 and 2010. Even since then the area in purple has been developed.



A map I had produced of the Charnwood Forest had all sorts of things removed of no interest to walkers but showed which land was open access and all the permissive paths. It also showed every pub and the new edition will also have all tea rooms.



	motorway		footpath
	A road/dual carriageway		permissive routes *
	B road/dual carriageway		bridleway
	minor road/dual carriageway		byway
	local road		restricted byway
	lane or track		long distance path
	railway		public access land
	traffic free cycle route		
	national cycle route number, on road/traffic free		

The representation on this map of any other road, track or path is no evidence of the existence of a right of way. Whilst we have endeavoured to ensure that the information on this publication is accurate we cannot guarantee that it is entirely free from errors or omissions.
 * Footpaths and bridleways along which landowners have permitted public use but which are not rights of way. Permissive agreements may be withdrawn.
 The representation on this map of public access land does not necessarily confer a public right. Much of the access is permissive and may be subject to temporary closures or withdrawal.

SCALE 1: 25 000
 0 1/4 1/2 mile
 0 500 m 1 km

1st Edition © Global Mapping
 Design and Cartography by Mary Spence MBE

With grateful thanks to Roy Denney of Charnwood Cartography for the original ideas and assistance throughout production.

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The OS equivalent



To demonstrate how LIDAR assists mappers the image on the right is a LIDAR scan showing many surface features (or just below the surface) whereas the Google Earth image above it shows very little.

What amazes me is that when they measured Everest by triangulation starting at the southern tip of India they got it within a few feet of being correct.

Mapping remote places nowadays is a far cry from the time George Spenceley helped create the first map of South Georgia.



Overseas
meet

Wind River Range
Wyoming

Aug
2017

A three-week five-member YRC climbing and backpacking trip timed to include the August 2017 total solar eclipse.



The genesis of this Wind River range meet was twofold. Some years ago, Alan Kay had received a strong recommendation from a fellow backpacker that the Winds were the best area in the States for the serious backpacker – a range for connoisseurs. Alan’s subsequent research confirmed the attractiveness of this range of lakes, alpine terrain, bare rock and dozens of 4,000m peaks but he’d had no chance to visit the area. Independently, Michael Smith, returning from the Tetons spotted the range and found out more about it. He then heard from colleagues of its potential for rock climbing. This was in 2016 and publicity relating to the 2017 total solar eclipse with its path passing close to the Winds became known so a plan was put before that year’s AGM. This envisaged a llama supported trek to follow on from observing the eclipse with an opportunity for climbers to have their gear dropped off at their base in the Cirque of the Towers. Potential trekkers though were not keen on having to look after and load their own llamas and the interested members were happy to backpack for several days at a time.

By the early months of 2017 a plan had emerged: fly into Denver; acclimatise for a few days with short hikes; watch the eclipse from Riverton; backpack near the Cirque or climb there with a horse and wrangler taking in their climbing gear; move round to Pinedale to the west of the range and backpack in to Titcomb Basin below Fremont Peak; then if there was time stop off at Rocky Mountain National Park for a day on the way back home.

The outcome was a successful trip with a variety of contrasting experiences for both backpackers and climbers. Good weather helped. This report of the trip is presented in six main parts: Hikes; Eclipse; Backpacking from Dickinson Park; Backpacking from Elkhart Park; Climbs and Scrambles and Reflections.

Those on the meet were:

David Hick

Alan Kay

Tim Josephy *

Michael Smith *

Richard Smith *§

* Climbing,

§ Two weeks only

Day by day summary of activity:

17th Aug. Four fly from Manchester into Denver via Reykjavik and drive SUV to nearby Westminster's Super 8 hotel.

18th Drive 1½ hours to near Fort Collins, for Colorado's Lory State Park and walk a couple of trails including Arthur's Rock. Then a further couple of hours drive to Rawlins and the Econo Lodge.

19th Drive an hour or so passing Muddy Gap to take a dirt track, Agate Flats Road, to park at Sage Hen a few miles WNW of Lankin Dome. Walk to and scramble up point 7617 ft. a kilometre west of Bills Peak, 7461 ft. and 3km west of Lankin Dome. Continue to drive a couple of hours to Lander to shop for food and permits for the Shoshone Reservation. On to rooms at the Silver Spur Motel. Tim gets medical treatment.

20th Hike a trail to the Agie Popo Falls in Sinks Canyon. Final shopping (pepper spray and lashing cord) then on the short distance to our eclipse accommodation near Riverton. Richard arrived there from Denver having landed there late on the 19th.

21st Pack sacks. Observe the eclipse. Our Riverton host gives us a Dutch Oven beef meal.

22nd Early departure for the Allen's Ranch in the Wind River Range.

Climbers walk the North Fork Trail to Lonesome Lake followed later by the horse and wrangler with their gear. Establish camp higher up towards the Cirque of the Towers.

Backpackers start from Dickinson Park trailhead and follow the North Fork Trail and Smith Lake trail to camp at Middle Lake.

23rd Climbers explore the Cirque and the approaches to the climbs.

Backpackers follow Smith Lake Trail, High Meadow Trail and North Fork Trail to camp at Lizard Head Meadows.

24th Climbers tackle Pingora.

Backpackers walk to Lonesome Lake, Bear Lake, camp at Bear Lake.

25th Climbers scramble over Mitchell Peak.

Backpackers follow the Lizard Head Trail to camp at Little Valentine Lake.

- 26th Climbers tackle Tiger Tower then Wolf's Head. Descend via the col by Overhanging Tower.
Backpackers follow the Bears Ears Trail to camp at Dickinson Creek campground.
- 27th Climbers head for Texas Pass. Richard continues onward to scramble up Camel's Hump. Move most of the gear down to Lonesome Lake ready for packing out.
Backpackers drive to Moccasin Lake, then bushwhacking on a circuit of Mary's Lake, Shoe Lake and Little Moccasin Lake.
- 28th Climbers start early to take remaining gear to Lonesome Lake and leave it for the wrangler to pack out. Walk out along the North Fork Trail to the Dickinson Park trailhead.
Backpackers complete their route to finish at Dickinson Park trailhead.
Together, all five drive to the Ranch, collect climbing gear and drive about four hours through Lander, round the southern end of the range and north to Pinedale.
- 29th Recover, replenish and repack for backpacking in Pinedale. Michael gets dental treatment.
- 30th Drive out to Elkhart Park trailhead and backpack in to camp above Island Lake.
- 31st Richard scrambles up Fremont Peak. Others hike up to Indian Pass and back.
- 1st Sept. Richard hikes out to the trailhead and drives back towards Denver. Other four hike into Titcomb Basin.
- 2nd Richard hiked up Medicine Bow peak in the Snowy Range, 12,013 ft on his way to Denver and flight to the UK. Others backpack out towards the trailhead via Lester Pass to camp by Barbara Lake.
- 3rd Backpack out to the trailhead via Photographers' Point. Drive six hours to Granby and the Inn at Silvercreek.
- 4th Drive through Rocky Mountain National Park taking the Alpine Ridge Trail. Take rooms and then walk the trail to Bear Lake, Nymph Lake, Dream Lake and Emerald Lake before observing wildlife.
- 5th Morning stroll around Lilly Lake. Drive through Big Thompson Canyon to Loveland and Denver to take return flight.
- 6th Back in Manchester.

Hikes

Denver is known as the mile-high city. Its surroundings and the lands towards the foot of the Wind River range are all high. We considered it a sensible precaution to ramp up the exercise level and heights attained over the first few days.

This approach also broke up the days driving and allowed us to get used to other aspects of the climate such as the low humidity, strong sunlight and cool winds. The acclimatisation appeared to be helpful. However, the last member to arrive had just a couple of days with little activity and still coped with conditions – though being half the others' ages may have also have been a factor.

Near Fort Collins and about 1½ hours from Denver airport, Lory State Park provided a convenient and relaxed four-hour, seven-mile round reaching 6,780 ft.

We took Arthur's Rock Trail to give views over Horseshoe Reservoir then parts of Timber, Well Gulch and Overlook Trails to return.

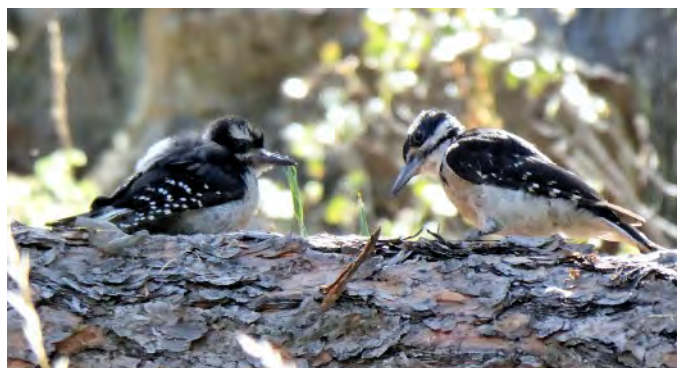


Michael on Arthur's Rock
Photo TJ

The exfoliated steep granite of Lankin Dome looks impressive from the highway past Split Rock. A careful look-out needs to be kept for the Agate Flats dirt road which leads into the western end of the mountains, crossing the wagon wheel ruts of the Oregon Trail and Sweetwater River before turning east near Sage Hen (1 km short of the Murphy Ranch). We parked by the junction having struggled with soft fine sand unaware of the vehicle's 4WD capability. A flat walk of a few miles past a stock pond, antelope hunters' large calibre rifle cartridge cases, a snake and a horned lizard among a lot of sage brush brought us to the foot of a 7,617 ft peak about 3km west of Lankin Dome. Each selecting different routes on the northern side we made our ways to the summit. Some scrambling was required before a gulley was reached. Along the way Tim pulled on a handhold which broke off. It fell from his hand and struck his shin leaving a 6cm long gash. We covered it with a strip of sticking plaster and continued. The summit was approached from the east and we left it towards the west to take the NNW ridge down – parched and scratched. This was a 4½ hour outing. Tim's shin was cleaned, stapled and dressed later that day at the hospital in Lander. While he drove across town to the hospital the other three of us showered, changed and were heading for the Lander Brewing Company's Cowfish restaurant when he pulled up beside us having been treated. Expecting crowds for the eclipse, the hospital had brought in staff from the surrounding areas and they were sat around, feet up on the table, waiting for custom. They were delighted to see him and he was insurance checked and being treated in ten minutes. Twelve staples were needed to hold him together. The bill for 20 minutes in casualty totalled \$4,175.



Greater Shorthorned Lizard
Photo TJ



Downy Woodpecker
Photo MS



Alan and David ascending an acclimatisation peak of 7,617 ft near Lankin Dome.

Photo TJ

Tim, Alan and David scrambling down

Photo MS



Alan by the summit of peak 7,617 ft with Lankin Dome behind

Photo TJ

On the eve of the eclipse there was some provisioning to be done so the hiking was curtailed. We drove 9½ miles from downtown Lander along Sinks Canyon to park at Bruce's Bridge. The 700 ft rise to the upper falls is spread over a clear almost two-mile long trail. We turned back soon after that at 8,500 ft to give a 2½ hour round trip.

The challenge at the falls is to slide down a steep water-polished rock to be launched into the air to plummet the last few metres into the plunge pool. It is a local rite of passage. We gave it a miss. Having made an early start, we saw few people on this popular trail on the outward leg but returning we were soon meeting families with dogs and grandchildren then rangers trying to sort out impending parking chaos.



Popo Agie Falls with 'the slide'

The hike into Lonesome Lake and up into the Cirque of the Towers required a 4am start from Riverton and took a full day from the Dickinson Park Trailhead. The North Fork Trail was reached by crossing the marshy bottom of the valley east then following a slight ridge before a steep descent south was made to the North Popo Agie River. This was followed upstream south then west for several miles with four knee-deep river crossings to reach Lizard Head Meadows where trekking llamas were grazing. The trail became distinct again on the far side of this marshy ground and continued west on the north side of the river to Lonesome Lake. While waiting here for the horses to bring our gear, two of us prospected up into the Cirque for a suitable campsite. Aware of the lateness of the day and the tired state of the party an adequate compromise site was identified.

In the event, having brought up much of the gear to that point, it was used to prepare a meal which allowed us to continue to a higher bench with a better water supply. That site, a little east of and below the prominent waterfall, proved to be a good spot throughout our visit.



Michael in one of the Popo Agie River crossings Photo RWS



**Camp in the Cirque with
Wolf's Head, Tiger Tower, Pingora and
Camel's Hump indicated**

**Lonesome Lake and Pingora
with the climbers
Photo MS**

**The Cirque camp kitchen
between three boulders
Photo TJ**



**Michael seconding on
Pingora's cracks**

Photo TJ



Passing through the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado on our return from the Winds to Denver we took in a few short hikes. The first of these was from the alpine visitor centre and called the Tundra Communities Trail. A gentle incline from the car park it reached 12,310 ft in just half a mile but gave hazy views of the surrounding peaks besides the alpine zone tundra flora and fauna.

Later the same day we braved the crowds above Bear Head Trailhead to hike the wide trampled trail past Bear, Nymph and Dream Lakes to Emerald Lake for its views of Flattop Mountain, Hallett Peak and Glacier Gorge. Returning down the same trail made a 3½ mile round with a rise and fall of 700ft. Towards sunset, on the drive back down to Estes Park, a detour took us to a flat-bottomed side valley where family groups of elk grazed near Moraine Park.

The following morning a circuit of Lily Lake was used for a mile of exercise before a long drive. It was undemanding though we saw climbers heading for the rocky ridge above it.

Eclipses, especially solar eclipses, have long fascinated humans and some individuals have gone to great lengths to observe total eclipses of the Sun. Captain Cook's third voyage searching for the North West Passage stopped off at what he named Christmas Island to observe an eclipse of the sun. He personally could not see the moments leading up to totality as he did not have a suitable dark glass to hand when the cloud density changed.

The Resolution's master, William Bligh, had let the sun drift out of his telescope's field of view so missed the observation.

The expedition's astronomer, second lieutenant and ship's captain all observed the onset of totality but disagreed on the timing by several seconds.

Technological progress since 1777 meant we were better prepared with anticipated timings predicted to the second and aluminium-coated polyester film filters for the US-wide passing of the moon's shadow on August 21st. America too was well prepared with arrangements made for the about 20 million people who observe it first-hand within the 70-mile wide path of totality. Traffic flows were managed. Extra park rangers and public service staff were brought in. Accommodation prices soared. We paid £1,000 to sleep two nights in someone's ranch home while they slept nearby in their RV. The previous night cost over £150 per in a dilapidated twin motel room without breakfast. Thankfully the brewery restaurant did not appear to have increased its charges.

Our location of a spot north of Riverton was chosen to be close to the centre line of totality (12km where the path width was 107km) to give 2 minutes and 20s of totality. We could not find accommodation closer to the centre line in this area under £2,000 even nine months ahead. Camping in the Winds was considered but this would have considerably reduced the chances of a clear sky from over 90%.

Haze and some cloud gave some concern as the day of the eclipse dawned. But as the sun rose the skies cleared. This was the case for almost all the US except for close to the east coast where heavy cloud persisted.

From first contact (the moon starting to pass in front of the sun) around 10:20 we were observing with the dark glasses and experimenting with camera settings and using binoculars to cast an image onto a screen. Little changed down on Earth until totality was around 20 minutes away. By then things were distinctly dimmer, getting cooler as the mozzies emerged to make a nuisance of themselves. Birds flocked, went to roost and quietened down. Colours muted as the remaining light slipped from yellow to grey. All around the horizon (we were on a large plain) were sunset colours: oranges and browns.

We shivered as the temperature fell dramatically. Finally, around 11:40, totality arrived and we could hear distant whooping and cheers in the darkness. Dark glasses were quickly whipped off and photos taken without filters. The sun's coronal glow around the sides of the moon was visible and our photos picked up solar flares. With only a short time to take it all in we were all too soon treated to the diamond ring of the first intense sparkle of sunlight peeking round the moon.

Photo MS



Then gradually the light and temperature returned to normal and it was off to the Smith's supermarket for some supplies and Arby's for a beef sandwich.

Observing near Riverton
soon after first contact

Photo MS



For the next few days almost everyone we met asked if we had seen it and commented on how impressive it was. We got the impression that this quiet part of Wyoming, itself second only to Alaska for lowest state population density, had no real problems before the eclipse as visitors arrived gradually over five days to more than double the population. We did notice slip roads onto an interstate highway from Denver being closed for a few hours to keep traffic flowing, some queues building at petrol stations and busy eateries with local beer sales more than doubling. After the eclipse, however, many visitors started their journey home soon after noon and journey times home took two or three times longer on the highways which carried four times the usual flow. Heading into the mountains early the following day, this did not bother us.

Timing our visit to include the eclipse made the trip more expensive and delayed our arrival in the Winds. But getting to see the impressive 'once in a lifetime' spectacle made it worthwhile. Meeting an ordinary Wyoming family and spending some time with them was a bonus.

Backpacking from Dickinson Park

The backpacking group, David and Alan, watched the climbing trio, Michael, Richard and Tim, start their long walk-in to The Cirque, then had a second brew-up and a second breakfast, before following them across the marshy trail south of Dickinson Park trailhead.

We then followed the Smith Lake Trail westwards, initially in fairly dense forest, before rounding the prominent Dishpan Butte, and continuing westwards on a rough trail towards Smith Lake.

We'd read that this area has a resident population of black bears, so when we occasionally met other backpackers, we enquired about sightings, and though most were negative, two backpackers reported seeing a female bear with young in a meadow near Smith Lake.

We continued on past Smith Lake, which was seen through trees to the south of the trail – relieved but also a little disappointed not to see bears – and found a good wild camp site on the north shore of Middle Lake. Cathedral Peak, to the west, and its two huge east ridges, provided a fine mountain setting. Later in the afternoon, without heavy backpacks, we tried to go further westwards towards Cathedral Lake, but the valley was blocked with fallen trees and rocks, so we retreated to camp, where David tried his hand at fishing in Smith Lake, though unfortunately fish didn't take the bait.

Next day we backtracked about two miles to join the High Meadow Trail southwards, where we encountered an unexpectedly wide and turbulent crossing of a tributary of Smith Lake Creek. The rough, undulating trail continued to a series of waterfalls on High Meadow Creek, and a steep descent to join the North Fork Trail, immediately before a second knee deep river crossing. We were then on the route of the climbing trio the previous day, with a third, more turbulent river crossing an hour later. Eventually we reached the planned camping site at Lizard Head Meadows, a fine spot, despite mosquitoes, with superb views of Mitchell Peak, Dogtooth Mountain, The Monolith, and tantalising views further westwards into The Cirque.

We occasionally met small groups of other backpackers, who'd gone into the wilderness specifically to view the eclipse from a mountain setting; they were all duly impressed, though they'd been lucky to have cloud-free views. We chatted for some time with one lone walker, a man who knew these mountains in detail, and he described much of the geology and rock scenery we were to see over the next few days. He subsequently encountered our climbing trio.

Next day, after packing and hiding much of the gear, we continued westwards to Lonesome Lake. What a fine setting this is, fully justifying the descriptions we'd read in advance of the visit. Enclosed on three sides by shapely granite peaks, we got out the stoves, brewed tea, and sat for a while, trying to absorb it all. Quite suddenly, about thirty yards away, a large moose, with a fine set of antlers, ran at high speed across our path, to disappear into scrub and forest north of the lake.

We retraced our route to Lizard Head Meadows, collected the gear, and ascended the Lizard Head Trail for about a mile, to an un-named lake east of Bear Lake. As its name suggests, this is allegedly frequented by bears, and though we didn't see any, they probably saw us first.

This was another fine camping spot – David fished the lake, unfortunately without success, and Alan went up to Bear Lake, in a rock-strewn cirque, totally dominated by Lizard Head Peak, 2,000 feet above.

Next day we resumed our route on the Lizard Head Trail, which here goes over a huge boulder strewn plateau, mainly at an altitude just short of 12,000 feet, devoid of any form of shelter, and thus a place to beware of in storms. Huge compensation, though, in the fine array of granite peaks to the west, stretching northwards as far as the eye could see – Lizard Head Peak and Camel’s Hump, separated by a high cirque and small glacier, the oddly named August 16th Peak, and increasingly a series of lakes up to Grave Lake, as well as umpteen other peaks stretching to the horizon, too far away to identify.

The Lizard Head Trail goes high on the eastern flanks of Cathedral Peak and two un-named peaks, all over 12,000 feet high, and from this angle resembling huge tors, composed of pillow lava. Now on the northern slopes of Cathedral Peak, we followed the trail north-eastwards, descended a 200m long snow slope, joined the Bears Ears Trail, then turned west and descended to Little Valentine Lake for our next wild camp.

This was yet another good mountain wild camp site, a short distance above the lake, well sheltered from wind, with a pair of marmots resident among rocks across the stream. The final day of this mini-backpacking outing involved ascending the part of the Bears Ears Trail we’d descended the previous day, then zig-zagging round and to the north of Mount Chauvenet, walking amongst outcrops of pillow lava at an altitude of 11900 feet. There was still a grandstand view of mountains in the northern part of the Wind Rivers Range, so grand it was difficult to look elsewhere.

The trail turned eastwards, beneath and north of the Bears Ears Mountain, where we had close-up views of a number of the “bear’s ears” – rock formations which justify their name. We crossed a large snow slope, then Sand Creek, had a brew of tea, and were passed by a group of five men on horseback, who’d come from Valentine Lake – the larger lake below our previous night’s camp.

We crossed Adam’s Pass and followed the trail north-eastwards through woodland above Ranger Creek to Dickinson Park Work Center, then south along the access road to the campsite at Dickinson Park.

We’d completed our five-day backpacking on schedule, and had a spare day before the three climbers were due to return from The Cirque. We therefore drove north to Moccasin Lake and walked to Mary’s Lake on an unmaintained, deteriorating trail; the trail then totally disappeared, so we bushwhacked north to Shoe Lake, eastwards to Little Moccasin Lake and

eventually made our way to the northern end of Moccasin Lake, where to our relief we found a fisherman's trail along the east shore, enabling us to get back to the vehicle. On this day we saw recent bear scratches on tree trunks and bear droppings, and though we didn't see a bear, in the wildest part of this maze of fallen trees and vegetation we disturbed an elk, which made off at speed.

After a second night at the Dickinson Park campsite we walked for two hours along the North Fork Trail, in the hope that we might meet our climbing colleagues, but it was not to be, so we returned to the campsite to await them.

Backpacking from Elkhart Park

After operating as two separate groups in the east, the five of us reunited for a backpacking trip from Pinedale in the west into the high, narrow valley of Titcomb Basin. Another early start and we had driven the 40 minutes up Skyline Drive to the Elkhart Park trailhead and were surprised to see so many vehicles there. By 8am we were laden and walking along the Pole Creek Trail. The trail wound through pines and small lakes gently rising to Photographers' Point. This cliff edge's extensive views over the Bridger Wilderness gave us an excuse to pause

From here the clear and well signposted trail starts to cross the grain of the land with repeated rises over small ridges and drops to lakes.

We met perhaps thirty backpackers in twos or threes making their way out from Titcomb Basin back to the trailhead. They reported heavy rain showers the previous day.

Often people camp near Seneca Lake but we pushed on past little Seneca Lake and two minor passes and



descended across snow patches to the head of Island Lake. Mosquitos were a problem by the lake so we went steeply up the slope to the southeast and camped by a fast-flowing stream on a tree-lined cliff top.

This gave good views, had a breeze, dry pitches and proved to be a good site.

Determined looking Alan packing into Titcomb Basin



The big attraction of this area is Titcomb Basin and its views of towering peaks and we set off for that the next morning but increasing cloud by the time we reached the turnoff to Indian Pass caused us to switch plan and head for that pass. Richard had passed the same junction earlier having left camp at 6:30 and carried on into Titcomb Basin then scrambled up Fremont Peak to the north in demanding conditions (described elsewhere) to make the most of his one available day before he had to head back home. The remaining four of us wound through the steadily rising trail past the lakes of Indian Basin. Turning east first through marshy ground below snow slopes then over those slopes and screes we eventually reached the pass, 12,140 ft on the Continental Divide. Looking back over the terrain we considered the route ingenious and appreciated why the more direct route had been avoided – snow slopes and steep rock slabs made that way impassable. At the pass we caught up with a heavily laden couple who were about to head down Knife Point Glacier; it would be a day or two before they would hit another decent trail. The female half was so intent on keeping her footing on the snow slope that she was unaware of David's approach and was so startled on realising he was there that she shrieked and dropped her trekking pole. Perhaps she thought he was a bear – well, he had been backpacking for a couple of weeks. We returned by the same route to make it a nine-hour day of about 11 miles. Brief morning rain caused us to put on waterproofs for the only time in the three weeks. The afternoon gradually brightened.



Heading for Indian Pass

The next day Richard was off before 8am to walk out and drive to be sure of catching his flight the next day. Those remaining had a slower start as the plan was for a more relaxing pace and less ascent on a walk into Titcomb Basin to the north. The northern tip of the uppermost lake was reached in a ten mile, six-hour stroll with many stops to admire the peaks and watch the flotilla of goldeneye on the upper lake. This time we met two Germans on a variation on the Continental Divide Trail. They were 4½ months into the south-to-north route and unsure if they would finish it this year before the winter set in.



**Titcomb Basin
from the camp
above Island Lake**

**Gannett Peak,
highest in the
Winds, can be
seen through the
col above the
snowfield**

The next day we planned to walk most of the way directly back to the trailhead to greatly reduce the following day's hike out and allow plenty of time for the drive south. Up at dawn and packed for departure from the Island Lake camp before 8am we were soon over the two minor passes and down to Little Seneca Lake. A dilemma faced us: carry on straight back and we would finish early in the afternoon or we could take a different route new to us, twice as long and not researched, over the Lester Pass and rejoin the outward trail near Eklund Lake. The slope up to the 11,115 ft pass looked well graded and slowly we talked ourselves into this option to make best use of our remaining time in the Winds – after all we were unlikely to be returning. There were moments when we regretted that decision. The tramp up to Lester Pass was no problem. A snow bank on the other side was descended to wind down the Highline Trail through alpine meadows to the tree line and a lake for a break. We were making good time.

Then we reached Pole Creek and discovered that an unexpected river crossing was needed. All descent so far... a lot of it Another mile or so and a second, deeper faster-flowing crossing. Then in the heat of the afternoon a long unrelentingly uphill Pole Creek Trail took us past a string of lakes including Long, Mary's and Eklund Lakes to regain all that lost height with nutcrackers giving raucous accompaniment.

It was hard work with our packs and we were tiring but we had seen two new valleys. Enough flattish ground was found by Eklund Lake where we camped despite the inlet being dry. This site was enlivened by squeaking and whistling rodents including chipmunk, ground squirrel, pikas and water shrews. A camper on the far side of the lake fished at night using a light as a lure.

The hike out the next day via Photographers' Point was uneventful. Off by 7:15 we were at the Elkhart Park trailhead before 10am. Another grand five-day trip.



**Descent
from
Lester
Pass**

**Alan and
David
Crossing
Pole Creek**



Climbs and Scrambles

After our exertions of the previous day's walk in to camp by the Cirque of the Towers we decided to explore the lower levels of the Cirque and check out the approaches to our selected climbs. Although the area is a long way from the nearest trailhead, all the towers are within an hour and a half or so of the campsites above Lonesome Lake.

That lake was sadly one of the first to become polluted due to human activity but efforts at education by the Ranger authorities and a ban on camping within ¼ mile of the lake have greatly improved the situation. People seem to be taking the problem seriously here and elsewhere in the range, making low impact camping a priority. The basin below the Cirque of the Towers, with its chaos of boulders hiding little meadows and copses of pines holds a multitude of secluded campsites, far enough from streams for hygiene but close enough for a convenient water supply. Although there were many other backpackers and climbers camping, the sites were so well hidden we never felt crowded.

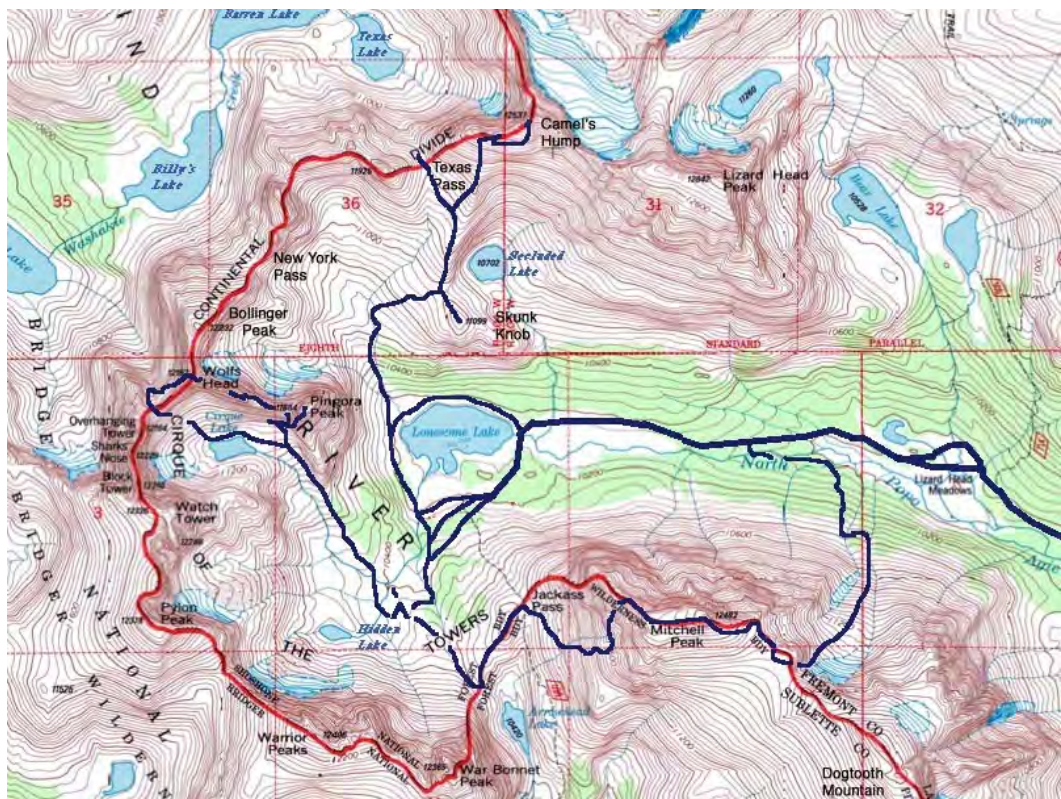
We set off to reconnoitre Pingora Peak and Wolf's Head, both sharing the same initial approach through an area of massive boulders. Luckily a climbers' path has formed and the going was surprisingly easy to a small cairn marking the zigzag route up ramps and ledges onto the south shoulder of Pingora. Here we could trace our planned route for the morrow before descending the ledges and working up to the foot of the wall leading up to Wolf's Head. We had already been warned about the horrors of the direct approach up 300ft of steep ledges and a pair of descending climbers agreed declaring it 'very scary'. We climbed a short way up a blocky gully which looked fine and decided on that way for later.

The South Buttress of Pingora was our first route the next day, a four-pitch climb rated at 5.6 (UK Severe). We had youth on our side and it seemed a waste not to use it so we pointed him up the climb and off he went. Enjoyable exposed climbing up corner cracks on impeccable granite led all too soon to a 200ft scramble on to the blocky summit. One pitch was rather harder (5.7, UK HS/VS), so we may have been off route. Pingora dominates the view from below but on the top one feels dwarfed by the much higher peaks around the Cirque. Three airy abseils reunited us with our approach shoes and a leisurely stroll back to camp after a short but satisfying day.

The second route, two days later was the famed East Ridge of Wolf's Head, 5.6. Although the climbing is not hard, this is a much more serious proposition being virtually inescapable and with a long approach and descent. Given the reputation of the Cirque for afternoon thunderstorms, an early start is essential. We did but even so there were several parties ahead who must have set off in the dark. Having decided on the indirect approach we scrambled up a mini bergschrund beside a snowfield to the base of our gully. This went easily apart from a short excursion onto the flanking slabs where we used a rope although it turned out not to be really necessary. Topping out on the ridge we then had to cross Tiger Tower by one pitch of Diff climbing and an abseil down the other side to the Wolf's Head col. From here the aspect is somewhat alarming. The ridge is spectacularly narrow and foreshortening makes it look impossibly steep. Once you get started though the true angle becomes clear and delightful V Diff climbing on granite with the friction properties of velcro took us in about 350ft to the more level section of the ridge.

The exposure along most of the routes is “awesome” (you can’t climb in the USA without using that adjective), a couple of sections of admittedly easy climbing were exceptionally narrow.

We soon reached the four pitches of technical climbing; tenuous toe traverses, hand traverses and squeezes through holes from one side of the ridge to the other. All delightful climbing on beautiful rock with stunning situations. Route finding was easy. If you can climb it, you’re going the right way. If you can’t you’re not. Eventually some easy scrambling reached the airy summit with room for two. The first abseil station was just below the summit and four abseils of 80-100ft reached a ledge and terrace system which took us the ¼ mile to the col before Overhanging Tower and a final abseil. All abseils can be done on one 60m rope. We thought it was all over but the descent from the col on very steep gravel was horrible. However, all things come to an end and we soon reached easier going and a delightful walk out surrounded by peaks turning golden in the setting sun. Pingora was a good climb. Wolf’s Head was an outstanding climb. If one is climbing in the Hard VS to low Extreme grades there is a lifetime of magnificent climbing to go at here. I wish I had discovered it years ago!



Routes in the Cirque of the Towers

**Tim
and
Michael
approaching
Pingora**

Photo RWS

Besides the rock climbing in the Cirque some of the surrounding peaks were scrambled when we wanted a quieter day or the weather looked less settled.



Mitchell Peak, 3,804m or 12,482 ft, stands opposite Pingora and flanks the Jackass Pass. It has steep faces to the north and west with rocky ridges breaking the southern slopes above the pass. The normal route starts by crossing the Popo Agie River to the north by Lizard Head Meadows and circling round to the eastern side. We had though read of a rough winding route starting from the pass. From our camp we traversed a minor hump to reach the Jackass Pass (also called Big Sandy Pass) picking out potential ascent routes on the way. A vague track through the lower grassy slopes vanished once we started on the talus (boulder field). Turning a ridge by a traverse right and entering a gully we made good progress to a scramble up a small ridge with a stunning finish (I, 3rd class). A move onto a block left one peering nervously down over the apparently overhanging north face. A right turn and gentle scrambling over blocks took the three of us to a broader ridge and shallow Cairngorm-like boulder slope and a rocky granite summit. A worthwhile ascent. A bite to eat and we needed to move on as the weather looked as if it would deteriorate as forecast. Rather than descend the ascent route we looked west and the normal route appeared reasonable. After a 100m or so south we scattered down a rock slab (I, 3rd class) to find a stony slope to the col towards Dog Tooth Peak. The descent into the corrie above Lizard Head Meadows was initially steep and loose but improved to a rough grassy slope. A long descent left us on a rocky outcrop, peering over mature pine forest trying to find a way on. A way was found through the trees by following recent moose track and trusting we would not run into the rear of the beast. On reaching the fast-flowing turbulent river we turned upstream and after a mile or so found a place where we could step across between boulders and gain the North Fork Trail back to Lonesome Lake and camp. We suffered only a few spits of rain but there had been significant rainfall elsewhere in the range.

The Winds' prolific photographer and climber, Finis Mitchell, climbed the peak eleven times between 1923 (aged 21) and 1973 and placed a plaque by the summit to mark this achievement. The peak is named for him.

Camel's Hump

Though technically a day to recover between our exertions on Wolf's Peak and the long walk out, it seemed a shame not to try and take in another one of the magnificent mountains of the range.

Described by the guidebook as a 3rd class scramble, the Southwest Slope route up to the twin summits of Camel's Hump (3,821m, 12,537ft and 3,807m, 12,492ft) provided a series of interesting problems.

Richard soloed the unmarked route which followed a series of inclined ledges up the face with a short bouldering-style wall encountered at each step between levels. The ledges, noted in the guidebook as 'conveniently slanted', have just enough friction against your boots for the angle to stop you sliding – although it takes a while to convince one's body that this is the case. The top provided both superb vistas of the previous week's routes and an excellent ridge scramble between the humps. Lizard Head Peak (3,914m, 12,842ft), the highest in the area, was tantalisingly close separated only by a fantastic airy ridge climb (West Ridge, 4th class). However, low energy reserves and no company meant it awaits another visit.



Richard on the Camel's Hump

Fremont Peak

During the walk in to Island Lake, Fremont Peak (4,189m, 13,745ft) stood out on the horizon. With time against Richard before the end of my trip he wanted to see as much of this new part of the Wind River Range as possible. His route would take him first up into Titcomb Basin – its lakes reminiscent of an Alpine valley - before heading northeast from the 10,575ft Lake's east shore through a notch to Mistake Lake. It was at this point while descending slightly that Mistake Lake justified its name as a loud rip emanated from his trousers.... ventilation was not an issue for the rest of the trip. From the southern end of Mistake his route went southeast up the main rock gully to gain Fremont's southeast ridge via a saddle at 11,900ft.

Joining there the main path and, with the damp weather more reminiscent of a Munroe ascent, Richard started up the Southwest Buttress scramble (class 3). Once into the scramble, the path is not clearly defined and the grade/exposure of the scramble varies significantly depending on the route picked up the ridge (up to class 4 on the slabs towards the right). Thankfully the grippy rock and intermittent clearing of the clouds allowed him to work his way up and enjoy the challenge of the slabs. With the mountain to himself, the top was identified by a long canister securely wedged between the two topmost prominent blocks.

During my brief time on the top waiting for gaps in the clouds to reveal the view, every weather was experienced. It is easy to see why this mountain was believed for so long to be the tallest in the Rockies. The descent on the loose rocks improved with each step as one feels more invigorated as the elevation decreases. Glissading into Indian Basin and encountering yet another stunning valley with a colourful abundance of wild flowers, his knees were thankful for flatter ground.



**Titcomb Basin
from the lower
slopes of
Fremont Peak**

Photo RWS

Medicine Bow Peak, Snowy Range

Following the recommendation of our Riverton host, Richard took Route 130 back to Denver and with his flight not until the evening he was looking for something to keep him occupied. Although the driving distances are great, rolling along these quiet American roads is undemanding and the scenery making you feel you're watching a Western. Route 130 traverses the Medicine Bow National Forest and many trailheads were signposted from the roadside. Travelling light (most things were packed for the flight) and with no map, he did not set a good example to the hordes of families setting off for their Labour Day weekend walks.

The Snowy Range is the northernmost sub-range of the Medicine Bow Mountains, their distinctive quartzite rock creating a striking white scar poking through the forests. The walk up from Lake Marie follows (thankfully) well marked trails and follows the bare rocky ridge up the boulder strewn top of Medicine Bow Peak (3,662m, 12,013ft).

With two weeks of conditioning behind him Richard was not to be overtaken.

The unobstructed views from the top over the National Forest were only limited by the haze and showed that this area could keep you easily busy for a week or more.



**View from near the summit of Medicine Bow Peak, Snowy Range
Photo RWS**

The Snowy Range is certainly worth a detour should you be passing and made a great finale to Richard's trip.

Reflections

The Wind River Range is an impressive area for backpacking or for climbing. The five members spent hours gazing at the scenery despite all being highly experienced travellers in the world's mountain ranges. The area covered by the Winds is large: 100 miles long running NW-SE along the Continental Divide with over 40 peaks exceeding 13,000 ft (~4,000m). The range's breadth averages around 20 miles with relatively few access points (trailheads). The more popular western flank has just fifteen access points and there are fewer in the east. The roads to the trailheads are long and can be rough going so an SUV is an advantage though we also managed with a saloon. Despite their length these roads do not penetrate far into the Winds. Once on the trails we found them to be well signed at junctions and there are some other paths neither marked on the maps nor signposted. The trails are constrained by the topography to generally avoid the steep river-cut valley sides so wind around with the rivers, shelves or ridges.

The ranges breadth and the circuitous trails mean the walks in to the central chain of peaks are long. Several backpackers we met were surprised that we managed reach the Cirque of

the Towers and Island Lake each in a single day - admittedly long days in both cases. The distances to the spine of the chain with its more dramatic scenery and tempting objectives make the range less suitable for single day outings.

We visited two of the most popular areas. Even so we never felt oppressed by the presence of others. Encounters on trails were infrequent enough to generally result in a chat - sometimes for ten minutes or longer. On one occasion, a lone backpacker guessed who three of us were on hearing us speak having spoken to the other two the previous day. Denver was chosen for the frequency of flights it offered. Salt Lake City would have reduced driving time by a couple of hours for the Pinedale (western) side of the range but flights were dearer. Flights to Riverton were too infrequent to be worthwhile. Using Iceland Air avoided the need to have a connecting flight within the US and the associated need to collect and recheck-in luggage. Services in the Iceland Air flights were basic.

Total expenditure for the meet was around £9,300 for the five participants including flights, car hire, accommodation, permits, food and drink. Permits were only needed for the Shoshone Indian Reservation (eastern) side of the range.

Despite good roads and highways leading to the centres of Lander and Pinedale the time taken to travel there from Denver and between them is long because of the distances involved: 400, 475 and 160 miles. There are few services and eateries along large parts of these routes.

There are many further opportunities in the Winds though we have probably experienced much of the most concentrated treats. The Big Sandy approach to the Cirque, Gannett Peak and the Highline Trail near there would all have been visited had we had more time. Backpacking the length of the range would take three weeks even with resupply drops close to the route.

Camping, especially backpacking, concentrates the mind on what is essential. We used one-person single-hoop tents except Tim who had more space in a two-person three-hoop tent when it was transported by horse and a hooped bivvy when he was bearing the load. There was usually little difficulty in finding suitable pitches. Clear night skies at 10,000 ft resulted in frosts some nights and those with -5°C sleeping bags appreciated them.

The Winds are not littered and some care is needed to keep them that way. It is sensible to canister or suspend food away from 'critters' not only to prevent loss or damage but to reduce impact on wildlife.

Feeding adequately is another important aspect of any backcountry trip. We ate well when in towns and had no problem finding suitable restaurants. The criteria for backpacking food were lightness, small size, calories, ease of preparation and acceptable taste with some variety. Complicating factors were that taking food into the US is problematic, time for purchasing food was limited and the increased numbers of campers anticipated for the eclipse might deplete local stocks. The Mountain House range of meals were considered acceptable and our eclipse accommodation hosts were willing to take delivery of an order from the company's US factory.

However, they would not accept payment from a UK card, nor PayPal. Alan, who was arranging all this, had to make a payment to our hosts who then ordered a simplified version of what we wanted for us. Simplified because we could not burden them with entering online the dozens of items we wanted so substituted standard multi-day emergency food supply packs as supplied to survivalists. These dehydrated foods simply required the addition of boiling water, resealing and being allowed to stand for several minutes though we found leaving them longer and being kept hot while standing improved the texture and temperature. Oddly the packs are not vacuum-packed but puncturing the packs meant the volume could be greatly reduced. Another odd feature is that the packs often contained a stated 2½ portions blazoned with 'enjoy right from the pouch'. Firstly, we could not get three of use round a single pouch to dip our sporks in and, secondly, we needed 1½ or 2 of the stated 'portions' to feel as if we'd had a serving rather than a snack.

As for 'cooking', this was simply a matter of boiling water. Two MSR multifuel stoves were used both burning generic camping stove gasoline purchased in a large supermarket for \$13 a gallon. About half was used. The other stoves used gas canisters available from outdoor suppliers and large supermarkets in mountain areas. A small complication at the end of the trip is the safe disposal of those items which are neither allowed to be dumped nor taken on a plane.

We dropped all remaining fuel off at a family-run outdoor shop where the owner was happy to use the remainder himself. He also took some pepper spray canisters. A surprised but delighted waitress took the remaining pepper spray canister.

**Tim sorting out food
from the bear canister,
Island Lake camp**



Weather conditions were generally kind to us. There can be significant snowfall in September at the high camps. Another frequent problem is smoke haze from forest fires. We noticed this one evening looking towards Gannett Peak from our camp above Island Peak and later for two days throughout the Rocky Mountain National Park. The filtering of the setting sun's light by the haze gave the sun a blood red colour against a dark grey sky.

Nature Notes

While none on the meet were experts in the flora or fauna, they did notice species they considered notable. Some of those identified are listed here.

Moose	Desert Cottontail	American Robin
Elk	Greater Shorthorned Lizard	American Pipit
Mule Deer	Northern Sagebrush Lizard	Grackle/Brown-headed
White-tailed Deer	Wandering Gartersnake	Cowbird
Pronghorn	Downy Woodpecker	Goldeneye
Feral Horse	Rufous Hummingbird	Great Crested Flycatcher
Yellow-bellied Marmot	Belted Kingfisher	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel	Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Red Squirrel	Double-crested Cormorant	Rock Wren
American Pika	Chough	American Crow
Unita Chipmunk	Red-tailed Hawk	Common Raven
Montane Vole	Gray Nutcracker	Wild Turkey
Western/American Water Shrew	House Sparrow	Ring-necked Pheasant
Coyote	White-crowned Sparrow	

The pikas were numerous and active gathering bundles of vegetation ready for the winter. Those in the Cirque were unafraid and came right up to our feet and ropes. The species are at risk from global warming as they are specialised for high altitude environments and can not compete with other rodents at low altitudes and die if exposed to temperatures of 25.5°C or more for several hours.

With warming their environmental niches are likely to recede higher up the mountains with consequent reduction in area and increase in communities' isolation from one another.

Of mouse and man – a bold pika peeking



Pikas do not hibernate so need to gather large quantities of herbage. An adult will typically make over a hundred foraging trips a day, 13 an hour, through the summer, carefully selecting the plants with the greater food value. Colorado study measured the stored food piles to be sufficient for more than 175 days winter feeding

Being Bear Aware

While no bears were encountered on this trip there were clear signs of their presence. Droppings were found on trails in Lory State Park and on the Lester Pass. Away from the trails the backpackers near Dickinson Park noticed claw marks and evidence of bears' back scratching on trees.

We took various precautions against attracting the attention of bears. Except for the camp in the Cirque of the Towers where local advice was that there were enough people around to discourage bears: food and empty food packets were stored in bear canisters; bear canisters were stored well away from tents; no food was stored in tents; meals were prepared more than a hundred metres away from tents; pepper spray was carried readily accessible; bear bells were attached to some trekking poles. Bear precautions are advisory rather than mandatory in the range.

Bear canisters were readily available for loan from Forest Service's Ranger District offices in Lander and Pinedale either at no charge or for a small donation. Copies were taken of the borrower's ID and credit card against the possibility of failure to return the canisters. There was a drop box for the return of canisters outside office hours.

The Continental Divide

The Pacific-Atlantic watershed of North America (Continental Divide or Great Divide) is long and tortuous. On our drive south we crossed it five times in an hour or so while on a reasonably straight highway. There is a Continental Divide Trail (CDT) running from the Canadian to the Mexican border along trails or back roads on or near the Continental Divide.

We met two individuals heading south and an Austrian couple heading north who were tackling the CDT. We could appreciate why they wanted to hike through these mountains and other parts of the Rockies. However, there are many scores of miles of the CDT south of Winds before the next wilderness area is reached, the Medicine Bow National Forest. Much of those intervening miles are through flat or undulating sage brush with dirt roads to be covered at an average of 17 miles per day which we thought would be tedious. A further problem in this area is lack of reliable water sources in the Wyoming Great Divide (desert) Basin.

One of the CDTers we met thought around two-hundred now set off each year with the intention of completing the trail but I note that under fifty had registered completion in 2016. At around 3,000 miles it is a serious undertaking and typically requires six months. Reputedly, heading north starting in March or April is more reliable as a late June start on the Canadian border can be delayed by a few weeks waiting for the spring run-off to finish and allow access.

Above Pinedale, our destinations Fremont Peak and Indian Pass are on the Divide but not the CDT. We did though follow the CDT in that area from Seneca Lake over Lester Pass and down to Cook lake and a little beyond. Near the Cirque of the Towers, Wolf's Head and Mitchell Peak are both on the Divide and a variation on the main CDT passes between them using Texas and Jackass Passes while the main route stays well to the east of the crest in this area.

Sources of information

Allen's Diamond Four Ranch www.diamond4ranch.com

Camping food www.mountainhouse.com

Continental Divide Trail continentaldivide-trail.org

Joe Kelsey, 2013, Climbing and Hiking in the Wind River Mountains 3rd edition. Falcon Guides

Ron Adkinson, 2012, Hiking Wyoming's Wind River Range 2nd edition. Falcon Guides

Lankin Dome area www.topozone.com/wyoming/fremont-wy/summit/lankin-dome

www.mountainproject.com/v/lankin-dome/106379366

Llama supported hiking www.landerllama.com

Lory State Park cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/Lory

Maps: <http://www.beartoothpublishing.com/product/wind-river-range>

andrewskurka.com/product/wind-river-high-route-guide

<https://www.gpsfiledepot.com/maps/view/512>

Earthwalk Press, North Wind River Range, Hiking map and guide1:48k

Earthwalk Press, South Wind River Range, Hiking map and guide1:48k

Permits: Wind River Outdoor Company, 8114 WY-789, Lander, WY 82520.

Windriveroutdoorcompany.com

Popo Agie Falls Trail, Sinks Canyon www.sinkscanyonstatepark.org

Ranger offices: Washakie Ranger District, 333 Highway 789, South, Lander, WY 82520.

Pinedale Ranger District 29 East Fremont Lake Rd. PO Box 220. Pinedale, WY 82941

Wind River Range: www.summitpost.org/wind-river-range/171223

www.visitpinedale.org www.fs.usda.gov/Shoshone

www.mountainproject.com/v/wind-river-range/105823538

Any Regrets - Tim's only regret after the trip was that he had not discovered the area twenty years ago and Michael's was that when passing through the hamlet of Rand, about 30 miles from the nearest decent stretch of water and spotting the ironically named Rand Yacht Club, we did not stop and call in for a drink.



Teide But Strange

Tenerife is a popular destination well known for its wild life, mostly in Las Americas and Los Cristianos but most visitors see little of the island. The major and wildest resorts are on the west side of the southern tip of the island and on the north coast Puerta de la Cruz is a more upmarket resort. There are other smaller resorts along the coasts on the south of the island. More adventurous tourists do go on trips to see Mt. Teide, well worth a visit, but there is far more to this strange and diverse island.

It is good walking country of a bit different in places. A number of members have done some walking there over the years.

The entire north-eastern tip of this triangular island is taken up by the rarely visited Parque Rural de Anaga. The north-western tip faces the might of the Atlantic and has massive sea cliffs starting at the small town of Los Gigantes (The Giants) and running round to the north coast at Garachico. A road cuts this tip off to get over to that coast and half way over a gorge runs down to the coast at Masca with its own very different micro-climate. There is a massive hinterland rarely visited but farmed extensively and then you have a high desert out of which rises Mount Teide. Add to this the weird landscape of solidified lava flows and you have all sorts of habitat supporting all sorts of plants and creatures.



A recent visitor was our President who recounts a tale of an attempt to actually climb 'Pico del Teide'.

"I was recently approached by my friend Matt, who had seen a very attractive article in a walking magazine about climbing Mt Teide on Tenerife. He was keen to try this, but didn't have much bigger-mountain experience (highest previous summit was Snowdon), so wondered if I might be interested in going with him. I was a bit dubious, as the trip would be just before I was due for a hip replacement, but it sounded an attractive place, so I agreed, and we flew out from Gatwick in early September 2018. We picked September as being outside the real high season but still with good weather likely; the lower walking on Tenerife is reputedly good in spring, but snow (which can persist well into summer near the top) can make Teide very difficult of access earlier in the year.

Tenerife is a very new island, completely volcanic in origin; the oldest parts are a mere 7 million years old, and much of it is a great deal younger (the summit of Teide has only been there since an eruption in 1798; the most recent eruption was in 1909).

It has been formed from 3 big shield volcanoes, arising from the sea bed, which have coalesced into one island – which also makes Teide the third largest volcano in the world measured from its base – (only Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa in Hawaii are bigger). Many interesting plants have evolved – cactus-like spurges, Canary pines with extra-long needles to comb moisture from the Atlantic winds, dragon-trees, which look like palms but are actually lilies... There is cloud forest, desert, and even plants which specialise in colonising lava, or in growing around fumaroles. As you might expect there are indigenous birds (including Canaries), lizards, and insects. A fascinating ecology.

Teide seems fairly quiet at the moment, though there are some active fumaroles near the top; obviously there is a lot of anxiety about a possible eruption, as a big one could trash Puerto de la Cruz, the island's second city – evacuating the place in a hurry would be a nightmare – but could also set off a huge landslide; the resultant splash would flood the eastern seaboard of the Americas (an ancient previous landslide involved a 1000 cubic kilometre chunk of island falling into the sea, and this one might be as big). No immediate indication of imminent eruption, though, and we felt safe enough visiting.

There is very little available metal on Tenerife, so the original inhabitants, the Guanches, used obsidian (volcanic glass) like flint to make tools and weapons; they were conquered by Spain in 1496, and the islands remain Spanish (indeed Teide, at 3718 metres/12,198 feet is Spain's highest mountain). Most of the Spanish settlement (and subsequent tourist development) is round the coasts, so while there are areas of wall-to-wall karaoke bars and cafes by the sea, it's easy to escape inland to find some peace and quiet... and much of the coast is undeveloped too, so there's lots of good walking, mostly on reasonable paths (though local maps are not wonderful).

Teide is the highest point on the rim of a big caldera, Las Canadas, about 10 miles in diameter, with the floor at about 2000 metres. It's an extraordinary landscape, much of it looking like the pictures sent back from Mars. There's a cable car which goes most of the way up Teide, but to go to the top, you either have to get a (timed) summit permit – difficult to obtain unless you book a trip with a tour company – or go to the top early and descend before 9:00 am. This is an attractive plan, as you can walk up and stay overnight at the Refugio Altavista at 3270 metres (book in advance), climb the final 500 metres to the summit before dawn, watch the sun come up, and be on the way down before the permit system cuts in.

We flew in (4 hour flight) and picked up a hire car at the airport; there are buses but we found the hire car made walking trips much easier. There's a modern dual carriageway most of the way round the coast, but many of the roads in the interior are steep and made of hairpin bends – fortunately most other drivers seem to treat these with respect. The biggest problem we found, even outside the real high season, was driving (networks of tiny one-way streets) and parking in the cities; we soon learned to grab any parking space that appeared and find our way on foot from there on.

We had a couple of days exploring the North of the island; we first visited the pyramids of Guimar (thought by Thor Heyerdahl to be a link between the Egyptians and the Maya, but probably built by a nineteenth-century freemason with an interest in astrology: they are aligned on the solstice); we also walked in the cloud forest of the northern mountains (very steep and rugged), and visited the excellent natural history and ethnology museum; for this bit we stayed in Santa Cruz, the capital. Then we had two days based in Puerto de la Cruz, exploring the

fringes of the caldera on foot, and prospecting our route up Teide. The next two days were on the mountain (of which more later). Finally we looked at the southern desert area, had a whale-watching trip, and walked on the coast and in the canary-pine forest... interesting as the pines turn out to be amazingly fire-resistant – presumably evolved to live near volcanoes.

To do the peak, we drove up into the caldera – which gave us a 2,200 metre height start. There is limited parking where the usual route leaves the road; we had to leave the car a mile or so further along. The route starts by climbing steadily up a dusty gravel track; this leads through an increasingly weird landscape, with red rocks and stones; the bare bits look like Mars; in places a few stunted plants survive – Mars being terraformed?

As we climbed there were increasingly spectacular views of the jagged, rocky opposite rim of the caldera. We walked between a set of huge black rounded boulders – the “eggs of Teide”, are apparently lumps of lava which have rolled down the steep hillside and rounded off by doing so. After about 5km, with some 400 metres of height gained, the track ended at a turning place. The continuation path looked steep and strenuous, so we detoured to visit Montana Blanca, 2748 metres, with views across the caldera and up to the summit of Teide (hidden further up by the steepness of the flank). There was some scrubby vegetation here, with little brown birds like pipits (maybe they were), and big grasshoppers with bright blue wings.

Having run out of excuses, we tackled the path on to the refuge. This was awkward, with loose scree and bare rock, for the next 500 metres up; taken steadily though (the altitude was a good reason not to rush) it wasn't as bad as it looked, and an hour's hard work brought us – gasping a bit – to the refuge. We sat on the terrace to recover, then Matt sketched while I prospected the route on up which we would be doing in the dark tomorrow.

The refuge is basically a bunkhouse with toilets and kitchen; it provides bedding; there is running water though this needs to be boiled before drinking, but a vending machine sells bottled water. All this was useful as it meant we could walk up just carrying food, some water, spare clothes, camera and head-torches.

As it turned out we need not have worried about permits: the wind round the summit cone was gusting to 80km per hour (there's a display in the refuge), and was forecast to do the same tomorrow; this meant that the cable car wasn't running and wouldn't run – so no need for permits, as whoever inspects them comes up on the cable car. We looked at the amazing views – we could now see the summits of other islands sticking up out of a huge cloud inversion which covered the lower slopes and the sea; on the caldera rim to our left was an observatory (now studies the sun I gather); in front of us the setting sun outlined the jagged caldera edge. We watched the shadow of the peak behind us spread across the cloud – wonderful!

As the light went the temperature dropped to almost freezing; we kept coming out to look at the stars (Mars very prominent, and Orion in view; this high and with almost no light pollution the starscape was astonishing) then diving back indoors to warm up again.

The refuge was full overnight, and as some people got up strangely early we didn't sleep too well (we had checked sunrise time with the guardians, and aimed to arrive a few minutes before, as waiting on the summit would be cold).

We had a fairly minimal breakfast and a hot drink, put on our head-torches, and set off.

The path to the summit first climbed steeply again through boulders and lava fields, then worked up and down round the flank of the summit cone to the cable car top station. A final steep and exposed section, a bit tricky in the gusty wind, took us to the top. Our timing was just about right: we had allowed a good hour from the refuge, and arrived at the summit just as it started to get light.

We huddled behind a boulder and watched the dawn come up over the caldera rim and cloud inversion below us; sunrise this far south was rapid and dramatic, and we saw the classic view of the peak's shadow on the cloud below – well worth all the effort.

We would have stayed longer, but the effective temperature with the 80kph wind was well below freezing, so we worked back down to the cable car station.



Sunrise from the summit - Photo Rory Newman

The terrace there was sunny and out of the wind, so Matt got himself warmed up while I explored a little way out towards the subsidiary top of Pico Viejo - dramatic smaller crater, and sulphur-smelling fumaroles.

We followed the up and down path back round the flank in welcome warm sunshine, detoured to visit another set of fumaroles, then dropped back down to the refuge – with frequent view and photography stops. We sat on the refuge terrace and ate a welcome larger second breakfast, then tackled the steep section back down to the track; I was tired and quite slow down this, and very pleased to reach easier ground, but the rest of the tramp back to the car was pleasant, and the landscape still as dramatic as ever: hard work but VERY worthwhile.

For anyone who wants to climb Teide, or walk on Tenerife, we flew with Easyjet from Gatwick to Tenerife's southern airport; Easyjet and other airlines fly from other British airports. We arranged car hire through the Zest website; I have used this before and would recommend it. We booked accommodation in advance via the internet and this worked well. Food and drink are reasonably priced, and Tenerife is far enough west to be on British time. We found the Paddy Dillon Cicerone guide "Walking on Tenerife" very helpful. Booking the refuge well in advance is advisable (a search for Refugio Altavista Tenerife will find it, as will searches for Pico Teide Tenerife).

Booking a summit permit well in advance ditto, if you are going to need one – information via www.telefericoteide.com (where there is also information about the cable car and other useful links) or www.reservasparquesnacionales and click on Teide.

The refuge, and the summit, are high enough that some people do feel significant altitude effects, but apart from being breathless going uphill (which these days happens to me anyway) we had no problems.

Apart from Teide, much of the other walking is very rewarding, and for anyone who is interested, the gardens round the Guimar pyramids have a lot of botanical and ecological information. I'm happy to supply more information if anyone would find that helpful." <https://www.gpswandelenintenerife.eu/> gives 517 walks on Tenerife with GPX tracks.

Your Editor was fortunate enough to work there for 6 years only going out to our complex as required or for holidays but probably spent a total of nine months there. I got to know the island very well especially the western tip and the Teide area.

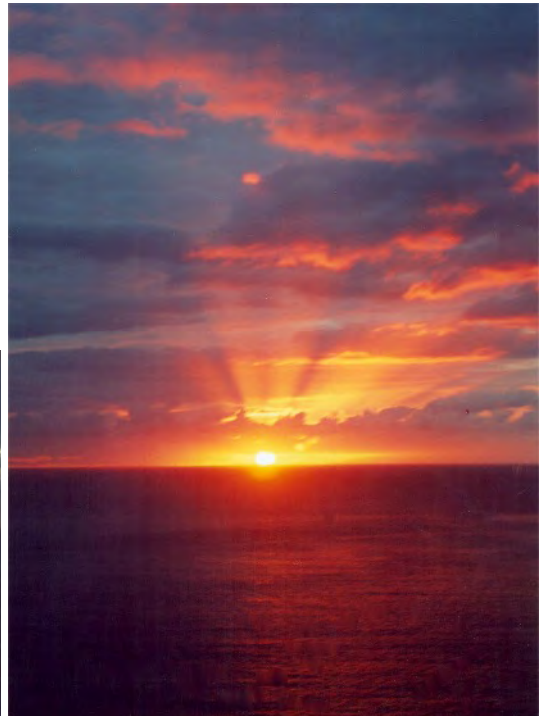
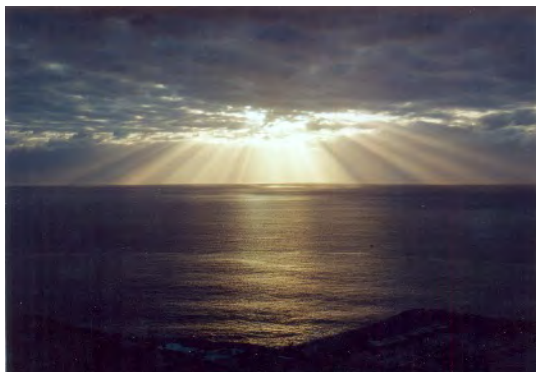


The sunsets from the cliff tops or at least a hundred feet above sea level were to die for.



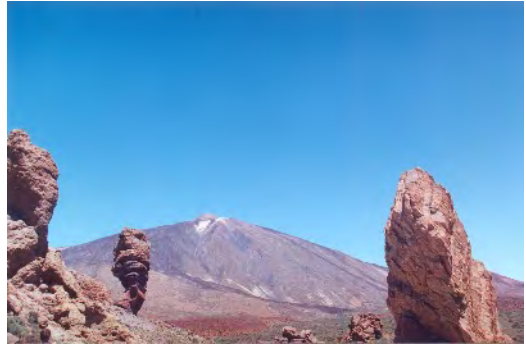
Photos Roy Denney

Acantilados de Los Gigantes, that rise from the sea to a height of 500-800 metres





The high desert below Teide



The strange rock formations



The Masca Gorge.

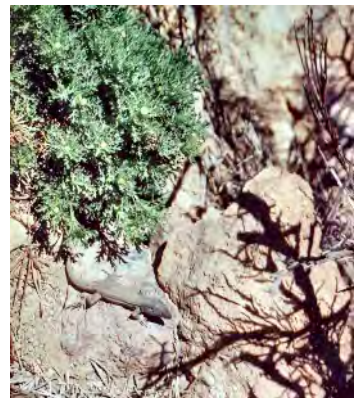
My wife Doreen approaching the start of the gorge and the party reaching the bottom.

Very much a tricky scramble and close to being an assault course.

Not many climb back, boats are sent from the bottom.

Photos Roy Denney

It takes about three hours to descend and the sides of the ravine climb as high as 600m above the sea, and at its narrowest the gorge is only 20m wide, where the side rocks are filled with bizarre, swirling rock formations and curious endemic vegetation. Lizards are everywhere.



Flora of Tenerife - Rory Newman and Roy Denney



Cascabela peruviana - Yellow oleander RD



Convolvulus RN



Echium wildpretii -
Tower of Jewels RD



Cardon (a Spurge) RN



Aeoniums RN



We are indebted to John Middleton for his assistance in trying to identify these plants. There are still some we do not know. Can you help?

One glorious specimen on the next page is a bit unsure but it looks very like a poinsettia which in its native form is found most in Mexico and is a scraggly shrub that lives in seasonally dry tropical forests. Mature specimens can grow to be so large and lanky that they almost resemble vines.



RN

Pinus canariensis - Canary Pine

RD



RD



Dracaena draco - Dragon Tree, and the
Phoenix canariensis - the Canary Island Date Palm

RD



Desert plants, unidentified RD



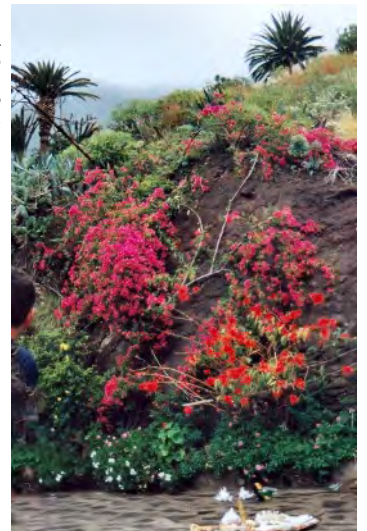
Boulder shrubs by Teide

RD

Euphorbia pulcherrima ?
'Fire on the Mountain'

(Actually in the Masca Gorge)

RD



‘Out with the old and in with the new’ is a saying which feels apposite for this meet.

Obviously, we are done with the 2018 meets and starting with 2019’s. Annually we hope for good winter conditions in the Lakes and usually we are disappointed and get a cold soaking.

The 2019 meets got off to a better than average start with three days of dry cool conditions and only the mountain tops draped in cloud. The chilling winds of Friday and Saturday calmed on Sunday.

The prospect before the meet was not promising. With 23 expected for the meet, 21 staying overnight, the barn was inaccessible. One outside user had misplaced the usual barn key and another appeared to have locked it and the downstairs spare in the barn by closing the Yale lock door behind him. So, the first arrivers on Friday were charged with breaking into the barn to recover the keys. Kicking the door, levering with a mattock then using a jemmy eventually gained entry.

Cyclists and two groups of walkers passed by while they were breaking in and not one queried the situation. Unfortunately, no keys were found anywhere inside. Later John Jenkin and Alan Clare came to the rescue and bought then fitted a replacement lock barrel. They also repaired the broken shower light. One further refit was a temporary shower curtain as the old one was torn. These refits also ticked the box of ‘out with the old and in with the new’.

Breaking and entering accomplished, the Smiths and Brown headed off up the newly repaired Tilberthwaite track and over Great Intake and Birk Fell to tackle the iced up Wetherlam Edge. They returned via Steel Edge and the path just north of Tilberthwaite Gill.



Helen and John on Wetherlam (photo MS)

Friday's soup and rolls were followed by cake and a round of "Happy Birthday" in honour of Carol's significant birthday earlier in the week. Carol and John had planned to mark her new decade with a trip into Great Douk Cave but on arrival found the water flow at the entrance too great a barrier.



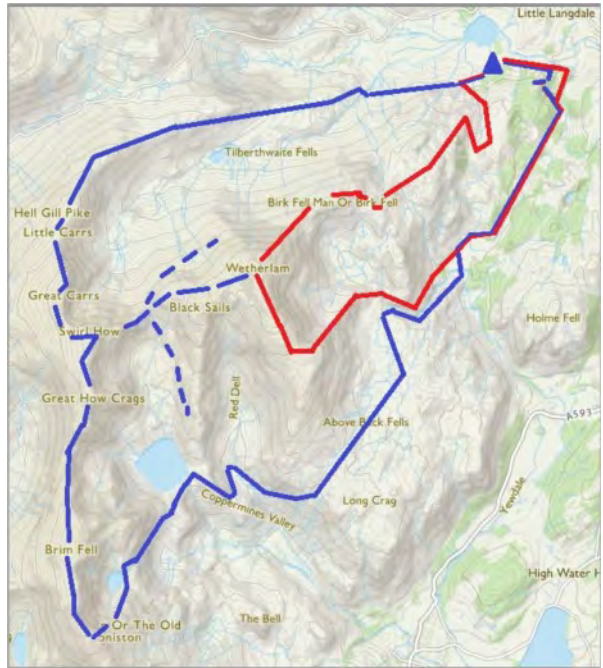
**Carol and
Peter
(photo MS)**

Twenty-one were gathered by 9pm and the place had warmed up. A further 'new' was half a dozen new faces in their thirties or forties to supplement the 'old' retirees. They all had active days, were most welcome and already making plans for another meet later this year.

Robert as meet leader was up long before dawn to have a full breakfast prepared for those wanting to get a full Saturday day out on the hills.

Including Tim who had driven over from Lowstern, fifteen set off up towards Greenburn and onto West Side Edge, the Carrs to Swirl How. There Martyn and Tim descended Prison Band with Tim heading back to the cottage and Martyn to refreshment in Coniston. Pete and Ann followed them down then went over Wetherlam to descend its icy Edge.

The remaining eleven continued into the cold wind over Levers Hawse and Brim Fell to lunch on the sheltered side of the Old Man of Coniston's summit cairn. Passing the Miner's Track's steady flow of walkers coming up our party reached Low Water then left the crowds behind by traversing north across the black crags of Brim Fell to Levers Water, under Kennel Crag to the Moor How mine workings. Hole Rake took them to the path down by the south side of Tilberthwaite Gill.



Friday's round in red, Saturday's in blue

Reaching Low Tilberthwaite they were met by Martyn on his way back from Coniston. Together the round was finished in the gloom of dusk via the tunnel to Cathedral Quarry where three trained voices reverberated around the walls.

Meanwhile, Alan had walked over to Tilberthwaite and was circling back towards Low Hall Garth when he met Derek near Slater Bridge. They, with John Jenkin and Ian, bought supplies in Ambleside and sought a spot of lunch in the Wainwright, Elterwater.

Derek had a 'funny turn' there and an ambulance was called. Thankfully, the crew having checked him out were content for him to return to the meet and have a rest - we don't want that sort of 'out with the old'.

By evening he had recovered enough to take some food and a glass of wine made from his own grapes.



Traversing below Brim Fell (photo MS)

Robert and the Whalleys walked the round of Elterwater and Skelwith Bridge from Low Hall Garth

Robert and Carol in Little Langdale (photo JW)



Sunday outings in Langdale

Harvey arrived from Settle, parked up by the ford and joined everyone for pre-dinner drinks and nibbles in the cottage. Robert's meal of charcuterie, cottage pie, fruit pie then cheeses put back more calories than we had expended on our day's outings. Afterwards, Vice President John Brown thanked Robert for organising the meet before Michael's Romanian and Nepal meet videos were screened.

An excellent start to the year thanks to Robert's thorough preparation and everyone helping out over the weekend. Bring on the rest of the new!

Michael Smith

Sunday saw most looking for shorter rounds, especially those needing to travel back to London and other southern locations. Robert, Ian, John, Derek and Alan saw to the cleaning up and repair work. The Lathams mountain biked over to Langdale, Elterwater, Coniston and Tilberthwaite. Harvey was aiming for Stickle Tarn. Unfamiliar with the local area, Helen Brewitt and Dan were walking from the cottage round to Elterwater and Skelwith Bridge.



Exertions over, Robert relaxing

Richard, Peter, the Smiths, John and the younger element set off from the Old Dungeon Ghyll along Langdale to turn right up Troughon Beck - literally up the Beck on the graded scramble taking in its waterfalls.

Having scrambled through a layer of cloud they lunched on Martcrag Moor before continuing to Pike of Stickle. Their descent direct to the New Dungeon Ghyll took in Loft Crag and the Dungeon Ghyll waterfalls.

Attendees:

Lloyd de Beer	G	Ann Latham	G
Helen Brewitt		Harvey Lomas	
John Brown		Daniel O'Leary	
Esther Chadwick		Helen Smith	
Peter Chadwick		Michael Smith	
Alan Clare		Richard Taylor	
Derek Clayton		Martyn Trasler	
Ian Crowther		Jacky Waterhouse	G
Robert Crowther		Tom Waterhouse	G
John Jenkin		Carol Whalley	
Tim Josephy	day visit	John Whalley	
Pete Latham			

After being spoilt by the weather on last year's visit to Snowdonia, there was both a mixed forecast and consequently mixed expectations for the weekend. We were staying at the Tan-y-Wyddfa hut in Rhyd-Ddu, owned by our kindred club The Oread Mountaineering Club. The hut is well positioned with easy access to Snowdonia and although this was my first visit I was assured I was still enjoying the hut in its original livery.



On Saturday Mick Borroff, David Hick, Nick Welch, Richard Dover, Richard Taylor and Michael Smith set off from the hut to traverse the snow-capped Nantlle Ridge.

David had to retire with a sore knee part way up Y Garn, while the others scrambled along the crest in the soft snow and misty conditions to reach the obelisk on Mynydd Tal-y-Mignedd.



This brought back fond memories of Adrian Bridge from a previous winter meet. The ridge was then followed to Garnedd Goch and the descent took us down Cwm Ciperwrth to the hut circles and onto the ruins of the Ciperwrth copper mine, worked in the latter half of the 19th century.

The 8m water wheel is fitted with a winding drum while a crank drove connecting flat rods to power a pump in the second shaft to de-water the Gilfach mine below.



The ruins are remarkably complete and well worth a visit, see:

https://www.aditnow.co.uk/Mines/Cwm-Ciperwrth-Copper-Mine_10973/.

They returned to Rhyd Ddu by crossing Cwm Pennant and climbing through the slate quarries in Cwm Trwsgl via the old tramway, over the col and down through the plantations in the late afternoon gloom.

Meanwhile David, Richard Josephy and Harvey Lomas completed low level circular walks in the Beddgelert and Cwm Bychan areas albeit separately and without encountering each other.

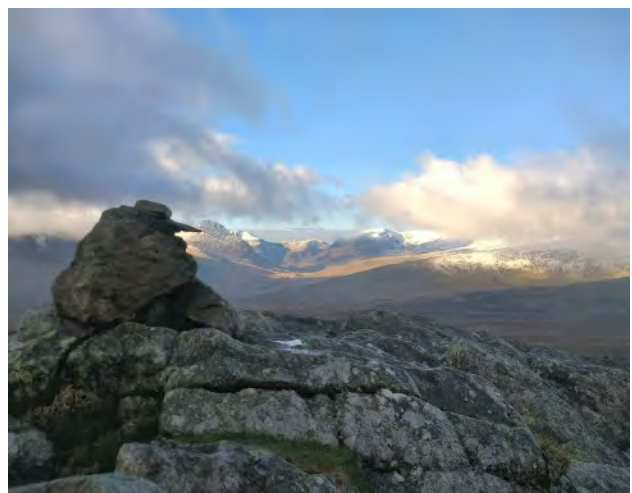
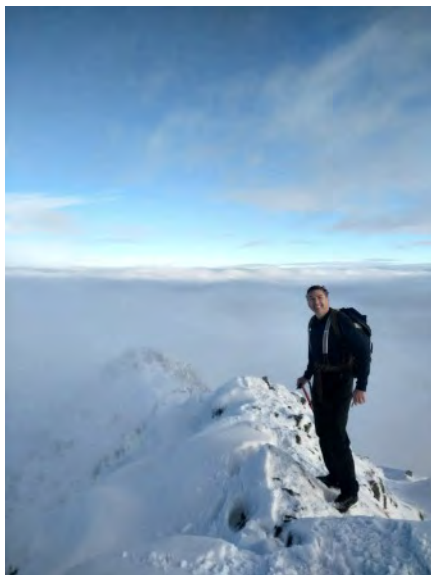
Tim Josephy walked from the hut, crossing the South Ridge of Snowdon, down the Watkin path to Nant Gwynant then back via Beddgelert and the bridleway before returning to the hut to prepare the evening meal.

Richard Smith and Chris Hilton drove around to the Llanberis valley to try the Llechog Buttress scramble (grade 2/3*). Following the route description diligently they set off up the greasy rocks in misty conditions. After failing to find an elusive 'perched block' it dawned on them that they were actually halfway up the Llechog Ridge route (1/2*). Although disappointed with their navigation error, with the damp conditions they were thankful to be on the easier climb. With no guidebook print-off for this route they continued up the ridge in blissful ignorance to emerge at the top in improving conditions. Continuing onwards to the populous Snowdon Summit the snow was in good condition and they emerged out of the clouds. Buoyed up by the weather and the thought of tables being set back at the hut, they returned via Crib Goch, arriving at the car park using head torches.



Back at the hut, tables had been neatly positioned and a looming tea bag shortage had been averted. Our thanks must go to our meet leader Tim who prepared an exquisite dinner of bolognaise, selection of breads, salad and parmesan for the main course with treacle sponge and a selection of cheeses for after.

Sunday started much like Saturday, with low cloud. However, this did not deter those who could spend another day on the hills. After driving round to Capel Curig, Richards S and T, Michael and Chris followed a route recommended by Tim. Starting off east then north they gained the col to turn west up Crimpiau, then splish north to Craig Wen.



The clouds cleared and views over to Tryfan, the Glyders and Carneddau were enjoyed. Another mile further north and three of us were on the snowy slopes to Creigiâu Gleision's 678m summit, while one scrambled there via the rocky crest further right. Scarred from Saturdays endeavours, Chris was picking out perched blocks on every outcrop. After the more northerly top a descent was made through the woodland to Hendre for the short pull up to the col visited earlier. Striding out over the couple of miles back to Capel meant they could be setting off for home before 3pm. A good five-hour round.

Meanwhile on Sunday Mick and Dave parked in Capel Curig and walked over the hill to Lyn Crafnant and back via the forest trails, pausing to watch the trout rising in Lyn Bychan and

lower down, bumped into Tim who was doing the same route in reverse.

Another great meet was had by all with the start of winter conditions kindling excitement for the coming Scottish meet in February.

Thanks again to Tim for organising.

Richard Smith

Attendees:

Mick Borroff
Richard Dover
David Hick
Chris Hilton
Richard Josephy
Tim Josephy

Harvey Lomas
Michael Smith
Richard Smith
Richard Taylor
Nick Welch



Ciprwth
copper
mine

DH enjoying the
view to the
Snowdon
Horseshoe and
the Glyders



'Déjà vu' is Gaelic for 'here is the Scottish weather'.

The journey northward was straight forward and the forecast suggested a weather front would pass over north east Scotland during late Friday and early Saturday.

I imagined we could work round that.



The SMC Raeburn Hut is a small but perfectly formed 1980's purpose built premises situated on the A889 between Dalwhinnie and Laggan. Initially dark and cold however having followed the various clear instructions the place was soon warm and bright.

Aaron Oakes, Jamie Parker and Alan Linford arrived in Dalwhinnie after lunch. AO and JP had made their way up Meall Chuaich, just to the east of the A9 above Dalwhinnie and were rewarded with great views on the way up. Jamie, a prospective member, with suitable glee later announced that this was his first Munro. His suitability to be a member was confirmed as both he and Aaron initially miscalculated, in the dark, the return direction and had to make a corrective detour.

Tradition is everything.

All of the party arrived through the evening bar Bob Clark, a guest and father of another guest, Matt, who was scheduled to arrive late Friday evening.

Friday morning was disappointingly wet and windy. Bob Peckham, the new poster boy on the cover page of the vastly improved YRC Journal drove south to Pitlochry and wandered over Ben Vrackie from Moulin and reported back that he had experienced some ice underfoot and strong winds on top of the hill.

Alan wisely kept to the shore of Loch Ericht and its environs to avoid the worst of the weather. Aaron and Jamie, stout fellows, again drove south to locate Stob Coire Easain, above and west of Loch Treig, and east of the Grey Corries.

However there was no escape from the ever searching wind and the combination of that and knee deep wet snow persuaded the pair to turn back having reached around the 850m mark. Reassuringly, they had a better idea of where they were on this occasion.

David Large and his guest, Matt Clark had plans to reach Hell's Lum Crag above Loch Avon but having pushed up Fiacail a' Corie Chais to the large cairn, at spot height 1141 on your map, the pair had no choice but to retreat in the face of a ferocious wind driving over the plateau.

Similarly Michael and Richard Smith, Helen Brewitt, Anca Pordea and Chris Hilton drove up to the ski centre car park with a view to finding one of the many easy gullies in Coire an t-Sneachda (pronounced 'trayack').

Stepping out of the car I thought if I had a dog I wouldn't let him out in this. Despite suitable clothing wind and sodden snow hindered progress up into the corrie.

Aladdin's snow covering was thinner than anticipated and Central Gully disappeared into the clouds. Given the soft snow and strong gusts a decision was made to go further west, a little further than the Goat Track, and up a broad gully running southeast to exit close to the top of the Fiacail Ridge.

The wind howled across the plateau. Barely able to walk and lying down momentarily in the maelstrom it brought home to one just how brutal these hills can be for the unwary.

Rather wet and chilled, steady progress was made back to the ski centre car park.



Saturday's planning took into account the previous day's experience and many opted for a lower level walk requiring a shuffling of the cars. The iced up tracks from Nethy Bridge near the Boat of Garten were taken, south through forest before crossing the open moor a little west of the River Nethy to Ryvoan in the relative shelter of Meall a'Bhuachaille.

Along the way elevenses were taken by a memorial stone for James Hamilton Maxwell, killed at Ypres in 1915 aged 22. The moor gave good views of Braeriach, Bynack More, Cairngorm and in particular, a straight line across to the Chalamain Gap leading over to the Lairig Ghru. Ryvoan Bothy was inspected and found in good condition before dropping into Glen More for a second snack overlooking a frozen An Lochan Uaine. Here, our navigator, Anca, pointed out a 600m alternative route on the other side of the valley. Richard took this up only to find it had changed from the mapped line and went about 70m up the hillside and went on for over 2km into the 'centre' of Glen More.

For those new to the area a 'scenic' tour was taken back to the Raeburn hut via Inch and the Ruthven Barracks.

Aaron and Jamie, in similar fashion made a circuit of Loch Morlich and the surrounding forest.

David Large and Matt Clark were determined to make amends for Saturday's retreat and for the fact that David had now, including last year's trip to Glencoe, returned to the hut in daylight on two occasions. The pair headed back into Coire an t-Sneachda to find Patey's Route, graded IV(5).

The route was later described as thin and as the light disappeared DL was

seconding the last pitch.

A denuded and exceptionally long step to the right resulted in David dangling on the rope until success on the sixth attempt. Matt unable to communicate with David was greatly relieved to see David emerge on to the stance.

Climb over, the simple descent in appalling conditions and in the dark was made all the more exciting as DL realised he was at one point a couple of steps away from stepping out in to the void above Aladdin's Mirror Direct.

The 'absent friends' returned to a late dinner a little after 10.00pm, DL making up, in good measure, for his two previous daylight retreats.

As Meet Leader I provided sufficient food to allay any unrest and in return those assembled rose to all and every domestic chore. We were in total a party of twelve, and late on Friday evening two members of the North London Mountaineering Club arrived. The hut accommodates 15 and as is often the case, the facilities suit a larger party catering together.

Sunday, most journeyed home in perfect weather with sun-visors deployed. Bob Peckham enjoyed the sunshine but also a cool wind on A Chailleach (930m), north from the car park in Newtonmore, with the last km or so providing very good cramponing on firm wind-hardened neve.

Despite the weather the Cairngorms, for me, conjures many happy memories of previous visits, often at Easter, occasionally summer, of remote corries and tops, bothies and burns and remains a magnificent and special destination.

Chris Hilton

Attendees:

Aaron Oakes, Alan Linford, Anca Pordea, Bob Clark (G), Bob Peckham, Chris Hilton, David Large, Helen Brewitt, Jamie Parker (G), Matt Clark (G), Michael Smith and Richard Smith.



Ben Vrackie and Richard Smith and Helen Brewitt on the summit



The Pamir Highway

speleological and other observations

John & Valerie Middleton

What and Where is the Pamir Highway?

The *Pamir Highway* is a 1,200km section of the **M41** which in turn is a major road that passes through three Central Asian Republics. This route is 2,040km in length and originates at the town of Kara-Balta just to the west of Bishkek the capital of Kyrgyzstan. It then proceeds through central Tajikistan and continues southwards to finish at the city of Termez in Uzbekistan. The mountainous segment known as the *Pamir Highway* commences at the ancient southern Kyrgyz city of Osh and terminates in Dushanbe, the lively capital of Tajikistan.

Between these two great cities the road traverses through the spectacular but sparsely populated and inhospitable central Pamir mountain ranges. This challenging route is one of the world's great '*high altitude driveable road trips*' with the Ack-Baital Pass reaching 4,651m*. Four further passes exceed 4,100m whilst the high plateau itself rarely falls below 3,900m. At these altitudes and over all the passes the barely levelled road surface is invariably rough, winding, narrow and frequently very steep. Such difficult conditions have also been aggravated by inaccessibility, earthquakes and the severe local climate. Elsewhere on the plateau there are 48 summits above 6,000m as well as three that exceed 7,000m!

*** *The highest driveable pass on Earth is the Umlingla Pass in Ladakh, India at 5,883m!!***

Whilst the *Pamir Highway* does follow remnants of the ancient 'Silk Route', as witnessed by various caravanserais and forts, an attempt at improvement was made in the mid-eighteenth century by the Russians in order to keep the British Empire at bay. One hundred years later the Soviets again attempted, without great effect, to upgrade this road. However, it does remain the only viable access route to the eastern half of Tajikistan and the fascinating region of Gorno-Badakhshan (GBAO).

Our Objectives.

The aims of our wanderings were threefold. Firstly, to note and where possible investigate speleological regions close to the M41 road; secondly to observe the often unique local flora and thirdly to mingle with and learn about the local peoples, past and present. Each site of interest is marked on the map with an arrowed number and referred to as such in the text. Additionally, by following the Pamir Highway we hoped that we may eventually connect to the point that we had reached in our Tajikistan explorations of 2018 (see YRC Journal 2018 Vol.14 Number 1).

This article concentrates mainly, but not wholly, on caves and karst within easy reach of the M41.

KYRGYZSTAN & TAJIKISTAN

THE PAMIR HIGHWAY



Key Karst Words (simplified – courtesy of Dr A.C. Waltham).

Epigene refers to the development of caves by surface-derived water, thereby including stream caves draining from stream sinks, and their low-level phreatic continuations.

Hypogene refers to the development of caves by water rising from depths, with a distant source unrelated to the local drainage. Hypogene waters are commonly warmer than ambient, where they have risen from deeper levels with geothermal heating, but they do not have to be warm.

Epigene and hypogene therefore refer to the depths of the source of the formative waters, and do not refer to the depths at which the caves have formed or now lie at. It is now recognised that many caves, e.g. Carlsbad Caverns and the Pennine maze caves in Yoredale limestones, are hypogene, whereas it was previously thought, wrongly, that almost all caves were formed by sinking streams and would therefore be described as epigene.

Hydrothermal refers to processes involving rising hot waters, which may or may not be mineralised, and the features formed by such hot waters. It is mainly applied to mineralisation processes but overlaps with hypogene cave formation at the lower end of its temperature scale.

Speleogenesis refers to the complete process of cave evolution, from initial inception, through development and enlargement and to its final destruction.

A Brief Overview of Kyrgyz & Tajik Karst

Both these countries are renowned for their stunning beauty, majestic mountains, history and friendly people. For the speleologist they are also proving to be a potential wonderland of new cave exploration and scientific karst research.

Kyrgyzstan has a land area of 199,951km² with an average elevation of 2,750m.

Tajikistan's corresponding statistics show the land area to be 130,279km² with an even higher average elevation of 3,186m.

A significant proportion of each state is composed of little studied limestone. The main reasons for this lack of investigation would seem to be physical inaccessibility and that access for many areas has only recently become politically possible. A further constraint is the fact that many of the caves are likely to originate from hydrothermal processes. This infers that access to the surface, even from a sizeable cave system, may be insignificant and difficult to find unless entry is through mined passageways or following some significant tectonic or similar event.

Apart from the mountain ranges mentioned under 'Regional Notes', which is limited to potential karst likely to found close to the M41, further areas of considerable potential do exist. Of significance in Kyrgyzstan are the wild and remote mountains in the south and south-east of Naryn Oblast. These include the great ranges of Karatal-Japaryk, Babice-Too and Kokshal. Within Tajikistan there are equivalent areas of possibility in the Pamirs, the Hissor Range, Turkestan Range, Kuramin Range and the Fan mountains.

During the Soviet period the Russians, Hungarians and Bulgarian speleologists did make various discoveries, but it is only in the past decade that any real international interest has been forthcoming. Recent visitors include the Lebanese, Italian, French, German, Israeli, American and most recently, the British. The *Foundation for the Preservation and Exploration of Caves* in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan now acts as co-ordinator for such explorations under the umbrella of *'The Central Asian Transboundary Project'*. (F.P.E.C.).

CAVES OF KYRGYZSTAN & TAJIKISTAN				
Cave name	Location	Country	Length	Depth
01. Kan-I-Gut ¹	Tahtabuz, Batken	Kyrgyzstan	6,000m+	-150m?
02. Fersmana ¹	Tuya-Muyun, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	4,130m	-260m
03. Dnepropetrovskay ²	Khodja-Mumin, Kulob	Tajikistan	2,500m	-100m
04. Rangkuls kaya ⁴	Chyrak-Tash, Rangkul	Tajikistan	2,050m+	-268m
05. Komsomolskaya ²	Khodja Mumin, Kulob	Tajikistan	1,800m	-100m
06. Pobednaya	Tuya-Muyun, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	1,700m	-80m
07. Great Circus Cave ²	Khodja-Mumin, Kulob	Tajikistan	1,200m	-0m?
08. Spotivnaya	Naryn	Kyrgyzstan	600m	-30m
09. Salty Miracle Cave ²	Hodja Mumin, Kulob	Tajikistan	870m	-60m
10. Jubilee	Batken	Kyrgyzstan	510m	-0m?
11. Surprise	Tuya-Muyun, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	450m	-40m
12. Chil-Ustan	Aravan, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	380m	+20m
13. Khakasska	Isfan-Jailoo, Jalalabad	Kyrgyzstan	360m	-0m?
14. Bear Den Cave	Kol-Suu, Narin	Kyrgyzstan	350m	-0m?
15. Vershinnaja ²	Hodja Mumin, Kulob	Tajikistan	338m	-120m
16. Besh-Unker	Osh	Kyrgyzstan	250m	-90m
17. Kara-Unker ³	Jalpak-Tash, Ozgon Osh	Kyrgyzstan	250m?	-0m?
18. Bolshoi Baritovaya	Tuya-Muyun, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	185m	+48m
19. Uloo-Too	Aravan, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	180m	-83m?
20. Teshick-Tash	Aravan, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	180m	-0m?
21. Zhemchuzhnaya	Babash-Ata, Jalalabad	Kyrgyzstan	150m	-0m?
22. Ustun Kamar	Tahtabuz, Batken	Kyrgyzstan	130m	-0m?
23. Azhidaar-Unker	Tuya-Muyun, Osh	Kyrgyzstan	120m	+20m
24. Ak-Turpak ³	Kadamjay, Batken	Kyrgyzstan	120m	-0m?

¹ Length includes mined passages ² Salt Cave ³ Gypsum Cave ⁴ -240m +28m
NB. Only a few of the above caves have been surveyed to very high standards.
This list has been composed from various sources in several languages – there may be minor errors in spelling or even duplication.

REGIONAL NOTES

Mountain ranges known to contain karst features or are considered to have such potential are shown in bold italic text

01. Bishkek.

As the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek is a relatively new and pleasant city with less than a hundred years history. It is refreshingly green and is currently undergoing a vigorous process of replacing most of its old Soviet buildings. Whilst it can be shown that the city's area was inhabited 7,000 years ago and the great 'Silk Road' passed nearby virtually all evidence was destroyed by the Mongols in the 13th century and again by the Tsarist Russians. The only notable site in the region is what remains of the 10th century city of Balasagun.

This was destroyed in the usual manner, but the old minaret has been partially rebuilt and there are various interesting petroglyphs nearby.

The 4,875m high peak of ‘Alamüdün Chokusu’ can be seen to the city’s south where there is also skiing and several attractive valleys. The latter were still well covered in snow on our visit of early May. To the north it is just 25km to the Kazakhstan border. From conversations with local people, we do not believe that caves or karst are to be found nearby.

02. Jalalabad Central.

Whilst travelling south from Bishkek the first areas of notable limestone to be encountered are the **Isfan-Jailoo** and **Babash-Ata** ranges just beyond Toktogul Reservoir. At the north-western corner of **Isfan-Jailoo** spectacular and seemingly impenetrable Carboniferous limestone cliffs cascade down to meet the M41 road just before the town of Karakul. Access to the mountain’s interior at this point looks particularly difficult and is probably only possible with aid from a local guide. Various geologists and speleologists have however made such visits and returned noting widespread karst features including depressions, dolines, sinks, springs and caves. The longest explored of the latter is ‘Khakasska’ at 360m but the potential for greater finds is thought to be considerable.

Babash-Ata, which attains a respectable height of 4,427m is situated slightly further south and is even more difficult to reach from the road. Once more reports have been made by various surveyors showing high level doline fields, sinkholes, canyons and caves up to 150m in length. The south-eastern slopes of this massif were also investigated in 2017 by an International Expedition using the very attractive and accessible hill village of Arslanbob as a base. Unfortunately, they eventually had to declare that they could see little sign of any karst processes other than three short caves. (*Speleozistan 2017*). It is the north-western slopes and plateaus that would seem to be the more speleologically promising.

Arslanbob’s main claim to fame is that it sits on the edge of Earth’s largest wild walnut forest (*Juglans regia*) covering over 11,000 hectares. Many of the protected trees are magnificent gnarled specimens up to a thousand years of age that still produce nuts! Also mixed in with the walnuts are a considerable number of other fruit and nut trees such as almonds, pistachio, apples and peaches. The village is also an excellent base for walking, trekking and horse riding with many tracks leading to waterfalls and amazing mountain vistas as well as into peaceful green valleys. The ever present **Babash-Ata** mountain translates as ‘Father of the Garden’.

By continuing a further 70km southwards a minor hill road leads north-westwards to the attractive village of Arkyt. This is the start for any visit into one of Kyrgyzstan’s greatest natural wonders, the 23,900 hectares ‘Sary-Chelek National Biosphere Reserve’



Protected within this area are mountains up to 3,054m; verdant forests; flower rich alpine meadows; the stunning 234m deep Sary-Chelek Lake; crystal clear streams; rapids; over 1,000 different species of plant life that includes at least three different Tulip species; 160 birds; an unknown number of reptiles and insects plus 34 mammals with pride of place going to the Brown Bear – *Ursus arctos isabellinus* and elusive Snow Leopard – *Panthera uncia*. In other words – an earthly paradise!



Tulipa anadroma

Further still to the west and unvisited by us are the remote, wild and reputedly ‘breath-taking’ **Chatkal Ridge** and **Sandalash** ranges. Extensive areas of these massifs are known to be composed of Carboniferous limestone. **Sandalash** reaches an altitude of 3,392m and the longer **Chatkal Ridge** passes 4,000m at several points. Sinkholes, dolines, springs and small caves up to 96m in length have been reported by local people as well as geological surveyors. Caves and karst of both epigean and hydrothermal processes are anticipated.

The small but interesting limestone massif known as **Buzboo-Too** is situated part way along the road between the M41 and Kerben city. This has been little explored, but the 2017 *Speleożistan Expedition* did make a short visit here recording ‘Balustan-Ata’, a large rock shelter with a small spring regarded as a place of pilgrimage together with the 19m long ‘Makatilla’ cave. The Expedition reported no further signs of any karst processes in their short stay. However local people do report other springs around the massif’s base and an Israeli 2018 Expedition noted various karstic features of hypogene origin.

03. Osh.

The city of Osh is claimed to date back some 3,000 years although little of this now remains. As has been normal throughout Central Asia much was destroyed by Mongol invaders of the 13th century AD followed by others of like mind. Apart from the very friendly local people the probable highlight is the large and vibrant Jayma Bazaar where almost anything may be obtained. Also, within the city and directly overlooking its very centre is **Suleimans-Too**



This is the last limestone hill of the short but craggy **Chil-Mayran range**. It contains several caves most of which may be easily visited. The longest of these is 'Chilton Horud' that boasts three entrances and 50m of passage. Not unnaturally this hill is considered sacred and has been a place of pilgrimage for Muslim peoples over many centuries. Access is open to all for a small charge but respect for its history is also appreciated. There is an interesting 'Silk Road Museum' part way along the main path. This attractively exhibits various local artefacts and documents the regional history within an enlarged natural cave.

Just 20km to the west of Osh lays the settlement of Aravan and the attractive **Osh Mountains**. These again are limestone where several caves extending for over 100m are known. Perhaps the largest and most interesting is 'Chil-Ustan' with a length that just exceeds 380m. Entry is gained through an imposing 15m high and 20m wide entrance situated high on a cliff face. The system is basically comprised of three large chambers connected by small passageways with the end chamber measuring an impressive 85m x 40m x 20m. This latter cavern contains a sparkling array of interesting formations and as well as hosting a colony of *Rhinolophid* bats. Five other species of bats have also been noted within the vicinity of Chil-Ustan (*Dundarova*). It should be noted that it can take almost 2 hours to reach the cave which is up a wide but continuously steep gully where ropes may also be needed!

On the opposite side of the Aravan River and close to Aravan itself it is possible to see some 1st century BC petroglyphs known as the 'Celestial Horses of Aravan'. These have been carved onto a limestone rock face adjacent to a small freshwater spring. The area is again considered sacred. There are more and probably better horse petroglyphs on **Ayrumach-Too** just 10km north-west of Osh. These fully confirm the high esteem that horses once had to ancient peoples some 2,000 years ago.

Just within the Osh region and the first cave that we visited is the 180m long 'Onyx Cave'. This requires a guide to find but the complex route is well rewarded with expansive scenery and reasonable displays of cave coral and flowstone.

Some 40km south-west of the Dangi canyon and very close to the Batkan border most of the Abshir River emerges from a large perennial resurgence known as 'Abshir-Ata'

This is situated some 20m up a vertical rock face with an open passage length of only a few metres. It is an impressive site and as such has attracted ancillary food and market stalls. Several other short caves and shelters, some of quite reasonable proportions, may also be seen in the vicinity whilst the further reaches of the valley are particularly beautiful and are protected as a local 'Nature Reserve'.



Finally, 80km to the north-east of Osh there is a gypsum karst region on the southern slopes of the **Ozgon-Too** range. The stream cave 'Kara-Unker' which is estimated to be 250m in length has been recorded here.

04. Tuya-Muyun.

Tuya-Muyun is probably the most intensively studied area of karst within Central Asia. This is due to its proximity to the large city of Osh; its scientifically interesting hydrothermal speleogenesis and its associated mineralogy. Most notable of the latter are copper, radium and uranium deposits. The former was mined in the middle ages by the Chinese whilst radium and uranium were extracted during the 20th century. These latter deposits, now exhausted, were mainly exploited from the combined 4,130m long ‘Fersman Cave and Mine System’ (*Pecheniuk & Bortsov.*). In the 1950s it was uranium from this mine that was used in the Soviet Union’s first nuclear bomb (*Doran*).

The relatively small and very accessible **Tuya-Muyun** mountain range is situated about 30km to the south-west of Osh. It is a region of rolling hills and open natural beauty containing not only many caves but also the spectacular Dangi Canyon through which the Aravan River flows. Some of the caves may be seen along the walls of this canyon whilst others are found on the massif above in an area measuring roughly 2,500m x 250m.

Because of their reputed hydrothermal origin, the caves generally have small, or mined, surface entrances that in turn lead to larger more interesting passageways. At least eight of these are known to exceed 100m in length with many being adorned with crystals of calcite, barites and other interesting minerals. Unfortunately, this ease of access has resulted in considerable visitor damage to the formations.



Our own investigations took us to the more horizontal sections of ‘Fersman 1’ and ‘Fersman 2’ together with the stream filled kilometre long ‘Fersman Adit’. We then finished our explorations with the badly damaged but still impressively crystallised ‘Bolshoi Baritova Cave’. Access to other caves in the canyon were prevented by a high river level.

‘Azhidar-Unker’, ‘Fersman’ and ‘Baritova’ caves are known to host various bat species that include Blyth’s Horseshoe Bat - *Rhinolophus lepidus*), Greater Horseshoe Bat - *Rhinolophus ferumequinum*, Lesser Mouse-eared Bat - *Myotis blythii* and Geoffroy’s Bat - *Myotis emarginatus*. (*Dundarova*).

05. Batkan.

Batkan Oblast extends westwards towards Tajikistan. It is bounded in the south by the 5,000m high Turkestan Range and in the north by much lower hills bordering northern Tajikistan.

There are many areas of little explored limestone here but the most promising would seem to be **a.** the **Andygen-Too** mountains where several caves, some hydrothermal and some epigeal, are already known together with dolines and other karst features; **b.** the area of the **Madygen** Canyons to the north-west of **Andygen-Too** within whose spectacular gorges various large entrances have been reported but not explored and **c.** the eastern end of the **Tartabuz** range some 20km to the west of Samarkandik. This latter region has been reasonably well documented and is home to the notorious 'Kan-i-Gut' cave and mine as well as several other lesser systems, dolines and springs.

'Kan-i-Gut'* is a complex limestone cave of hydrothermal origin containing mined and natural passageways, shafts and chambers. No high-grade survey has yet been made of the system due to the complexity of several three-dimensional labyrinths. Varying lengths have been quoted up to a much exaggerated 300km! However, following several recent expeditions, the cave is now considered to extend for an unfinished 6km with a depth of around 150m. Several very large caverns are to be found in the system with the two greatest measuring 68m x 29m x 80m and 43m x 49m x 19m respectively.

A small number of the Asian Barbastella Bats - *Barbastella capsica* syn. *leucomelas* bats are known to have a rather insecure home close to the main cave entrance (*Dundarova.*).

The cave was first noted in the 6th century AD when mining of lead and ironstone commenced to be followed later by silver. Underground archaeological finds have been made that include ancient clay miner's lamps, clay bowls for holding mercury and old copper coins. Equally ancient inscriptions have been recorded on several passageway walls. Associated surface furnaces dating back many hundreds of years have also been unearthed nearby. More recently the cave became renowned for its many unusual forms of gypsum crystals, aragonite, barites and calcite that once decorated the passageways. Most of these have regrettably now been badly damaged or even destroyed.

According to local legends the name 'Kan-i-Gut', variously known as 'Mine of Death', 'Mine of the Doomed' and 'Mine of Disappearance', originated in the mid-18th century. The then rather brutal regional ruler, a Khudayar Khan, would sentence criminals to enter the cave and if they returned without evidence of some treasure they would invariably be executed.

**For further information on the mining and mineral aspects of Kan-i-Gut see Filippov A.G. & Tsibanov V.V.*

06. Sari-Tash.

Although this is a small and remote village, it occupies a very important strategic position at the junction of four roads. To the north the M41 leads to Osh; southwards the same road continues into Tajikistan; eastwards the E007 crosses into China and onto the fabled city of Kashgar whilst westwards the A372 follows the broad Alay valley to a limited Tajikistan border crossing.

Sari-Tash has capitalised on its position by offering basic accommodation in several Homestays, some small cafes and the last service station before anywhere! Additionally, with an altitude of 3,163m it is ideal for acclimatisation and as a base for trekking in the foothills of the High Pamirs. Magnificent panoramic views of the latter can be had from almost any point.



An almost obligatory deviation from the village is to drive a short distance along the Alay Valley and then turn south to Lake Tulpar where superb views can be had of the 7,134m high Peak Lenin. This is also the way to the climber's base camp, but a permit is usually required and the views are no better. On the opposite side of the valley, above the village of Sari-Mogol there is an unsurveyed gypsum stream cave that is reputed to terminate in a deep lake. This appears on maps as 'Zindan Cave'.

06a. Border crossing.

It is a fact that most land border points are far more interesting than those met at International Airports. This crossing is no exception! The Kyrgyzstan Border Post is situated at a windswept 3,472m just a 40-minute bone-jarring drive from Sary-Tash. Passport Control is short and efficient so long as various sporting questions can first be answered. Baggage Checks are equally as efficient, and the complete process may be done in under 30 minutes. There now follows a further 40-minute 'roof of the world' drive through 'no man's land' adjacent to the Chinese border. The road just reaches 4,336m before descending to the few huts that make up the friendly Tajik Border Post at a rarefied atmosphere of 4,195m. Again, if the paperwork is correct and more sporting questions can be answered you will be in Tajikistan within 30 minutes. Should it be wet, as it was with us, then it may take a further 30 minutes and several strong men to pass through the quagmire that passes as a parking area.

07. Karakul.

From the Tajikistan border crossing to the small village of Karakul is a moderate 60km. On paper this does not seem far but given the road conditions, the 4,232m Uy Buloq Pass and the many stops to view some amazing scenery it can easily take up to 3 hours. Very basic accommodation is available at the village but there are several interesting places to justify a stopover. Most notable are a necropolis of 21 tombs dating back to before the third century BC and an area of extensive Saka geolypths. However, even without these, the number one destination is undoubtedly Lake Karakul itself.



Lake Karakul - 230m deep Roughly 25km across within a 45km diameter meteor impact crater

Lake Karakul is an endorheic* expanse of brackish water that partly fills one of Earth's largest meteor impact craters. This crater's rim is 45km in diameter and can unfortunately only be fully appreciated through satellite photographs. The lake is roughly circular, 25km across at its widest point and almost divided into two sections by an island and a long debris bank. The smaller eastern part is shallow and barely reaches 19m in depth whilst the larger western area plunges down to -230m! During bright weather the lake's appearance has an attractive turquoise colouring which blends perfectly with the surrounding snow-capped peaks. Without the sun it becomes distinctly black, gloomy and a possible place to avoid! A considerable number of interesting geese, ducks and small birds may normally be seen on the lake and within its vicinity. So far as is known only one fish, the Karakul Stone Loach - *Noemacheilus nigri*, manages to survive in the icy waters. The altitude of Lake Karakul is 3,960m with the village being just a few metres higher.

**endorheic – no stream flows from it.*

08. Rangkul.

Continuing southwards on the Pamir Highway and just 23km before reaching Murghab there is a turn-off to the east. This leads into the beautiful Rangkul Valley with its two lakes and surrounding mountains.



The first lake, known as Shor-kul, is shallow, brackish and has a variable measurement of 3kmx2.7km. The second, Rang-kul, is also shallow, freshwater and covers a variable 8kmx2.5km. Both extents of water are connected by the 4.5km long Izyuk channel. This double lake system is once more endorheic and is found at an altitude of 3,787m. There is also a limited alpine-marsh flora that includes Saltmarsh Flat-sedge - *Blysmus rufus*, Bristle Sedge - *Carex microglochin* and Few-flowered Spike-rush - *Eleocharis quinqueflora*. Interestingly these three members of the Cyperaceae also occur in the UK with only Bristle Sedge being a 'British Red Data' species.

The lakes are also a favoured resting place for birds possibly because of a surprisingly rich population of invertebrates, including amphipods, beetles and mosquito larvae. Additionally, just after daybreak, the rare Marco Polo Sheep – *Ovis ammon polii* can often be viewed drinking at the lakes. By mid-morning they may then be spotted along the ridges on their return to the inaccessible mountain tops.

The immediate limestone mountain to the south side of Rangkul Valley is the ***Chyrack-Tash*** massif with a maximum height of 4,776m. The eastern-most mountain of the range is named ***Silik-Tash*** and is home to 'Rangkulsкая', currently the deepest cave system yet explored in Tajikistan.



Various explorations by both Russian and Ukrainian speleologists have yielded an unfinished length and depth of 2,050m and 268m (-240m, +28m) respectively. This is a complex cave believed to be of hydrothermal origin and whose 3.5m high and 4m wide entrance was exposed by glacial erosion. (*F.P.E.C.*). This same glacial ice can still be found within parts of the cave.

In nearby Silik-Tash gorge various unexplored cave entrances have been noted that may also be associated with 'Rangulskaya'. If a connection could be made, then there is the potential for a 6-700m deep system. (F.P.E.C.).

Whilst driving along the Rangkul village road the cave valley can be seen at N37° 49' 68.1" E 74° 04' 92.4" altitude 3,957m. There is a small building between the road and the lake that aids positioning. By driving up this valley for 7-800m the obvious cave entry may be seen up a steep slope on the left. Before reaching this point on the road there is a much smaller, isolated and conical hill that houses many obvious caves. This is the Holy Mountain of **Kalek-Tash**.

NB. Mountain names quoted in this section are of phonetic origin as spoken to us by our local guides Rasul and Abdulmajid. They may be incorrectly spelt!

09. Murghab.

With a population of just under 4,000 and at an altitude of 3,618m Murghab is regional capital for the entire eastern Pamir (38,440km²). With its attractive situation in the shadow of the mountains it provides a welcome sanctuary from the rigours of travel. The town is also host to many good 'Homestays' and even boasts what is probably the only hotel in the entire Pamirs. This may only be '1 star' but the cramped 'en-suite' rooms really do feel like luxury!

Apart from the Rangkul Valley and its caves our next most interesting journey was to travel down the beautiful Aksu River Valley as far as the few houses that make up Madian village. From there the route follows the sensationally steep Madian Valley as far as an area of hot water springs. This was an exciting 4x4 journey with the springs proving doubly interesting as they appeared from both ground upwellings and fissures in the cliffs.

10. Alichur.

The main reason to visit the Alichur region is to trek amongst the beautiful high-altitude lakes of Yashi-kul, Bulun-kul, Tuz-kul and Sasi-kul. Each is shallow, slightly saline, turquoise blue in the sunshine and surrounded by 5,000m high snow-covered mountains. Bulunkul village itself lays claim to be the coldest place in Tajikistan. No caves are known but several can be seen in cliff faces whilst travelling along the road from Murghab to Alichur.

11. Wakhan Valley.

From shortly after Alichur the Pamir Highway continues westwards to Khorag. However, our route was to deviate southwards over the 4,344m high Khargush Pass, past the Military Check Point and on into the sensational Wakhan Valley

This is an area whose splendour must be seen to be believed! To the east is Afghanistan and the 6,320m peak of Koh-e-Pamir; to the south Afghanistan continues with the even mightier peaks of the Hindu Kush whilst to the north Tajikistan's own Shakhddara Range rears up to more 6,000m summits.

In the broad flat valley are cultivated fields and the Panj River that sparkles in the sunlight whilst meandering its westwards course. All is peace, unimaginable beauty, history and fascinating cultures.



Descending to the Wakhan Valley
and below,
the Yamchun Fortress

We spent 3 nights here, but a month would barely be long enough to do this paradise justice!

To prevent repetition readers should refer to the 2018 YRC Journal, pages 107 – 110 for more detail on this fascinating area.



12. Khodja Mumin.

This magnificent salt diapir was visited by us in 2018 and written up in the *YRC Journal for 2018*. These short notes add further detail to that account.

Just to the south of the new Salt Processing Factory there is a steep and rough 4x4 track that gives access to the speleological wonderland that is ‘North Plateau’. Once there the track winds its way around an abundance of enticing small and large dolines each of differing depths. Jagged walls of salt ribbed with razor sharp karren attempt to block further access upwards and variously shaped pinnacles stand out as wary sentinels. There are also several small springs, one of which emerges from a low cave. Between this very special karst phenomena lays a thin covering of grass, flowers and the odd small shrub. As an even greater attraction the abundant fiery red *Tulipa praestans* lights up the surroundings during springtime. Undoubtedly a very special place!

On our second day we successfully manage to circumnavigate the Hodja Mumin diapir at base level. This was an exceptional experience covering almost 40km and taking around 6 hours with many stops. At no point was the diapir uninteresting. There were salt springs, salt streams, great karren covered salt cliffs, a few obvious looking caves, salt pinnacles topped by gypsum caps (mushrooms) and a considerable amount of wildlife



Hodja Mumin Salt Works



Salt Pinacle Karst



Extreme Karren

The wildlife included a Long-legged Buzzard – *Buteo rufinus* which carried off a large snake before our eyes. During our circumnavigation we did manage to confirm that only two tracks give vehicular access to the upper surface of the diapir although there are several minor paths that are used by shepherds and others.



Salt Mushrooms with gypsum caps



Long-legged Buzzard

13. Surkh Doline Plateau.

The relatively small Surkh Range of mountains commences just to the north of Norak city and ends close to the Spa of Ob-I Garm. It is bordered to the west by the Pamir Highway (M41) and east by the Vakhsh river. The range has had no speleological research, but local geologists have reported a 25km by 1km plateau that hosts numerous small and large dolines up to 40m in diameter.

These dolines frequently break through the surface soil, through a bed of gypsum and into the obvious Cretaceous limestone below. They may be noted on 'Google Earth' centred at N 38° 34' 49.60" E 69° 32' 36.7" altitude 2,756m.

On our last day in very overcast weather we decided to attempt to reach this plateau. Luckily, we had previously met *Kayumarsi Mahmadvkharim* who was at Dushanbe University and whose PhD thesis revolved around this region. He readily agreed to act as our guide. The initial hills off the M41 are gently rolling and populated by a small but very traditional farming community. Access to the higher levels of the range is complex and requires a good 4x4 vehicle with high clearance and a driver capable of crossing some very rough streams. After considerable effort we did eventually manage to make visual contact with the plateau from about 700m away but, due to the onset of rain, it was then considered prudent to make a retreat before being cut off by rising river waters.

Kayumarsi informed us that because of the mountains unique geological character a proposal had been put forward to the government for special protection as a 'National Geo-Park'. We also read reports that cavers from the F.P.E.C. were hoping to investigate the plateau in the autumn of 2019. It will be very interesting to learn how they progressed. We only wish that we had made it first!

Logistics & Acknowledgements.

Due to the considerable number of special sites that we wished to visit in 2019 it was necessary for us to make even greater use of local assistance than had been normal. Equally it is now necessary, without apology, to create an even longer list of acknowledgements.

In **Kyrgyzstan** the logistics of our trip were efficiently handled by *Ulan Emek* and *Olga Bondareva* of Kyrgyz Journeys. *Stas Oleinkov* was our tough, fit, and knowledgeable guide who became a good friend whilst *Maxim Kuptsov* proved to be a capable driver who drove us 'to the ends of the earth'. The delightful *Lada* was our special guide around Osh whilst *Danya* was co-opted to help find the caves. Thank you all.

In **Tajikistan** *Faridun Khamroev* of Panjakent Tours capably handled our logistics for the second year; *Borbad Bobomalloer* was our energetic guide who taught us a lot and even learnt a little himself; *Firuz*, as in 2018, was our adventurous but ever safe driver; *Rasul* patiently found Rangulskaya and the Madian Hot Springs; *Mirzo* guided us during our Hodja Mumin adventures with a little help from *Abdolshukov* and finally *Kayumarsi Mahmadvkarim* who attempted to take us into the beautiful Surkh Range. Thank you all.

We must also express our appreciation to the considerable number of local people that we encountered. We were always welcomed as friends; we were humbled by the local hospitality and our trip would have meant little had we not also met and learnt from them!

Back home in the UK Dr Tony Waltham kindly allowed us to use several of his karst terminology definitions whilst Alexander Klimchouk confirmed for us certain cave statistics within the Hodja Mumin salt diaper. Thank you both.

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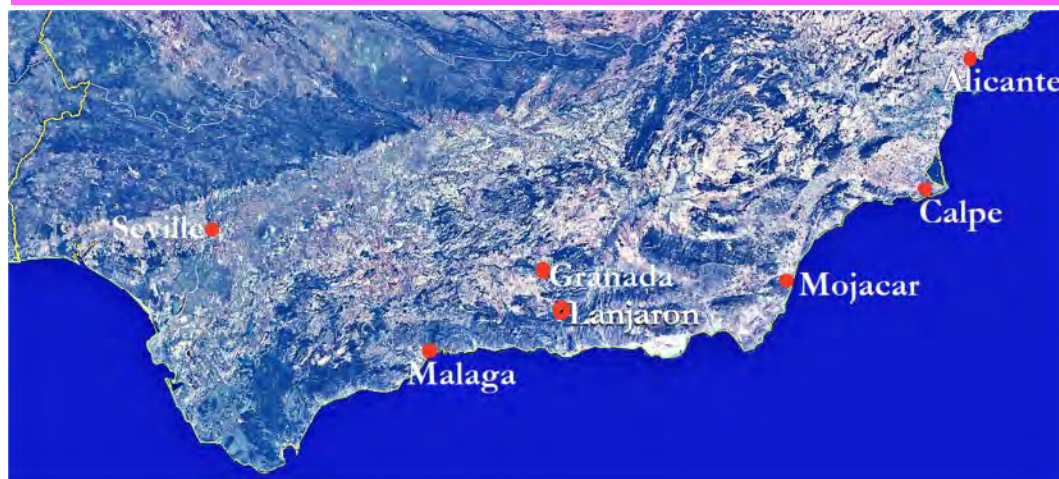
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**Overseas
Meet**

**Lanjaron,
Sierra Nevada, Spain**

**March
2 - 9**



Anyone flying into Malaga airport in Southern Spain in the spring can scarcely avoid noticing the snow-capped bulk of the Sierra Nevada looming over Granada, topped by Mulhacén, mainland Spain's highest peak at 3479m. With hill-walking in the Alpujarras (the Sierra Nevada's southern slopes) and the Cumbre Verde hills to the west, together with winter mountaineering, climbing, skiing and snowshoeing available, it proved to be an attractive venue for a winter/spring meet.

Despite two having to dropout at the last minute, 29 members and guests assembled at the Hotel España in the sleepy spa town of Lanjarón (called the gateway to the Alpujarras) at the start of a very enjoyable week. This 1907-built 2-star hotel was excellent value considering the group rate we secured - clean and comfortable, with central heating that worked (except in the dining room). The staff were warmly friendly and made us feel welcome, especially in the bar.

Saturday 2nd

Mick and Hilary had arrived on the Friday and did a pleasant walk from Busquistar in the Alpujarras, exploring some of the Carrigüelas - medieval Arabic mule tracks. Kjetil and Ann-Karin also arrived the previous day, after a marathon drive from the French side of the Pyrenees. They did the Sendero Forestal - Peñuela, one of the walks above Lanjarón.

Sunday 3rd

Mick and Hilary walked up the Bosca de Pesca (1464m) in the Cumbre Verde hills. Set back from the Sierra Nevada, it is a splendid viewpoint oriented towards the north-western slopes which were still holding snow and the nearer limestone peaks surrounding the wild Dilar valley.

Looking for a good but not too demanding first day, a 'four-hour' route was selected from suggested routes that came with a map. It took in the Rio Chico and Pico de las Alegas, 2703m. The initial three deciding on this soon ballooned to eleven and the convoy made a hesitant start to the Puente Palo picnic area at about 1760m. Forest tracks wound up through the pines before a traverse rightwards awkwardly crossed a wire fence then continued to cross the Rio Chico. The slope above was steep and a faint zig-zagging path was obscured in places by snow banks and pines. These obstacles split the party: some heading straight up to the main broad summit ridge heading north and others with GPS, passing the ruins of Refugio Forestal del Cebollar on the west flank of the peak. All met at the summit where Richard Smith and Kjetil decided on making a circuit of Chico's headwaters crossing large snowfields to Pico del Tajo de los Machos (The Men's Craggy Peak), 3085m, then a couple of slightly lower bumps on the way south for a long 1,200m descent off the end of the ridge in failing light. Meanwhile the remainder descended via the ruined refugio using the ascent route. Several Spanish ibex were spotted on the round.

Refugio
Cebollar



Chris and Ian were unable to locate Vivero Helechores en route - not as it turns out a building, but a plantation marked on their map. Undaunted they took a bold diversion through a previously uncharted forest clearing (known hence forth as the Hawkes - Hilton Gap), crossing the Rio Chico to gain the lower slopes of Picos Alegas. As they approached the summit their hearts were racing. As Richard Smith later informed them, at 2700m, atmospheric oxygen is down from 21% to 14%, so being out of breath was not surprising then! From the rocks along the western edge of the Pico Allegas, they descended via the rather stark Refugio Cebollar and back into pine forests to retrace their outward steps. John and Ros went for a walk around the countryside surrounding Lanjarón. Some of the walking was quite steep but with great views. Ros soaked her feet in a lovely fast flowing acequia (irrigation leat) to cool off.

They finished off with a visit to Lanjarón castle, now ruined and watched the crag martins catching flies in the valley against the cliffs. Many butterflies were seen, the swallow tails were particularly exciting.

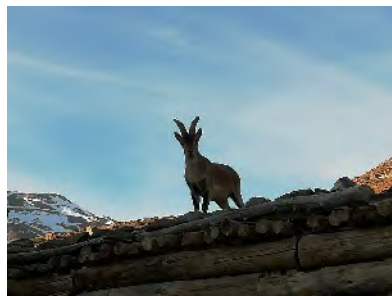
Monday 4th

With a poor mountain weather forecast for the original booking at the Refugio Poqueira, we were fortunate to be able to bring it forward a couple of days for the Mulhacén ascent. The unseasonal warm spell enjoyed in the UK in February had also ablated most of the snow below 2700m on the south side of the Sierra Nevada. As a result, a party of sixteen was able to start the walk-in to the hut from the top of a long dirt track at 2600m reached by car from Capileira. Following a picnic at the Hoya de Portillo car park, some 3-4 hours later they were all relaxing on the hut terrace with a beer, talking to a group of Brit climbers from the West Country about conditions on the hill.



Rehydrating
at the
Refugio

A small herd of cabra montés (Spanish ibex) were photographed near the hut before all came back in for the guardian's excellent four course dinner.



The Refugio Poqueira can be strongly recommended.



Whilst Ros took off for the excitement of Malaga with Hilary and Gail, John took Paul, Alan and Angie up to Hoya del Portillo, where they had lunch with those going higher, then Paul and John walked to the Mirador with lovely views over towards the Veleta and Mulhacén ridge. From here they walked over the ridge of Loma de Piedra Blanca (2623m) and also saw some ibex.

Tuesday 5th

After a varied and plentiful breakfast, the party set off up the valley beside the infant Mulhacén River, dodging or enjoying long snow tongues as necessary to reach the foot of the west ridge, close to the Refugio Vivac de la Caldera shelter.

Ian became excited (and distracted from the climb ahead), when beside the Rio Mulhacén, Mike discovered garnets in metamorphic rocks, on what were once pre-Alpine sea floor sediments.

Crampons were used by some, axes by others and all eventually reached the summit trig pillar, which was surprisingly sheltered.

After photos and a quick lunch, the party descended Mulhacén's south ridge in a biting icy wind and gratefully dropped back down to the hut to collect sleeping bags and other kit left behind.

Taking a short cut down a snow slope two members descended rather more rapidly than they originally had intended.

After suitable refreshments, they descended to the Acequia Alta and followed the sinuous water source back to the cars and just about got back to the hotel in time for a swordfish dinner.



Alan Palmer and John went for a walk to the north of Lanjarón following a rushing acequia which took them to the Rio de Lanjarón and a small area with some buildings showing the local building technique, which was of interest to Alan. Knowing they had to cross the river somewhere, they made their way along the marked PRA-34 route to the river down through 15m cliffs and followed another acequia to the town. The butterflies were wonderful and to be able to walk through the ancient sweet chestnut forest, with some of the trees at least 400 years old was a delight.



John Brown
beside an
acequia

Wednesday 6th

With cloud and rain in the mountains, Mick, Hilary and Ian opted for a shortish walk around the springs above Lanjarón along the Sendero Acequia Aceituno - Cecarta, followed by a fish lunch at the coast with Nick.

The Chadwicks/Taylors elected to play tourist and visit some of the villages they had raced through en route to Mulhacén. Pampaneira and Bubion were enjoyed in an increasing wind finishing up at Trevezlez (at 1476m, the highest village in Continental Spain) where they opted for an out of the way restaurant. After the order had been taken and the lady of the house had confirmed that they really did want to sit outside they were surprised to be approached by someone who was believed to be the waiter but turned out to be Chris Hilton! All were disappointed with the village architecture which seemed to comprise numerous square buildings, until it was realised that that is where all the Alpujarras jamón serrano – cured ham, is hung in the dry wind to mature.

Deciding to have a day sightseeing John and Ros set off for Granada, hopefully to visit the Alhambra. It was not until they tried to buy the tickets that they found passports were needed to gain entry! As they did not have them, they drove up to the ski resort at Pradollano. They felt strange to be in the snow watching the skiers. After a good lunch and just as the weather closed in, they made their way back to Lanjarón.

Three made a morning's visit to Lanjaron crag which is above the western end of Lanjarón.

The unattractive approach is through an overgrown dumping ground but the rock itself is good, and the crag adequately bolted. Richard S climbed three 4c sport routes; Piolina, Ajos Bastantes and Medios Dias with Tim and Michael repeating or top roping them.



The second one was considered much more difficult, so they could have been on El Poeta, 6a. Further to the left, around a corner, Richard climbed a route which might have been Erik el Indino 5a or El Medico Pintura 6a or parts of both.

The PR345 Sendero Circular de Lanjarón's 6 mile / 9.5km, 650m ascent well-devised route attracted two parties and was explored by others during the week. It took in the Moorish castle, cobbled mule trails, hermita, crags, river, aqueducts, ornamental gardens and olive groves.

Richard and Michael spotted a fox while they sheltered under an overhang waiting for a shower to pass.

Thursday 7th

The sunny weather fortuitously returned, and a large party headed over to the Cumbre Verde hills to climb the shapely Cerro del Trevenque (2079m) by its western ridge, topped with some mild scrambling



On the subsequent descent through the forest, several nose-to-tail chains of fully-grown pine processionary moth caterpillars were observed on the move, the largest, having some 59 members, extended to about 1.25m in length as they followed each other's pheromone trail to find suitable pupation sites in the ground.



This attractive area was visited again the following day by three who had missed out the day before.

John and Ros drove to La Zubia and walked up into the Cumbres Verdes, through the warm pine woods along a dry valley which gave commanding views over Granada and was a very pleasant days walk. #

Meanwhile a party of five young and young at heart (three Richards, Billy and Ethan) decided that the Sierra Nevada ski slopes required a review. Despite an 0700 reveille, all were up on time and at the slopes before the lifts opened. Once they had found the quieter back and less icy slopes, a very enjoyable day was spent with much less expenditure of energy than is likely to be the case on the forthcoming Norway cross country skiing expedition.

Friday 8th

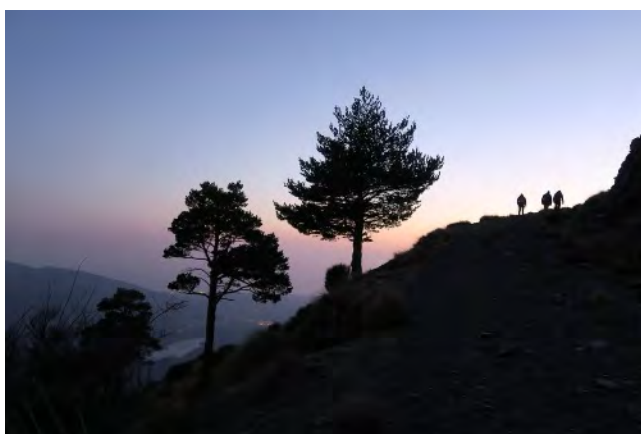
Chris drove Mick, Ian and Alan Palmer for an hour up a dirt track to the roadhead beneath the old Refugio Ventura and set off to climb the Cerro de Caballo (3005m), Europe's most southerly 3000m peak, an outing of some 22.5km, 1280m ascent.



Following experiences earlier in the week, they didn't bother with axes and crampons and picked their way across the Loma de Lanjarón, trying to follow a thin path that kept disappearing under snowfields of variable delicacy. Under increasing cloud which largely deprived them of good views, they arrived at the summit pillar by two separate routes.

They descended rapidly and eventually reached the main Ventura path, helped by GPS, and enjoyed one of Chris's rallying descents in the car to scrape in just before the dinner gong.

Late return from
Cerro del Caballo



On the opposite side of the A-44 motorway from Lanjarón lies the Embalse de Baznar in the Lecrín valley with the traditional villages of Restábal and Melegis on the hillside above. Rounds of these three provided outings for several members. Wildlife sightings and bar/café visits provided additional amusement when following the waymarked trails which were typically several kilometres long with a few hundred metres of ascent.

The Taylors/Chadwicks felt more culture was in order and celebrated their victory over the on-line Alhambra booking system with an interesting but mentally exhausting visit to the Generalife Gardens and the Palace. They finished off the day in true YRC style by taking afternoon tea and cakes on the terrace of the 5-star Alhambra Palace Hotel. Richard wisely volunteered to retrieve the car whilst Peter settled the bill.

For their final full day John and Ros spent time walking and driving around the Embalse de Beznar reservoir. As they looked over the dam, they saw at least 50 brown trout turning lazily in the water. They stopped to take in some of the villages en route. In Restabal they walked down through the narrow streets to the water's edge. At Talara, they sampled coffee and the best cakes ever seen, all home-made. Whilst walking at Beznar, the next village, they were able to sit and watch a stoat hunting. There were also orchids growing here, a very pleasant place.

Saturday 9th

Most people travelled back to Malaga for their various flights home, some stopping for lunch on the beach at Nerja. Mick and Hilary drove over to the Sierra de Grazalema on the far side of Ronda for another week exploring the sunny limestone countryside and raptor spotting.

Mick Borroff

Attendees:

Mick Borroff (leader)	Gail Taylor (G)
John Brown	Richard Taylor
Ros Brown (G)	Hilary Tearle (G)
Ann Chadwick (G)	Ann-Karin Tveranger (G)
Peter Chadwick	Kjetil Tveranger
Ethan Dover (G)	Nick Welch
Paul Dover	
Richard Dover	
Ian Hawkes	
David Hick	
Chris Hilton	
Tim Josephy	
Angie Linford (G)	
Alan Linford	
Christine Marriott (G)	
Dave Martindale	
Alan Palmer (PM)	
Tony Penny	
Val Penny	
Billy Sarakan (G)	
Helen Smith	
Michael Smith	
Richard Smith	



Note from Alan Linford

The area offered ample local walks and access to three National Parks, ideal for those in the Club with lower horizons but who still enjoy being on meets. Coolidge, in early YRC letters, would deny the title 'mountaineer to rock scramblers' - what title for those members who simply enjoy all that a club meet has to offer? Tourists maybe...

On Day 1 we had an early flight and took a taxi from the airport to Lanjarón, organised by Spanish Highs who were most helpful, giving us all afternoon to find the best bars and more importantly the starts to all the walks, helped by some pdf downloads.

Nearby were the Parque del Salado and the Paseo de Castillo which led to Lanjarón Castle, an after-lunch walk for some but a mountain for Dave Martindale. The National Parks provide well-maintained paths and we were just in time to see the orange trees in fruit and blossom.

Val's Birds List

Greenfinch	Black Redstart
Long-Tailed Tit	Shoveller
Black Wheatear	Coot
Red Billed Cough	Spanish Sparrow
Blackcap	Great Tit
Raven	Stonechat
Little Grebe	Swift
Marsh Harrier	Spotted
Wren	Woodpecker
Chaffinch	Jackdaw
Blue Tit	Great Crested
Alpine Accentor	Grebe
Cormorant	Moorhen
Kestrel	Thekla Lark
Robin	
Mallard	
Chiffchaff	
Goldfinch	
Coal Tit	
Golden Eagle	
Green Woodpecker	

Val's Butterflies List

Common Blue
Green Hairstreak
Red Admiral
Small White
Large Tortoiseshell
Brimstone
Silver-Studded Blue?
Swallowtail
Peacock
Bath White?
Small Tortoiseshell
Long-Tailed Blue
Scarce Swallowtail
Painted Lady
Speckled Wood
Spotted Fritillary
Small Copper
Spanish Festoon
Large White
Moroccan Orange Tip
Cleopatra

Probably due to being just one week after the Easter weekend, the Spring LHG meet was attended by a select band of members and one prospective member.

Friday afternoon saw Team Humphreys clock up a tour de Tilberthwaite, via the newly repaired track previously frequented by the 4x4 crowd, the repair of the bathroom light and the rehanging of the oven door. Team Smith (this time a one-man band) arrived late afternoon via a wet Long Sleddale and Kentmere Pike, in time to celebrate the day's achievements with beer, soup and rolls whilst devising an initial plan for the rest of the weekend. Team Salmon arrived at a much later hour after a seamless journey from Leeds and a faultless West Coast mainline service from London. Another round of soup, rolls and of course, beer, completed the arrival protocols and bed beckoned at a civilised hour.

Saturday morning dawned full of promise with broken cloud permitting intermittent sunshine. Of course, promises can be broken so plans were made to accommodate whatever the day chose to throw at us. Taking the adage "an army marches on its stomach" as her guide, the meet leader provided breakfast of cereal, toast and a full cooked to fortify the crew for the day's activity. The advanced party of Salmons and Smith departed for the Three Shires Stone intent on the Crinkle Crag while Humphreys x2 completed the domestic operations. JHH set out for Wasdale on commercial business after dropping RCH to intercept the early trio somewhere in the vicinity of the Three Shires Stone, said stone being absent for repairs. Departure was slightly delayed by one almighty traffic jam on

the LHG track as two vehicles attempted to reach the ford only to find four Langdale Ambleside MRT vehicles heading up the track to Cathedral Cavern (mercifully, a training exercise). With much reversing, bleeping, disgorging of personnel and parking up, order was restored and Team Humphreys flew up Wrynose to meet the advance party with perfect timing.

JHH disappeared off to Wasdale to talk Scafell Souvenirs, whilst the trekking quartet struck out for Crinkle Crag via the Difficult Step, suggested by Arthur Salmon. By now, the sun was playing more hide and seek before the drizzle took over, rapidly becoming rain showers of some force. The showers came and went, the cloud rose and fell, and views tantalised with hints of sun in the valley.

Although, when we reached it, the difficult step was damp, it was crested with less difficulty than it's name suggested. Had we been but five minutes later we might have had more entertainment as a distinctly menacing squall of soft hail struck.



Mercifully we were safely located in a well-protected rest spot, tucking into coffee and morning nibbles. This was far more comfortable than the two chaps we encountered shortly after who had stopped on the col, fully exposed to the incoming precipitation. Some assistance with navigation was given, a promise made to look out for them at the ODG and a we wished them a cheery good day as we headed on towards the Three Tarns. Our party was concerned by their apparent lack of basic kit but hoped that Lady Luck might look kindly upon them.

Having reached the tarns and established that some feet were starting to register an excess of dampness, that some over-trousers were suffering from a small but annoying design fault and that the ODG remained untrodden ground for one of the party, it was decided to descend via The Band for some appropriate refreshment in the hallowed hostelry. A young German chap was heading up, fully loaded for a night wild camping on the tops. He gave a much greater sense of preparedness for the conditions than those we had previously encountered.

It being April, the farm was in full lambing mode with various stock movements going on, with and without canine assistance.

RCH headed off to get the first round in, while the remaining trio were given an impromptu farm tour by the nine year old lad who was keen and proud to show off their operation. Eventually, all were reunited at the ODG including the chaps we met earlier. Having delivered a sales pitch for LHG to one group in need of more substantial accommodation than their tents and slightly soggy sleeping bags were likely to offer that night, we struck out on the final leg of the day, back over Blea Tarn to LHG.

B Salmon, having been eyeing up all available options during the day opted for a wild swim in Blea Tarn (no wetsuit required!) while meet leader cracked on to ensure supper was ready for all in good time.

Team Whalley had arrived that afternoon, so the party was complete. Tea and cake were on the table for everyone's return and the drying room pressed into action to handle the day's kit – once the dehumidifier had been recovered from underneath a wood pile. Although the chicken curry had spoiled somewhat, supper was completed by several rounds of pancakes with lemon and sugar/maple syrup. Smith was chief tosser and no losses were sustained. Plenty of beer and wine flowed and all succumbed to deep slumbers

Sunday hinted at a better day weather wise so after a repeat of the breakfast offering of Saturday, JHH departed for southern lands and the intrepid sextet ventured forth to Wetherlam via Wet Edge, Great Carrs and Swirl Hows. Wet Edge was deemed a slog although it was interesting to try and identify from a lofty view point where the hydro electric scheme had been inserted into Greenburn Mines. It won't be long before there is very little sign at all. Smith spotted a Ring Ouzel, an unusual find in this area. The closer we got to the tops, the greater the population density became, probably as the weather was far more conducive to a day's hiking than 24hrs before.

Having traversed the Prison Band (unable to explain its name), we crested Wetherlam, meeting a group familiar with LHG and most complimentary of its facilities and location, before striking out for the top of the Tilberthwaite track and our return to base. Time was starting to play a role in decision making as trains needed to be caught and so a degree of rapid descending was required.

The route has been named “Directissimo” as a result. A fair degree of scrambling was required; there appeared to be some fairly recent rock fall on the upper section which had redesigned the path somewhat. Smith had received a missive from home requiring rapid attention and had set off ahead of us from Swirl Hows. According to later reports, he may have found the better option off the lower reaches.

More tea and cake on our return replenished energies before the Salmons raced off to rejoin the West Coast Line at Windermere and the Whalleys hit the road to return home.

Hut tidying completed I stayed one more night before departing Monday morning at a ridiculously early hour to complete the weekend’s activities.

Rebecca Humphreys

Attendees:

Rebecca Humphreys (Leader)
Jason Humphreys
Michael Smith
Arthur Salmon
Barbara Salmon (P M)
Carole Whalley
John Whalley



Greenburn Bridge



Wetherlam



Saturday 11th - The party assembled at what turned out to be a very comfortable and well-appointed converted cottage in Elphin, in the Assynt region of NW Scotland. On the way, Mick got up very early to get to Dalwhinnie, and climbed Geal-Charn and Carn Dearg from Loch Pattack, enjoying 3 hours of steady snowfall. Ben and Little Wyvis were ascended by other members en route. The day was cool and windy with a few snow-flurries on these tops, but the weather was clearly improving, and in the evening we had good views from the hut across to Suilven. There were still significant snow patches high on the hills, but these disappeared over the next few days. After a gourmet supper (thanks, Bob), the party retired, mostly in the hut, but it was agreed that to preserve discipline and morale the president should have separate quarters, so he pitched a tent round the back.



Sunday 12th We awoke to sunshine which basically continued all week. Various parties went off to ascend Cul Mor (Helen, Michael, Bob, Rory), to climb Glas Bheinn (Mick and Richard), to visit the Eas Coul Aulinn waterfall (Britain's highest), and to traverse Ben Mor Coigach (Chris).

All parties had magnificent panoramic views and there was general agreement later that with good weather in late spring, NW Scotland is as fine as any landscape anywhere on the planet. As an added bonus, dry weather meant that the going on the hills was generally excellent.



Towards Suilven West Summit

Later Bob cooked for us again (everyone else catered one night), and before doing so CLEANED THE OVEN! – so he definitely gets the hero of the week accolade.

After supper, plans were made for early starts tomorrow.

Monday 13th A Smith party plus Richard and Chris wanted to traverse Suilven W to E, so a car was left at the east end, just N of Elphin, and the party were dropped off at Glencanisp Lodge; they had an excellent but long and tiring day, visiting all the tops.

Meanwhile Mick and Bob went off to bag the Munros of Sgurr Ban, Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair and Beinn Tarsuinn (Mick had only 19 left to do at the beginning of the week, and had clearly got to the “wee bit single-minded” stage of Munro collection.



Chris, Richard and Helen, Suilven summit

Bob perhaps unwisely admitted to having prospected some of the route, so was co-opted). Again they had a very long day – this was not improved when Mick and his mountain bike unexpectedly parted company, but the resultant knee damage didn't prevent him from completing the expedition.

Finally Rory climbed Meallan Liath Coire Mhic Dhugaill, an unexpectedly interesting hill with rocky corries, lochans, mountain flowers (mountain azalea, mountain everlasting) and a close view of a mountain hare.

An unfortunate wardrobe mishap on descent involving trousers resulted in a large increase in ventilation, and consequent embarrassment to the owner; the damage was fortunately only to dignity and trouser seat.

Back at the hut we compared days, listened to cuckoos and watched a set of red deer stags with antlers in velvet hopping over fences.



Mick
on the
slabs of
Sgurr
Ban

Bob on
Beinn
Tarsuinn



Tuesday 14th Unsurprisingly after the heroics of the previous day, some of us were, not to put too fine a point on it, a bit knackered – so we decided to have a trip to Handa Island. We drove to Tarbet, then got the ferry across the bay. The sea was beautiful – blue/green and very clear – and the reserve staff now put on waders and run a sort of wheelbarrow-like landing stage out to the boat. Rumour has it that on a

previous visit one YRC member, disdaining assistance to get ashore, suffered total immersion. After a briefing at the visitor centre, we wandered up to the North edge, through nesting arctic and great skuas, skylarks, and many heath spotted orchids. There were impressive cliffs with nesting guillemots, razorbills, fulmars and puffin, and a huge sea stack with a flat grassy top.

Many lizards were seen (here and throughout the trip).

We were amazed by Richard's mating dance to entice a puffin (just to be clear, he wanted to photograph it) but the puffin was less impressed – I think he missed the bit where you offer her a fresh raw sandeel in your beak. Back towards the visitor centre, we saw a seal "bottling" and eider squabbling. All in all a very interesting "day off".



Wednesday 15th Another fine day. Parties set off for Stac Pollaidh (Michael and Helen, successfully ascended, plus the Knockan Crag geological trail), for Ben Stack (Mick, Richard, Bob and Chris – the peak was traversed, involving an interesting encounter with a fishing party, one resplendent in full highland rig – so much for tick prevention), and for Ben Mor Coigach plus shopping (Rory, involving a close encounter with a golden eagle on Speicin Coinnich, the first summit, and wonderful gorse in full bloom). The Stac Pollaidh party were rather alarmed to watch what seemed to be the start of a wildfire in a rather inaccessible location – cause unclear – but emergency services seemed to be en route to deal with it.



All parties enjoyed spectacular views of the surrounding hills. We were intrigued to discover from a chance meeting at the foot of Coigach that the Craven Pothole Club were also staying in Elphin.



Thursday 16th Michael, Helen, Richard and Chris



set off early for An Teallach, leaving one car at Corrie Hallie, and climbing the hill from Dundonnell; the first two traversed the Munro summits and returned to the Dundonnell car whilst the other two continued the traverse over the pinnacles, descending to Corrie Hallie.

Helen approaching An Teallach

Great Stack (top) and Stac Pollaidh

All were impressed to look down Lords Gully (first winter ascent 1923, JHB Bell and the YRC's own EE Roberts). Bob climbed Canisp, seeing ptarmigan, and with good views. This gave him a chance to try out his new lightweight paintbox and sketching set. Mick and Rory climbed Ben Hee, with good views to the north and east, and a very odd section of ridge fissured by landslips. It's reassuring to report that even Mick (who does not hang about when driving) dives off the road when confronted by a hurtling timber lorry round a blind bend.

Friday 17th Mick and Bob left early for another heroic day on the Munros, this time an ascent of the remote A'Mhaighdean and Ruadh Stac Mor from Poolewe.



View down Dubh and Fionn Lochs
from A Mhaighdean

The expedition was a success, with both summits collected, and fine views. This time Bob nearly came to grief on a bicycle approach – a near miss for a puddle faceplant.

Chris had a quiet day, with a trip to the beach in Gruinard bay, and Rory opted for a pleasant coast walk to the Old Man of Stoer and a visit to the bone caves on the flank of Breabag. He was relieved, stopping for a discreet pee break, to remove a tick from a VERY awkward place.

Helen and Michael visited the Tralligill caves, then climbed Conival; meanwhile Richard, already away up Conival, continued to Ben More Assynt.



Mick and Bob's very long day meant that they were late back and therefore missed Richard's culinary tour de force – an eventual triumph following near-disaster when he couldn't get a tin-opener to work, and had to resort to serious violence to open the main course. By the evening the weather was showing definite signs of deterioration.

Saturday 18th Overcast start to the day with rain forecast, so Chris, Mick, Helen and Michael opted for low-level walking, visiting the Old Man of Stoer, with the Smiths then following the now very popular NC 500 route east along the Drumbeg road.

Richard and Bob climbed Quinag. Rory potted up and down Canisp, just getting the view from the top before the weather closed in, and seeing a hare and several ptarmigan, one at very close quarters.

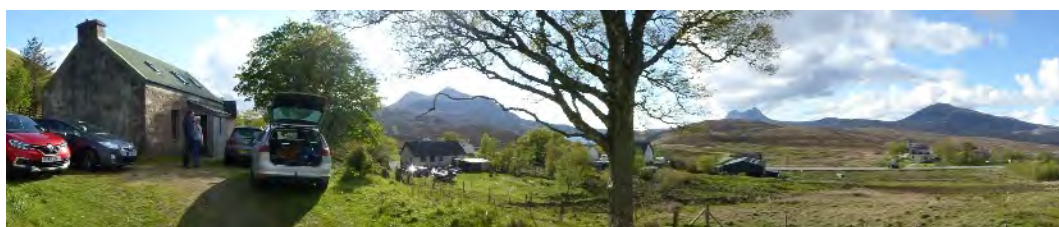
Sunday 19th We cleared up, packed up, and set off for home (apart from Mick, who was off to pursue more Munros).

Afternote:

While lunching by Stac Pollaidh's cairn, Michael spotted a dropped pair of climbing shoes, and was delighted to find they were his size and in good condition. Honesty compelled him to post on UKClimbing "gear found by Stac Pollaidh" and he was disappointed when within 20 minutes the owner had emailed him with their description. Still he did get a £20 reward.

This was an excellent meet, with good weather, good company, and a comfortable hut – which must surely have the best view of any club hut in the UK.

Many thanks to the SMC. We did well for wildlife, with regular sightings of eagles, cuckoos, ptarmigan and divers, as well as many seabirds, plus red and roe deer, hares, frogs and lizards. Interesting plants seen included mountain azalea and everlasting, creeping, netted and least willow, juniper, mountain avens, sundews, butterwort, alpine lady's mantle and holly fern.



Thanks to all those attending for making it such an enjoyable occasion. Rory Newman

Attendees:

Mick Borroff, Chris Hilton, Rory Newman, Bob Peckham, Helen and Michael Smith and Richard Taylor.

Chronicles of a retired man - Roy Denney

In 1996 I retired after 36 years with the bank under its various guises. I started work in 1960 with William Deacons Bank Ltd. (Willie Deaks) with is heartland in Lancashire. That was before the banking crisis. (No, not that one.)

Being Lancashire based it had many customers in the cotton trade and when that collapsed it had to be bailed out and the Bank of England asked the Royal Bank of Scotland to take it over. As an incentive it gave the RBS several of the B of E's own provincial branches. The RBS also owned Glyn Mills and Co. and the English branches of the National Bank of Ireland, so all the English branches were to trade as Williams & Glyn's until the RBS decided to badge all of them under its own name.

I retired from what was by then the RBS when I did not like the way it was going and we all know what happened subsequently to RBS. Who says history does not repeat itself

Following amputation of a part of my foot and unable to do much walking or indeed much of anything, my mind turns to looking back. It had always been my hope upon retirement to knock off a number of long held ambitions. I wanted to do some sailing on an ocean going yacht having had a taste of it on Ian Crowther's craft; to go snorkelling off the Great Barrier Reef; to visit the earth's extremes i.e. the Grand Canyon and Everest. I wanted to spend some time on a South Seas island and visit Australia, New Zealand, the Dalmatian Coast and British Columbia.

Everest was the first, and I have since twice crewed a nine-berth Westerly Oceanlord yacht up and down the Dalmatian Coast; toured the canyons of Arizona, Utah and Nevada; spent some time on the Cook Islands and taken to the waters of the Great Barrier Reef. My son made New Zealand an easy option by going to live there and as I have in-laws in Australia I took that in as well each trip. I am now just left with British Columbia from my wish list to visit but that is looking increasingly unlikely due to insurance costs at my age and with my ailments.

I do however seem to have some sort of curse on me as whilst I have 'done' these areas it has never lived up to expectations. Don't get me wrong we have had wonderful times in all the locations but

We chose the wrong time of year to go to Nepal and copped for some atrocious weather. It all added to the drama of the trip but has left me short of pictorial memories. We went in the narrow spring window and that year winter dragged on and the rains came early and we got very few sunny days and often found ourselves struggling through falling snow. I remember staggering out of my bag in the middle of the night, from a crude hut at Lobuche at about 16000 feet, to wander through the snow to the prepared hole in the ground to do what nature required. I recall some of the perilous bridges and paths and mud slides where paths used to be. I remember flying into Lukla seated on the luggage in a Russian army-surplus helicopter, looking at the scenery through holes in the fuselage. No tarmac runway then, just gravel.

One advantage of going into the mountains early in the year is that the very limited toilet facilities are usually frozen. The normal arrangement is a slow accretion of waste beneath long drops and when the weather warms up they can be rather pungent. The downside is that

when you get really high the best you can do is to dig a hole in the ground, not easy when the very small amount of top soil is frozen.



The big disappointment was getting to Gorek Shep at dawn and looking down on the modern base camp before crossing the glacier to climb Kala Pattar in deteriorating weather and whilst we summited it we only caught brief glimpses of Everest through the cloud. In fact we ended up in a severe snow storm and could not descend as intended and had to contour in a wide sweep round the sides of Pumo Ri.

Trekking in

Getting higher

Glimpse of Everest



My only yachting experience was in Ian's four berth tiddler sailing off the western isles. We got in trouble in high seas and winds and the engine burned out and we were lucky to make the shore in Arisaig. That craft was left there and subsequently sold as I recall.

I do have another friend who is co-owner of a much larger yacht and was invited to crew it with eight other men as we sailed down the coast of Croatia.



Incredible gales meant that this was an experience but not what I had hoped for. Travelling flat out over the water, chained to the deck of a craft almost on its side, but given the wind speed we were fighting, getting us nowhere. It was exhilarating though. We had to sit out two days sheltering behind a small island. Even on shore going backwards when pulling our water hose along a jetty I forgot it was an L shaped jetty and went for an involuntary swim. I went back a couple of years later to help him move it to a new birth up the coast. The weather was much kinder this time but the total lack of breeze meant we were on the engine most of the time.

I have spent some time in Australia and it is a great country in more senses than one. It is so big you can only scratch the surface. The same can be said for the USA and the Grand Canyon was a great disappointment. We were early in the year and I had not realised that the rim is considerably higher above sea level than anything in the UK. We walked the rim in snow and got a chopper flight into the canyon itself but neither gives any real sense of the size of the place. We went through a number of other canyons in the area but one of the most interesting, Bryce Canyon was closed due to ice and snow.

We have visited New Zealand five times now, taking in Australia as well each trip. The first was quite brief but the second time was actually a good taster. We got about quite a lot while visiting my son who made his home in Christchurch and wandering South Island for a few weeks. We went back again in 2012 to have a big family gathering to celebrate our Ruby Wedding anniversary. On the family side it was great; in-laws came over from Oz and my daughter who lives in France came over with her partner.

Christchurch however was desperate. No matter how much you know from news reports, seeing such a beautiful colonial city laid to ruin by earthquakes is truly horrendous. Wonderful place; wonderful, resilient, independent, friendly people but

In Australia I was determined to see the Great Barrier Reef properly and had read up extensively about what was on offer there. I spent a week living in a beach chalet in the Cook Islands and for the first time in my life did some snorkelling. I did not see much but did have the beaches to myself. It was the tail end of a typhoon and churned up sand killed the visibility. The comment in the bar "are you the mad Englishman who spent the day in the sea" was hard to deny. Bad luck again!! Anyway I eventually found my way out to the outer barrier reef and was invited to do some warm up snorkelling along, with dozens of others, inside a shark net just off a diving platform. I declined to do so because I did not want to give away the fact that I was a complete novice.

The experienced people were then invited to go even further out with a marine biologist. First in the queue, I thought, cracked it! We then started to get kitted out and I was offered a full face mask which of course I had never used before. Not one to lose face I put it on but to my chagrin the leader made a bee-line for me and my secret was out. A heavy beard like mine does not create a water tight seal round a face mask. A lot of pleading and signing a disclosure got me a ride, helped by copious amounts of Vaseline to make the seal work. I swam with the party for about half an hour and it was all worth it.

I have been to some wonderful places, had some great experiences and met some fascinating people but it could have been so much better. My message must be however that it is always worth having a go. Even with the downsides it beats sitting in front of the telly.



If I had not done these 'adventures' what else would I have to talk about? Despite the disappointments there have been some truly wonderful experiences; dawn over the Khumbu Glacier on the way up to Everest, the falls in the Krka National Park in Croatia on a day off from the yacht; creeping up on seals in New Zealand; riding a train over trestle bridges high into the rain-forests of Queensland.



All this is in addition to the many places that meet me to.

Unfortunately skeletal and muscular problems are curtailing my activities these days. I keep fighting on but my present problems cannot be denied.

I still like to explore remote places, tricky as my wife Doreen does not like travel. Fortunately having family in the Alps (by the Isere River between the Vercors and Chatreuse ranges), the Southern Alps (New Zealand), Melbourne, Brisbane and Sweden, family visits get me to some magic places.



When fit I still spend most of my time searching out the wilder corners of Great Britain which I still hold to be a great country to explore, but the wide world also beckons.

See you in Timbuktu some time. (I wish!)

Bob Graham Round - Rory Newman

On paper, it had seemed quite a sensible idea – a challenge – but now, at 2:30 am in the chilly Keswick pre-dawn half-light I wasn't so sure. However I was committed at least as far as Dunmail Raise, so I checked my watch against the Old Moot Hall clock (both read 02:37), swung my pack on, and started.

At first, perhaps because of the time and no sleep, I found myself heading for Borrowdale, but after a few minutes navigation started to work, I cursed, turned round, and located the Skiddaw path. I had expected not to see anyone else on the fells for the first few hours, so it was a bit surprising, as I trudged steadily uphill, to meet 300 people, all going the other way. The first few galloped past more or less in free-fall, but towards the end some were walking, and a straggler told me this was the annual 3,000 foot tops fell race. There were a few shivering folk on the summit, some as a check for the race, and some to see the dawn, but after this I was alone as expected.

For those of you who don't already know, the Bob Graham Round is a challenge walk in the Lake District; it starts and finishes in Keswick, it can be done in either direction, and it has to be completed within 24 hours. It's only (only?) a 72 mile circuit, so it only demands a 3mph average. However, because it's based around the Lake District 3000ft peaks, with lots of other tops added to make the total up to 42, there are 27,000 ft of ascent and descent (for those who are metric, 115 km and 8,230 metres approx).

There is a tradition of Lake District 24 hour records going back to 1864, improved by various hardy mountaineers. Bob Graham, a very fit guest house owner from Keswick, was 42 when, with the help of 4 pacers who also carried food for him, he added enough extra peaks to make up to his age. It was a fairly staggering feat for the time - 1932 - and was not repeated successfully for 28 years - indeed by 1971, only 4 other people had completed the round within the 24 hour time limit, though 3 of them had also gone faster or further than the original. Since then, many more people have succeeded (including at least one YRC member, Frank Milner, and there may be more I don't know about).

The record has been pushed out to 75 peaks in 24 hours, and there is also now a record – recently broken by an astonishingly fit lady fell-runner - for doing the round twice. As a result of all this activity, there is now a very exclusive club for those who have completed the round (or more) inside 24 hours. I am not a member, having failed one vital criterion – more of this later.

How do you do the Bob Graham? First, get fit; very fit. After that, the standard approach is to put together a support party: I met a party from Sheffield, going anticlockwise to my clockwise; they had pacers and food/water carriers for each section on the fells (and a safety rope on Broad Stand); at each road crossing (there are four, plus a section on road up/down the Newlands valley) they had available hot food, hot drinks, spare clothes, spare footwear, a physiotherapist/masseur and a podiatrist.

Alternatively, if you are daft enough, you can stick what you hope is enough food in a rucksack, add a water bottle for refilling, a map, a compass, pen and paper, a waterproof, and of course a watch, and set off: this was my approach, and looking back, I must have been mad.

After meeting all the fell-runners, I cut down the back of Skiddaw, through deep old heather over Great Calva, and got cold wet feet crossing the river Caldew (I was wearing trainers) before the long pull up the back of Blencathra. About half way up the sun caught up with me; as it melted the overnight frost the warmth was welcome, and the view from the top was splendid. Long descent to the first road crossing at Threlkeld, then another long pull up onto the Helvellyn ridge; the route follows this, taking in all the summits, before dropping steeply down off Dollywagon Pike to Grisedale Tarn, back up Fairfield, then over Seat Sandal and down to the road at Dunmail Raise, reached in about 8 hours – so far so good.

Here I met my mother and sister, who had kindly agreed to meet for safety checks (and in case I gave up and wanted a lift), and the support party for the Sheffield attempt... oddly I never saw them on the fell, though we must have passed each other.

By now the sun was hot, and sweat dripped off my nose as I pushed on up Steel Fell, then across country to High Raise, and back for the Langdale Pikes. I crossed the top of the Stake Pass in Langdale Combe, passed Rosset Pike and its tarn, and worked steeply up Bowfell.

Other people were starting to appear on the fells as I trotted down to Esk Hause. There's an out-and-back to Great End, then the route takes in the tops of Scafell Pike, and I was glad it was a dry day so that I could take the short-cut scramble up Broad Stand onto Scafell and start the long descent to Wasdale Head.

It seemed a VERY long way down; I was starting to tire, and beginning to lose time. Met family again at Wasdale Head, and now it was the moment for decision: go on or accept the lift that was on offer. I sat by the roadside for a few minutes, basically nailing together every scrap of will and determination I could summon... and then it was easy: decision made; I was going to finish however long it took.

Being committed seemed to give a bit of an energy boost, and the section up Yewbarrow and over Red Pike to Steeple and Pillar felt easier, but by the scabble up the gully onto Kirkfell I was slowing again, and it felt a long way over the Gables, Brandreth and Knotts and down to the top of the Honister Pass; time was slipping and it was getting dark – but only three more tops to go. I struggled up Dalehead; I had relied on moonlight and not taken a torch, but it had clouded over; still I managed to follow the out and back path to Hindscarth, then lost it coming off Robinson, the last top, and found myself scrambling down very steep ground with little rocky outcrops in complete darkness. It was more by luck than anything else that I found my way down to the road.

Time was now very tight: I had 55 minutes left. I jogged the downhill and flat sections on the road, but could only manage to walk the uphill bits. I stopped briefly at a phone box to contact my family and confirm that I was safely off the fells, then staggered on. Desperation tactics called for: I dumped the rucksack in a field gateway, and went on, lighter, with just watch and car keys. Slowly the lights of Keswick drew closer as time ticked inexorably away.

At last the bouncy bridge, and I managed a final desperate spurt over the remaining few hundred yards to the Old Moot Hall.

Watch and clock agreed: 02:34. 3 minutes to spare. Done it.

I sprawled on the bench outside the Moot Hall, giggling feebly with relief; fortunately there were no police or other spectators for this unedifying spectacle. After a few minutes I pulled myself together and went to get the car to collect my rucksack. The next half hour was weird: I got out the road atlas; I could see where I was, and where I had left the rucksack, but could not work out the sequence to get from one to the other – brain refused to function. I could have wept with frustration, but eventually worked out that to get there from here, I needed to set off in this direction, so I would drive to the next road junction, stop, and rethink.... and junction by junction, slowly found my way.

As I was driving, tiredness hit like a cosh; I was taking the back lanes very slowly, because I kept waking up as my head hit the steering wheel; luckily there was no other traffic. Finally I found the correct field gateway, parked in it, collected the rucksack, sat back in the car, and slept like the dead.

Three hours later I woke, bright, clear-headed and ravenously hungry... and realised a flaw in my plans: I hadn't left any food in the car, and it was too early for anything to be open. I drove back east, stomach growling. At last I reached the Little Chef (now long gone) on the Appleby by-pass just as it opened; I'm ashamed to say I ordered two large breakfasts and ate the lot.

Then I drove home.

I'm glad I did it, daft though it was. I had sore feet for a few days but was otherwise surprisingly unaffected physically; I wasn't even stiff. Mentally I felt oddly detached for a week or so; I drifted through life but had no drive – I had left willpower up on the fells, and had to wait for it to come back. I drank (I worked out later) 9 litres of water during the round, and this was about right, I wasn't de-hydrated or over-hydrated.

I was unusually hungry for a few days; the round is off the scale when I try to work out energy expenditure, but extrapolation suggests it's over 20,000 kilocalories – that's not only more than I was carrying, it's more than I could physically eat in a day, I think.

Once I was back to normal, I followed procedure and wrote up the round, added times, and submitted this to the Bob Graham Club for potential membership; I got the reply that I was ineligible as I had no witnesses, but if I would like to do it again WITH witnesses they would be happy to accept me.

Somehow I never have.... instead I'm happy to belong to an even more exclusive body, those who have done the round but not joined the club.

I'll stick with the YRC.

**Overseas
Meet**

**Norway
Hut to hut by ski**

**April
3 - 10**

Three members arrived a week early for this meet and put in some practice a little further north in Oppdal at the invitation of Knut Tønsberg, principal guest at the 2017 Dinner. Kjetil Tveranger even managed a five-pitch ice climb with Knut. The weather was not ideal after a winter of less than usual snowfall. The daytime melts and night freezes were to cause a problem for the meet the following week

With the six of us converging on Hjerkin in three parties on the 3rd, Kjetil received the news that ice had formed across the routes of days two and three of our intended week-long north-south traverse of the Rondane. Indeed, two women had failed to reach the third hut (in Grimsdalen), tried to sit out the benightment but were soon soaked and called out the rescue services. Progress over ice is very slow and risks falls on skis or ski boots. An hour or so over coffee came up with plan B: the eastern Jötunheim. Checks on the snow cover there, though, were not encouraging. So on to plan C: approach the central Rondane from the south rather than the north. Reports from staff in the serviced huts were encouraging and there were plenty of huts in the area to allow a choice of routes. Once decided, all that remained was to communicate to the other two parties – one skiing near Lillehammer and the other flying over the North Sea – to alight from the train earlier than planned, at Ringebu.

With food shopping done and Michael Smith installed in a four-bed Spidsbergseter cabin at 950m (incidentally, the same cabin we used two years ago before skiing south to Lillehammer) preparing a meal, Kjetil collected the others from Ringebu station at 7pm. A late evening meal, a wee dram and all were soon in beds or sleeping bags.

**Peter, Malcolm,
Kjetil, Richard,
Michael and
James enjoying
the evening
sunshine and a
beer at
Bjørnhollia**



The first day, Thursday, was only 15km to the DNT huts at Eldåbu. The DNT is the Den Norske Turistforening or Norwegian Trekking Association which has over 500 cabins in the Norwegian mountains and forests with the largest ones being staffed and providing meals and hot showers. Most though are small self-service cabins with water from a stream or snow, a basic larder and simple gas rings for cooking. They are generally maintained by local DNT volunteers. The padlocks on all the small cabins are identical and our party's two DNT members each carried a key.

High cloud with the sun breaking through now and again made a good day for skiing along the stick-marked route north from the nearby frozen lake over Storfjellet and past Svartkampen to briefly join the pisted tracks of the Trolls Way before turning off west and into the thin silver birch forest to reach Eldåbu. The keys were not required. The place was heaving with people. A DNT guided party almost filled the main hut, a Dutch/French couple were in the overflow hut and more parties were steadily arriving then hunting around for space. The six-bed overflow hut looked like the best bet for an undisturbed sleep so we staked a claim for four beds and some floor space there. Later arrivals were discouraged.

The other couple were highly amused by our catering. Most parties use the dried or tinned food from the larder but Kjetil likes good food so we were slicing up a joint of beef to fry with onions. This was eaten with mashed potatoes and a bottle of red wine followed by fruit salad and ground coffee. Our clear view to the west over to the Jötunheim flooded the cabin with sunset hues.



Passing the evening with cards, Eldåbu

The Dutch/French couple were also amused by Michael, who having crept about from 6am making porridge and tea then used a spoon and pan lid as a gong to rouse the rest of the party. The hut cleaned, a start was made by 8:30am.

The tops were shrouded in thick cloud and the snow heavily crusted in ice so skis were sometimes hard to control. However, without skis, boots simply punched through the crust. Three possibilities lay before us: a long contouring loop to the west on the stick-marked route; northwest over a col and round a spur, both of these to Rondvassbu; or north over a lower col to Bjørnhollia. We took the unmarked middle one. As we rose gently up Steinbudalen the cloud lowered obscuring the broad flat col. With the aid of close attention to the GPS and compass, a small shed close to the col was passed and the col reached at about 1pm. It was now difficult to tell if one was skiing or stationary. Then came the descent. Shallow but needing caution as any slight steepening resulted in acceleration in minimal visibility – almost a white out. The lunch stop was short because of the chilling damp wind.

Visibility had improved as the valley bottom was reached and a westward contour started to round a spur to join the northern track to Rondvassbu. Half the party had used pulks

(sledges for dragging kit rather than using rucksacks as on previous Club meets) so they were interested to see four youngsters pulking along southwards. We met up on reaching the track and fell into conversation. They were an unsupported 'gap year' outdoor schooling group on their tenth day out and happy to chat. The large serviced cabin was reached eventually at 5:45pm.

A hot shower was welcome before the evening three-course meal with the option of a bottle of wine for an extra £50, lager £7 a half litre. Michael stuck to water – lots of it as he was suffering from dehydration after the longer day.

DNT waymark and stick-marked ski route at the col between Rondvassbu and Bjørnhollia



Again, there was a choice of routes for Saturday. Skiing a day north would take in more of the intended route but would leave us retracing our steps. A circuit could be made around the north of Rondane mountain but we took the more direct route eastwards along its southern flank. This was the only day of sharing the route with others as there was a DNT guided party ahead of us on the stick-marked route. Another gentle rise took us to a col, this time under clear skies from the middle of the day onwards. The descent wound smoothly down an increasingly V-shaped valley with a narrow track winding through trees and by a flowing stream. As this became a ravine the route climbed the northern flank. Sun and wind had stripped snow from the last few hundred metres to the Bjørnhollia serviced cabin so skis were carried.



Break for lunch after the col en route to Bjørnhollia

Most in the party were using Nordic touring skis but Malcolm Lynch was on narrower track skis he had used extensively in the Alps. These were difficult to control on the backcountry unpisted terrain. His endless patience and persistence were needed most days given our route.

Sleeping cabins, showers and the toilet block were each separate from the main building with its refectory and bar. The half-board stay at the cabin with a beer cost about £87 for DNT members, £100 for others. Paths between the buildings were pure ice in places – treacherous to cross.



Preparing to carry the skis approaching Bjørnhollia and the DNT hut there

Peter Chadwick, on a nocturnal excursion having slipped and fallen heavily, laid there wondering if he might freeze to death before being discovered. Thankfully he didn't.

Sunday dawned colder and with a brisk 15m/s wind from the north. Handy as our route was to the south. Preparing to leave we noticed an ermine checking out the rubbish bins for tit bits.



Skins (carpet-like strips to reduce the chance of sliding backwards) were put under our skis as there was an initial descent to a bridge then a steep climb up through woods and the slope above. From above the col a herd of wild reindeer was spotted to the west when we stopped for a break. A short steep walk down to the frozen stream bed took us to a wind-assisted ski run down over a chain of lakes until lunch was taken huddled in the lee of a private summer fishing cabin. There were traces of fishing holes in the ice from weekend visitors. Turning slightly right a hillside broke the wind so we were relying again on grip from wax, sticky strips (rather like double-sided sticky tape) or fishscales. James Marson took out his sleeping mat and held it aloft between raised ski poles as a sail. He was soon shooting along and having to spill some of the air. This worked even better with the mat unfurled further and held between two skiers.



Reindeer spotted during early lunch stop

A section of undulating ground took us back to Eldåbu. Quieter this time though we still used the smaller cabin. The stove was soon lit and tea brewed. Whiskey and warm water were followed by soup, fish stew, fruit salad and a candle lit game of cards. The wind slackened overnight but the temperature remained about -8°C.



Wind-assisted crossing of a lake south of Bjørnhollia

Leaving Eldåbu on Monday it was again cold and windy. After crossing the pisted track we headed east-southeast over moorland to the 1,138m Flåtjønnglupen pass between rocky Ramstindan and snowy Nødre Bølhøgda. After a break on that windy col it was another straightforward gentle descent southeast this time, crossing at its highpoint the E27 road which the previous week had carried all the Oslo-bound E6 traffic following an accident. Onward a steady rise over the lower slopes of conical 1,424m Muen was the small Gråhøgdbu cabin, hidden until we were close to it.

There was surprise awaiting us in this 8-bed cabin. Six women from Oslo were already in residence. We managed by taking turns to prepare food and each party using four beds with two relegated to mattresses on the floor. The women had been melting snow for water but there was a marked water supply about 140m away.



Richard skiing past Stor Ramshøgda

Unfortunately, this was under 1.2m of snow and the gusts were blowing spindrift around. Undaunted, Richard Taylor excavated the source and James descended the manhole to patiently use a scoop to fill the buckets lowered on a string. Not having to melt snow saved fuel and speeded up cooking.

As it was still only mid-afternoon an excursion was made to ascend Muen. On ski into the wind until the slope steepened then on foot. A little short of the summit the surface proved too iced over and without crampons or ice axes it was only prudent to return.

The larder supplied fruit soup, meatballs made of reindeer, vegetables and pasta with the usual fruit salad to finish.

The temperature had fallen to -10°C by the time we turned in for the night.

Peter and James arrive at Gråhøgdbu in spindrift.
Just visible 140m away on the right is the water supply marker



Tuesday, the last skiing day, did not need an early start so breakfast was drawn out. Today's luxury was porridge made with powdered milk rather than just water. After a thorough clean of the hut a departure was made at 10am. An easy-angled slope was made a little trickier by areas of the ice-crustured surface being covered in patches of loose spindrift which acted as sudden brakes, sometimes on just one ski. A couple of hours though and we re-crossed the road and were soon at the cabin with Kjetil's car.

An hour or so of the afternoon was spent practising with the avalanche safety gear for skiers by burying a transponder, using others in detector-mode to locate its approximate position then find it using probes and shovels. Even working in a relatively small area and without the inconvenience of avalanche debris or inefficiencies resulting from concern for lost friends, it still took a soberingly long time to recover the device.

Malcolm shopped and prepared a grand final evening meal. Then Kjetil settled to his accounts and worked out the cost of the trip – about £450 each plus flights. Four returned to Oslo in the car while two travelled by train taking advantage of an elders' discount. All arrived at Gardermoen airport at the same time to fly home via Brussels.

Thanks go to our Norwegian member, Kjetil, for organising and quickly reorganising the trip besides providing transport, skis and safety equipment for the party. Having in the party a native speaker thoroughly familiar with local norms certainly helped at every stage and facilitated negotiations in the busy overcrowded huts.

Michael Smith

Attendees: The route:

- Kjetil Tveranger
- Michael Smith
- Peter Chadwick
- Richard Taylor
- Malcolm Lynch (G)
- James Marson (G)



Eight members assembled on Friday evening at the Climbers' Club hut Ynys Ettws, ideally and idyllically situated for climbing on the many and varied crags in the Llanberis Pass. Sadly light rain had already made its presence felt and the forecast was for rain all night.

Saturday morning revealed the dismal view of Carreg Wastad opposite the hut, liberally streaked black with water. Although the clouds were breaking up it would clearly take more than a day before the rock would be at all dry.

The Dovers and John walked from the hut up the North ridge of Crib Goch, descending the East ridge to Pen y Pass and enjoying the classic scrambling of that route.

Alan drove to Cwm Pennant and ascended Moel Hebog in improving weather, with the cloud clearing soon after he reached the summit. He continued North in sunshine over Moel yr Ogof and Moel Lefn then down to Bwlch y Ddwy Elor before returning through the atmospheric ruins of the old quarry workings at the head of Cwm Pennant. Pennant is a beautiful and remote feeling valley steeped in history.



The name Bwlch y Ddwy Elor means literally "The Pass of the Two Biers"; supposedly there being no burial ground at Rhyd Ddu, bodies were taken up to the pass where they would be met by a party from Pennant. Rather hard to believe as there seems no reason not to have a graveyard at Rhyd Ddu. Still, it's a good story and no-one can disprove it.

The four climbers repaired to Pete's Eats in Llanberis to get an up to date forecast and a coffee. Given the state of the crags a traditional mountain day was decided upon and they drove round to Idwal for an ascent of the Slabs and more above. They were not alone. Andy and Peter followed a threesome up Hope, having to avoid the impossibly greasy twin cracks by another line further left.

They could have overtaken but preferred to socialise with two American ladies, so only had time for the steeper Lazarus on Holly Tree Wall before returning to collect the car.

At the
foot of
the
Idwal
Slabs



Richard and Tim climbed Faith, easily passing their traffic and continuing up Lazarus and the excellent Arete on the Continuation Wall above. The Arete, although given V Diff is technically similar to the Severe Lazarus and is noticeably unprotected. Taking advantage of the sunshine they continued up Senior's Ridge to the summit of Glyder Fawr and so back to the hut.

Andy Syme
on
Hope Idwal



View from Moel Hebog

Llanberis continued.

Sunday dawned dry and breezy but with showers forecast. Peter and Richard had to leave; with the crags still wet after overnight rain Andy and Tim walked from Pen y Gwryd up the Miners' Track to Glyder Fawr, passing the Dovers and John on the way, then over Glyder Fawr to Llyn y Cwn and back to the hut. A rather ferocious line of squalls enlivened the traverse of the tops and they were lucky to get back just before the next lot.

Paul, Barry and John were not so lucky; they followed the same route but descending to Pen y Pass. They arrived back at the hut looking like they had absorbed remarkable amounts of water.

Alan went to Croesor with the intention of making the round of Cnicht and the Moelwyns.

However the wind was so strong as he approached the summit of Cnicht that, being alone, he decided discretion was the better part of valour so he retreated. He spent the rest of the day exploring the valley.

This was a slightly disappointing meet as far as the weather and crag conditions went but we made the best of it and all enjoyed the weekend.

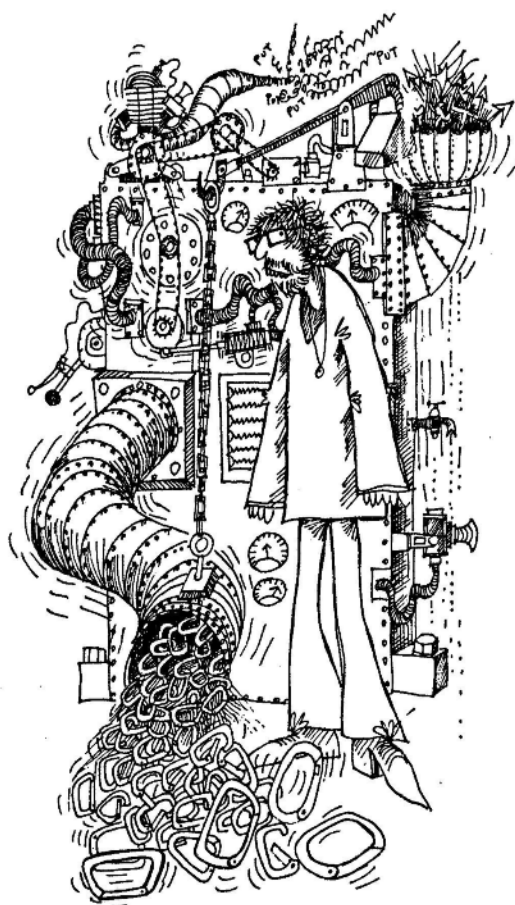
Attendees:

Andy Syme, Peter Elliott, Paul Dover, Barry Dover, John Brown, Richard Smith, Tim Josephy, Alan Kay.

Denny Moorhouse

Denny, a former member, was a doodler of the first order.

This image which turned up in our archives is said to be a self portrait.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Early engraving of technology in Wales. (From the Clogmakers Livery Company.)

Yesteryear - a look into the archives

A NOTE ON THE CAVES OF MAJORCA.

By the late HAROLD BRODRICK F.G.S.

He wrote:

The late C. A. Hill gave an interesting account of the caves of Majorca (more of the Cave of the Dragon) in Vol. III. of the journal.

"In March, 1934, I had the pleasure of following in his footsteps to find that in the intervening 27 years conditions had altered considerably. Now both the Cave of Artá and Cueva del Drach are easily visited in a day for each from Palma by car.

In his paper Hill quotes Martel with regard to the Cave of Artá and states that it is "black as the inside of a chimney owing to the resinous torches of visitors." This is no longer wholly the case. The cave is very cleverly illuminated by electric light, numerous switches being fitted so that varied effects can be produced.

The roadways have all been concreted and steps made so that one can visit the whole of the cave in the lightest of shoes. The stalactites in the upper portion of the cave are still coated with the sooty deposit so deplored by Martel, but when one gets to the lower parts of the cave, which would evidently not have been much visited in the early days, one finds their original whiteness. It is impossible to describe the beauties of this cave but I would strongly advise anyone who has the opportunity, to visit it.

Tradition has it that this was the last refuge of the Moors on the Island at the time of the Conquest by Jaime I. in 1231.

It is said that many of them with their families retreated to this spot and fortified the entrance with timber but two Spanish brothers were lowered over the cliff top and set fire to the wooden fortifications after which the Moors surrendered unconditionally, naturally to meet the fate of the conquered in those times.

It is interesting to find in the maps of the island dated 1784 the name of the cave 'Cueva de la Ermita' (The Hermit's cave). Its temperature is much lower than that of the other caves which I visited on the Island, possibly because it is at least 200 feet below the surface, whereas the others are only about thirty feet below ground.

As is well known, Martel published an excellent survey of the Cueva del Drach, a reprint of which is given in Hill's paper, with a translation of part of his article in Spelunca 32 (1903)

As a result of Martel's exploration and survey the whole of this wonderful series of chambers can now be visited very easily in the day.

The colder known portions of the Cave, Cueva Louis Salvador, Cueva Negra and Cueva Blanca are well worth seeing, but the real beauties of the chambers discovered by Martel in 1896 could only be seen by crossing La Miramar by boat, and that of the smallest, and returning the same way.

Within the last few years, an artificial entrance has been made at the end of the Salle, Louis Armand, some 600 yards from the old entrance and the furthest point reached by Martel's party. From here one walks along a very well made track through this very fine chamber, which is about 600 yards long and thirty to fifty yards wide and in which are numerous magnificent stalactites and pillars.

This leads, after crossing two bridges, into a complicated series of passages and chambers known as Salle de Los Herreros, filled with a profusion of stalactitic formations of all types.

There were numerous attendants here with acetylene lamps and they kept stopping at various viewpoints and illuminating the formations with magnesium ribbon. I understand that by 1935 the whole cavern will be illuminated with electricity.

Martel discovered this chamber from Lac Miramar by passing along a very narrow canal about 50 yards long in a Berthon boat. Two years ago the owner of the Cave, Don Juan Cervera, to whom I am indebted for much information, broke a passage at about twenty feet above the canal so that one can now walk into the Dome Moragues with ease. The Dome Moragues is a chamber about eighty yards in diameter and some fifty feet in height which slopes down to Lac Miramar.

We had been very well conducted to this place, where we found seats for the whole party; all the lights were put out and we sat in darkness. Soon we heard very faintly, note's of music and dim light appeared at the end of Lac Miramar, some 200 yards from where we were sitting.

Three boats electrically lighted came slowly along the lake, while the string orchestra on the centre one played 'Handel's Largo'. The general effect was wonderful, the stalactites reflected in the lake adding to the weirdness of the scene.

The boats passed us slowly and the band went out of sight round the corner of the lake to continue playing extremely well. Finally, the band re-passed us towards the entrance playing very appropriately 'Dreams of Delight' while the other two boats embarked the party and followed to the entrance.

Several journeys were necessary, as the party numbered nearly 100, but as the boat held about 25 passengers each, we were all soon in daylight.

I would advise anyone who has the opportunity, to visit this cave, described by Martel as one of the most beautiful in Europe.

It is very interesting from a geological point of view, being situated on the sea coast and is, as Martel points out, a marine grotto, similar to those found in Jamaica and Cuba, and as I understand also in the Bermudas.

The limestone of the district is very much hardened outside, being of upper Miocene age, while it is soft below. The sea has evidently penetrated into this softer stratum and worn it away, leaving the comparatively thin crust of the harder rock above. There is no practicable connection between the sea and the cave but the waters in all the lakes are to a certain extent salt, the degree of salinity decreasing as one gets further from the coast.

The greater portion of the surface of the island consists of Tertiary Limestones, but these being of a softer texture than the Carboniferous Limestones of Ingleborough, do not exhibit the fine clints to be found in the latter case. One does, however, find clints of a more rounded type in various parts but in no case do the fissures extend to any depth.

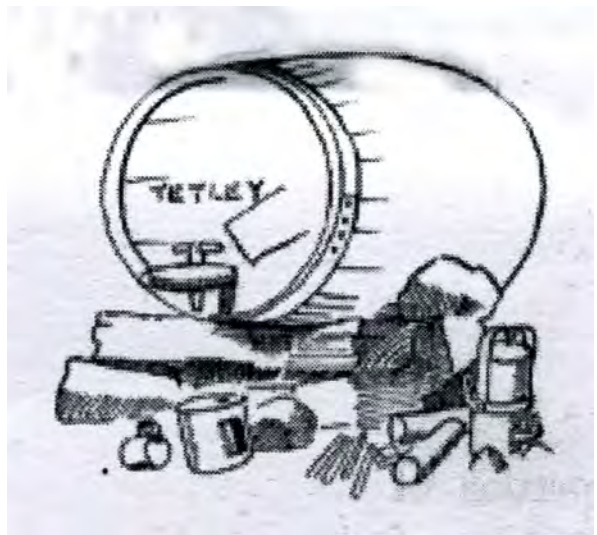
Most of the land surface consists of disintegrated limestone and is now very well cultivated, the water being pumped by windmills from a depth of about 25 feet. Martel does refer to Pot-Holes, but during my visit to the island I was unable to obtain any information on this point.

About two miles from Porto Cristo is another cave, Cueva de Ham, which was discovered about two years ago and which is well worth a visit. It is already lighted by electricity and is very easily visited, the owner having made a very good track through it; like the Cueva del Dracht.

It is in the Miocene Limestone and is full of marvellous stalactites, etc. In one of the chambers, wisely protected with wire netting, is the best collection of pipe-stem anemolites I have ever seen; the whole cavern is not very large but should certainly not be missed.”

Archivist's note

In the original journal, this article left much of a page blank and Alan comments that E E Roberts was our Editor at the time, by repute a rather strict school inspector, and that the cartoon used to fill the gap was somewhat out of keeping with what might have been expected to be his norm.



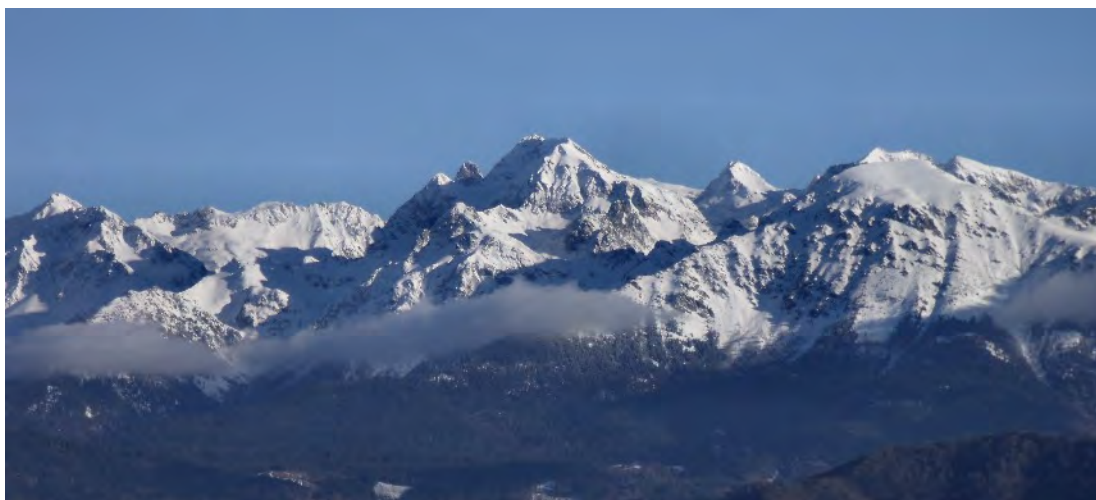
Chartreuse is fairly well known but as a very tasty liqueur in a green bottle; one I have to say, I am rather too fond of

Not many people realise that it takes its name from a mountainous massif in France which affords numerous wonderful walking opportunities. Fortunately for me when I look out of the windows from my daughter's house I look straight at it.

Part of the regions known as the Sub-Alps or Pre-Alps (préalpines) it is frequently overlooked because of its massive neighbours. Even locally it has competition. Where my family live they are on the banks of the River Isère, a tributary of the Rhone, just below where the River Drax joins it. These two rivers have cut this limestone area into three distinct hill formations. Best known to most is the Vercors, a large elevated plateau affording good walking prospects but also some extremely deep caves as many of our members know.

The highest of the three is Belledonne, the other side of the Drax not as attractive for walking, more dramatic and a draw in the winter for serious skiers.

It has several major peaks including Pic du Frêne 2,807 m, Rocher Blanc 2,928 m, Croix de Belledonne 2,926 m and Grand Pic de Belledonne 2,977 m.



Belledonne

The Chartreuse massif has some modest ski resorts but not enough to really compete. The net result is an unspoiled lightly populated mountain area.

It is one of the smallest pre-Alpine massifs, but four of its peaks are over the two thousand metres mark. This far south and at this altitude these see major changes as the seasons unfold.

This picture-postcard truly charming area can best be accessed from the three towns to its south and west: Grenoble, Voiron and Chambéry but there are villages in some of its valleys



The village of Le Sappey-en-Chartreuse

This is a little known area with many secrets including, it is said, an underground network of 300 kilometres which must be one of the biggest in Europe. The area has extensive forest cover (probably almost 50%) and with its high peaks and deep gorges, much of the Chartreuse is not that accessible.

It has been described in literature as an emerald; a natural jewel of the Alps, coincidentally the same colour as the world famous liqueur. That is actually made by a monastic order in existence for many hundreds of years and its colour conjures up images of the alpine meadows from which we can only assume herbs etc are collected as part of the secret recipe.



I will let you into a secret – locally there is another not dissimilar drink which varies dependent on who has made it and who collected which alpine herbs. I am even more partial to this *génépi* than to Chartreuse. I can only guess what goes into it but if you don't tell my doctor, I like to finish off a meal in a village restaurant I know with a bowl of Chartreuse flavoured ice cream with a shot of *génépi* poured over it.

The Chartreuse is designated a regional nature reserve and is a haven for protected wildlife species. It is an enormous area but only has just over 50,000 inhabitants. It does have visitors if not mass tourism, mostly coming in for the day from the surrounding area as accommodation within the massif is limited.

There is some caving and climbing and the long high limestone cliffs are popular with para-gliders who come from far and wide for its big events. Thousands come from all over the world for the annual Coupe Icare (Icarus Cup.)



To my mind, while I consider myself a sociable chap who likes a natter, the great attraction of the area is you can go walking for a day and see nobody. Care is needed though as every year there are fatalities because of hunters.

This is especially true in the afternoons as hunting groups are very sociable and the local drinks very palatable and the French do like long lunch breaks.

If you get on the higher summits in the area you can see Mont Blanc in the middle distance.

Whilst it is a limestone area it has little in common with our Yorkshire limestone areas. The land has been folded, uplifted and eroded so much that there are dramatic features. Attermire is the only location which comes to mind when I see some of these unusual views.

There are 'table top' summits, jagged peaks, strange pillars and deep ravines. You are best advised to follow the many trails as going by a compass bearing where there is access can be very tricky with all the natural hindrances.

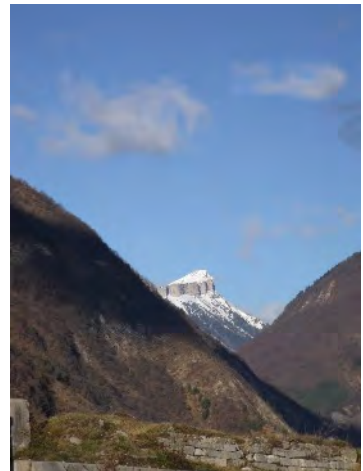
It is an area I can strongly recommend to you.



Néron
1,298m

With
Grenoble
in the
background

Chamchaude
2,082m



Typical limestone pillars,

Les Lances de Malissard 2,045m

and La Dent de Crolles 2,062m



There are no English-language guidebooks to walking in the Chartreuse, but John Gardner's website: <https://www.braemoor.co.uk/chartreuse/index.shtml> is excellent and describes 47 walks.

Raquetteering in France Mick Borroff

Having snowshoed in the Jura several times and the Mercantour once, Hilary and I were keen to try other mountainous areas of France in 2018 and again in 2019.

Snowshoeing in the Chartreuse 2018

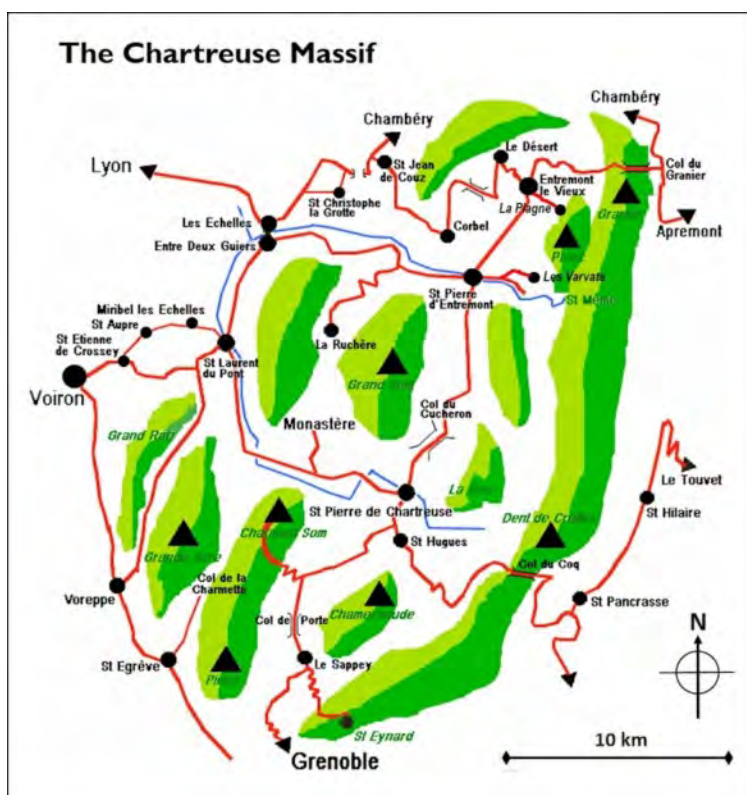
Having perused several *raquette* guidebooks, we settled on a fortnight's visit to the Chartreuse, just before the start of the French winter half-term. This compact limestone massif towers lies to the south of Chambéry and north of Grenoble, with the Belledonne mountains to the east. Many members will have been walking or caving over or under the mountains, topped by the tilted shelf of Chamechaude, its principle summit at 2082m.

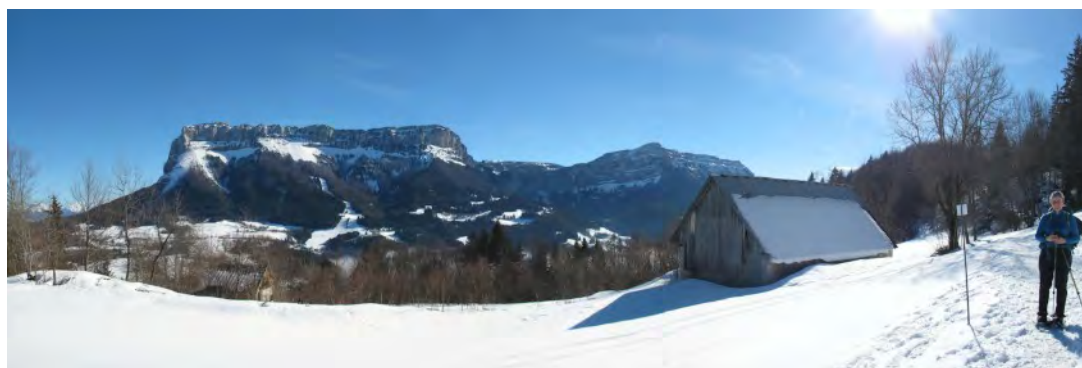
The area offers plenty of scope for snowshoeing and there is plenty of information available. Whilst there is some alpine and cross-country skiing in the massif, this is on a small-scale. Road access to the *ski stations* and major cols are kept clear of snow, facilitating car access to the start points.

We based ourselves in Le Château, a tiny hamlet perched high above the small town of Saint Pierre d'Entremont in the northern half of the Chartreuse.

There was plenty of snow on the ground when we arrived, necessitating multiple carries of our food supplies and luggage to our small renovated stone chalet.

This enjoyed commanding views across the valley rising above the castle ruins to the Roche Veyrand opposite and along the Entremont valley to the long line of cliffs forming the Pinet and Mont Granier snaking away to the north.





Mont Granier and the Pinet from Le Désert D'Entremont

We awoke to find the valley below filled with cloud, but the builders of the old chalet fortunately chose their site wisely and we were above the temperature inversion, enjoying the sunshine. For our first outing, we drove north to the *station* of Entremont Le Désert. Being a Sunday, the car park was fairly rammed, but we completed the varied Grand Carroz circuit, with great views of Mont Granier and surprisingly few people.

Monday was much quieter and the car park at the La Ruchère *ski de fond* centre was virtually empty. Four waymarked snowshoe routes depart from here, with three of reasonable length: we combined the best parts of two of these. The start of this route was under pine trees which had reduced the snow cover and the weekend traffic had reduced this further to a muddy path more reminiscent of home and we thus carried our snowshoes for a while. The snow improved as we got higher with good views of the Petit Som and Grande Som peaks. Our circuit then visited the Col de Sarriette, the Belvedere des Riondettes, with its fine views of the Grande Sure and finished with a traverse of the Rochers de Quartier ridge back to the car park.

We were now ready to look at climbing a summit or two. I had identified an interesting round traversing two peaks from the Col du Granier. This time, we were still in the cloud as we passed the barns of the Granges de Joigny and their avenue of pollards to begin our climb into the beech woods. I continued to emerge into glorious sunshine below the Col de Gorgeat and met a large group at the summit of the Pointe de la Gorgeat (1486m) enjoying the stunning view! The onward traverse involving a steep and slightly exposed snow slope up to Mont Joigny (1556m) proved to be no problem having minimal icing. The following ridge was a delight, with its views to the mountains of the Bauges on one side and along to Mont Granier and the cliff line flanking the east side of the Entremont valley on the other. A descent back into the cloud-shrouded beech woods brought me back to the col.



Mick on Mont Joigny



View from the Pointe de la Gorgeat

The weather forecast was for a full day of sunshine and we drove south through the town of Saint Pierre de Chartreuse to the Col de Porte (1326m). Our objective was to climb Montfromage (1662m) and continue traversing the undulating Balme de l'Air ridge to reach the Oratoire d'Orgeval. The tooth of La Pinéa overlooking our initial climb up through the pines to the ridge and the bulk of Chamechaude to the east dominated our views.



Oratoire d'Orgeval and Chamechaude

This completed, I continued on to the summit of the Charmant Som (1867m) with its amazing views across to the Alps and down to the distant Grande Chartreuse monastery nestling in the forest. I reluctantly dragged myself away from the summit cross for the return down the uncleared summer road to join Hilary back at the car. This is a deservedly popular route and had a firm *piste* throughout.



View from Charmant Som

On Thursday it snowed heavily all morning and the avalanche risk had been increased to Level 3 - Considerable. Our hamlet fortunately had three visits from the commune snowplough through the day. When the snow stopped mid-afternoon, we went out to explore the Montbel castle ruins which date back to the 12th century and then up into the pine forest behind the chalet to visit the unspoiled old barns at Granges Bandet and Grange Jacquet guarding the entrance to the narrow Combe des Ésparre valley, then back for homemade fruit cake and tea in front of the of the blazing wood-burner.

With a distinctly snowy landscape to enjoy and a good weather forecast, we headed back to La Ruchère for a circular route linking three cols which was safe in the Level 3 conditions. The still icy roads were passable with care with winter tyres. We set off from the car park into the pinewoods into virgin snow. Trail-breaking in the 25cm of new powder was easy and the previous mud at the start was well covered.



**Hilary climbing up to
Col d'Aliénard**

The Col d'Aliénard (1495m) was soon reached at the head of a nicely sinuous valley, but the cloud deprived us of a good view of the Grand Som.

Next, the Tracol (1445m) was gained and looking up we could see four off-piste ski tracks snaking down the powder snow on the western flank of the Petit Som. Lastly, the substantial meadow at the Col de la Ruchère (1418m) was reached, with the mountains still largely in cloud and we followed the ski tracks off the hill to return to the car.



Roche Veyrand and Mont Granier from the chalet

With our first week over, the cloudy, misty start to Saturday began to clear mid-morning with the promise of sun later, so with the avalanche risk back to Level 2, I decided to do a solo traverse to St Pierre de Chartreuse via the Col de Bovinant (1646m). I started directly from the chalet and was soon following a recent ski track into the forested defile of the Combe des Ésparre. Part way up the valley, I met a party of about a dozen French snowshoers coming down in the opposite direction, giving me a good piste to follow. The Col de Bovinant was thus soon underfoot, but the cloud had descended onto the Grand Som. The steep descent down the other side on deep powder snow over a hard, underlying layer required care, but was uneventful. More ski tracks were followed down to the chapel of Norte Dame de Casilibus and a good track led on past the huge Grande Chartreuse monastery complex and down to the road at the Pont des Allemands where Hilary picked me up.

There was no mist in the valley and a good forecast, so we decided to do a varied, level circuit from La Plagne. This was a lower route that we hoped would be quieter on a Sunday as it did not start from a ski station: this proved to be a good choice. The route went up through the hamlet with great views of the Pinet cliffs towering above, then across alpine meadows to a cluster of ancient barns – Les Granges du Pritz. The route then gently descended through the trees and more meadows down to the road. I continued on to Mont Rigaud, really just a bump on the flank of the valley, but a grand viewpoint with good long-distance views way down the valley to the Grand Som and across to our distant chalet at La Château, overlooked by the Roche Veyrand.

The avalanche risk had been increased to Level 3 in the morning, so we decided to go back to St Pierre de Chartreuse and go from the Pont des Allemands up into the woods passing the Grand Chartreuse monastery. I continued up to the Habert de Billon barns, then followed the Prairie de la Folie up to the Col de la Ruchère (visited from the north side on Friday). Many more ski tracks had been carved out on the west face of the Petit Som over the weekend.

I met three snowshoers at the col, one doing a head-stand in the snow! I descended via a lunch stop at a ruined *grange* and back down past the monastery to the car.

In the morning, I got dropped off at La Plagne under blue skies intent on a solo traverse of the high-level Plateau d'Alpe and then down to Les Vervats hamlet, described as a must-do route. There was plenty of snow on the GR9 route which snaked up the craggy hillside and the Col de l'Alpette (1,547m) was soon reached with its boundary stone engraved with a red cross dated 1822, marking the former border between Savoie and France. An eagle soared in the distance and there was good view up to the summit of Le Granier (access to the northern sector of this mountain is currently forbidden due to unstable couloirs and rockfall following torrential rains in 2016). The Refuge de l'Alpette was passed just below the col, followed by a long crossing of the superb plateau, initially through undulating groves of pines then across vast snow-covered meadows, overlooked by the Sommet du Pinet and Roche de Fitta to the west and the Rochers de l'Alpe and Rochers Belles Ombres to the east. The end of the plateau was marked by the Chalet d'Alpe with good views south along the Crêtes des Lances de Malissard. From the chalet, I climbed up to the Croix de l'Alpe (1,821m) to enjoy views across to Mont Blanc and the Belledonne peaks. I then dropped to the Col d'Alpe and as I descended into the upper Pratcel valley, I saw a herd of seven chamois. Then I continued down this lovely narrow and sinuous valley into the woods leading down to the waiting car at Les Vervats to complete a really excellent day.

There had been a little more snowfall overnight, just enough to merit a visit from the snowplough, but the Chartreuse was shrouded in thick freezing fog. Visibility was less than 100m at the chalet, so we didn't bother taking the car away and did a walk up to a small chapel and a loop in the Combe des Ésparre forest. The long and delicate hoar frost crystals encrusting the vegetation and newly emerged catkins were beautiful.



Belledonne Massif from the Col d'Alpe

Thursday was another day of freezing fog and it was -5°C outside the chalet. This had been preceded with some overnight rain and sleet that had covered the car (and much else) in about 6mm of ice. The roads however had been salted in readiness, so driving proved to be okay.

I headed back up to Entremont Le Désert to do an easy circuit through the beautiful rime-crusted meadows and beechwoods to the Col du Mollard (1323m). The mist partially lifted for a while allowing glimpses of the line of cliffs flanking Mont Outheran above.

Fortunately, the freezing fog had gone and having looked at the Roche Veyrand (1429m) each day from the chalet, we decided that for our last route, it was time to visit the summit in person. We started at the hamlet of Les Gandys and followed a track to some renovated barns at Les Granges and then ascended to the Col Cucheron, which was just out of the cloud. A good track contoured around the flank of the mountain, then a steeper *piste* zig-zagged up to the small sunlit summit with good views across to the Pinet. However, we couldn't see our chalet opposite because it was now enveloped in mist! Still it was a good end to a great fortnight.



View from the Roche Veyrand



Hoar frost crystals



Chamois



Cabane de l'Alpette and the Tête de Lion

Conclusion

The Chartreuse is a good area for a snowshoeing trip, having a very wide variety of circular routes and traverses at all levels. While some *raquettes pistes* are waymarked, the use of snowshoe guidebooks (currently all in French) is essential for the others since many routes do not entirely follow the signed summer paths and there are additional hazards to avoid e.g. known avalanche risk areas and snow-covered lapiaz etc.

Most routes were either downloaded or plotted as GPX routes beforehand and printed as overlays on sections of 1-25k IGN Topo maps to use on the hill. (GPX files and route translations are available from the author on request.)

Road access to starting points at both *ski stations* and hamlets is good and kept clear of snow. Both the small towns of St Pierre de Chartreuse and St Pierre d'Entremont have a good range of shops and would make a good base. Our choice of the latter was based on it being quieter, more traditional and less developed. The Chartreuse massif is compact and most snowshoe route starting points can be reached in well under an hour by car from either centre. There is a *gite* at La Plagne which could make a suitable base for a future club meet.

Snowshoeing in the Vercors 2019

Whilst researching our 2018 snowshoe trip to the Chartreuse, I found that several of the Isère *raquette* guidebooks also covered the Vercors and it was clear that there were plenty of interesting snowshoe routes on this high limestone plateau to the south of Grenoble. We again timed our visit to finish just before the start of the French winter half-term and based ourselves in a comfortable gîte in a quiet hamlet between St-Agnan-en-Vercors and the Col de Rousset for a fortnight.

My most memorable visit to the Vercors was in 1979 after a few day's mountaineering in the Massif des Écrins to warm-up. We climbed Pic du Nord des Cavales (3362m) but had to abort our attempt on the Meije from the Promontoire Hut due to bad weather. We then joined the Craven Pothole Club on the Molière plateau for our expedition to the Gouffre Berger.

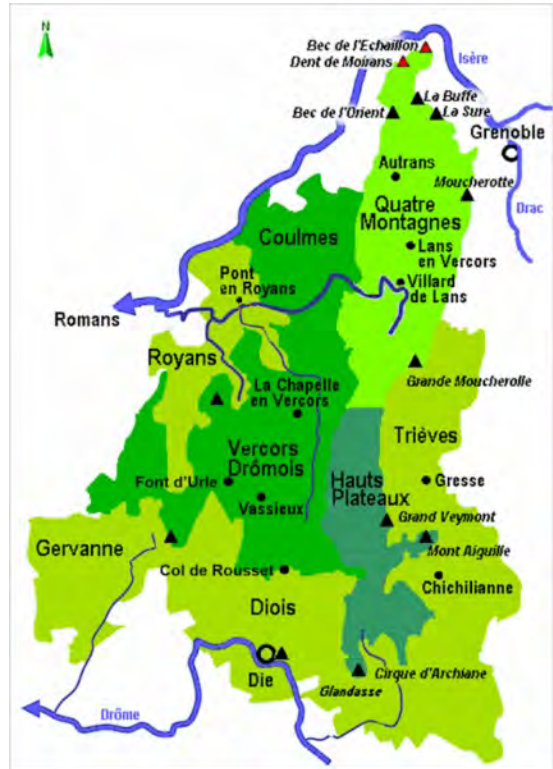
I was one of four members to bottom it on an unforgettable 21-hour trip from Camp 1 during the three days spent underground.

More recently Hilary and I had done a couple of walks with extensive views near Vassieux-en-Vercors on the way back from staying at Kevin Brown's cottage in the Baronnies. The memorials to the resistance fighters and the inhabitants slaughtered by German forces in Vassieux were particularly poignant.

The chosen location gave us access to a wide variety of snowshoe routes in the southern half of the Vercors National Park. This year the weather was rather mixed but with plenty of snow.

With snow forecast for the afternoon of our first day out, we started with a pleasant way-marked amble from the Col de Carri through the pine forest and then across more open terrain and sparse beech woods to the Col de Maupas, finishing just as the snow started in earnest.

After a substantial overnight snowfall, we drove up an icy road to Vassieux thankful for winter tyres and climbed up to Font d'Urle. It was -6.5 deg C with a strong wind as we left the car and ascended virgin snow slopes to the cliff line at the dramatic Porte d'Urle (1496m) just under the cloud base. The fierce wind-chill was uncomfortable and we back tracked to the car and carefully returned to Vassieux which was more sheltered. We then did a pleasant valley snowshoe route to an old chapel and back, with a few snow showers and little sunshine. We found the snow plough had cleared the car park leaving us on a snowy island.



The next day I drove back up to Chaud Clapier, near Font d'Urle intent on a route in the Forêt de Lente, only to find both snowshoes strangely missing their heel bars rendering them useless. I had lost one bar twice before, but only carried a single spare. There was no sign of them in yesterday's car park. I found losing both together was unnerving, so I decided to go shopping for a new pair of snowshoes in St-Jean-en-Royans. After speed-reading a number of reviews and having had a useful conversation with a local mountain leader in the shop, I settled on a pair of TSL Symbioz snowshoes which had a better, more secure design with no bars to separate.

There was nearly half a metre of new snow overnight on the car and a level 4 avalanche risk, so Hilary dropped me off outside the cemetery not far up the road in Rousset-en-Vercors where I had planned a safe route up onto the high plateau beyond the forester's refuge of Pré Grandu. I met a couple on skis bringing a pulk down the track from a couple of days camping in the snow who were grateful for my trail breaking. On the plateau, there were a couple of lads with another pulk who were also in a tent and were using a drone to capture images of the pristine landscape. I overtook them and found it slow going making a piste in the deep powder snow, so I stopped about 1 km before the Cabane Garland refuge part way across the plateau being mindful of my return. Here the pines had thinned out and gave me a good view of Le Grand Veymont (2341m) the highest point in the Vercors which dominates the ridge at the back of the plateau and I returned the same way enjoying my track downhill with a few steep additions through the trees. The new snowshoes proved themselves with good flotation and plenty of grip.

On Thursday we went back up to Font d'Urle and Hilary went for a walk towards Chaud Clapier and enjoyed watching a husky sledging race. Meanwhile I forged a route up the Serre de Montu , passing two cabanes roof-deep in snow and the Pas d'Infernet but had to stop below pt 1683m as the wind had been clearly loading the western slopes which my planned route traversed and the tops had by now become enshrouded in thick freezing fog. I returned back down my track which was rapidly disappearing under the spindrift.

It snowed, then sleeted all Friday, so we took a rest day. Saturday had more snow forecast for the afternoon, so we went up to the Vasseiux plain again and did a low-level circuit from the Col de Proncel over undulating terrain. It got a bit misty and started snowing lightly part way around but was a pleasant outing. It then snowed with some vigour for the rest of the afternoon.

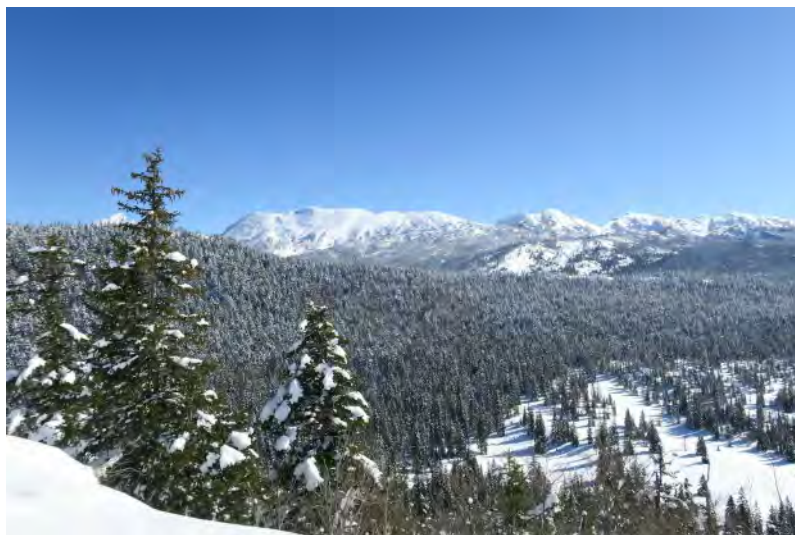
Sunday saw more heavy snowfall overnight continuing into the morning, so Font d'Urle was closed and only one ski run open at the Col de Rousset. The mist had come right down to just above our hamlet, so we didn't bother heading out. On Monday I drove cautiously up to the Col de Rousset car park and having seen that the avalanche forecast was still at Level 3 decided to try the short Les Gauras route which was supposed to be waymarked. The initial track had been mechanically pisted and some snowshoe prints looked promising. However, no one had been along the actual route, which was had not been waymarked either, so it was back to trail breaking the deep snow steeply up through the trees.

This was very heavy going on my own and I turned around after about four kilometres of step aerobics. Coming back down was a delight by comparison.

Fortunately, the weather improved the next day and we drove further north to the Site Nordique d'Herbouilly and I did the Sentier des Crêtes.

This was a bit of a misnomer as it was almost entirely in forest, with just one decent viewpoint looking out over the high plateau to the fine chain of 2000m summits forming the Vercors Eastern Barrier.

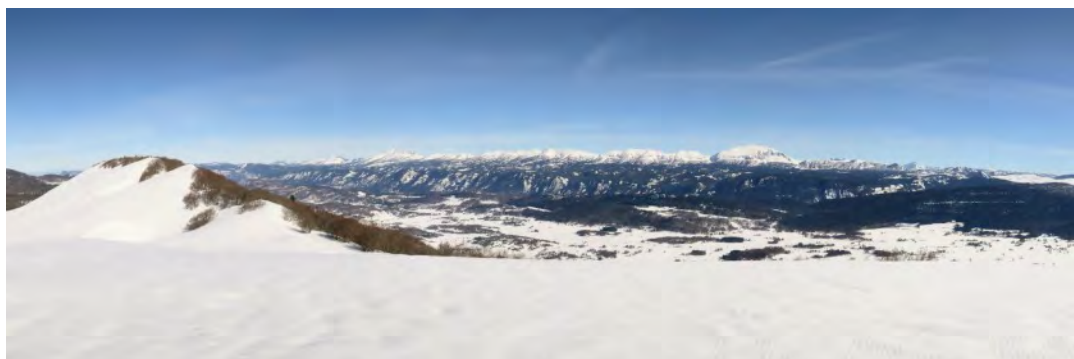
Meanwhile Hilary did a shorter snowshoe route in the forest.



Le Grand Veymont (from the Sentier de Crêtes)

We enjoyed refreshments at the Auberge de Roybon and chatted to the friendly staff.

On Wednesday, we awoke to fantastic blue skies and sunshine with a deep overnight frost. We headed up to Chaud Clapier and Hilary dropped me off to do a traverse route. I followed a good piste to Puy de Gagnère (1651 m), then followed the sinuous cliff line all the way to Font d'Urle where Hilary had parked the car, then snowshoed up to admire the cliffs.



Puy de Gagnère and the mountains of the Eastern barrier beyond)

The views south into Drôme were spectacular. We enjoyed a beer and a slice of peach and custard flan in front of the fire at the auberge back at the Col de Carri.



Crêtes de
Font d'Urle

The cliffs



The next day was miserable with rain in La Chapelle-en-Vercors and low cloud over Vassieux with a forecast for more rain in the late afternoon but it came in early. Very frustrating.

Our last day came with bright sunshine so we went up to Vassieux again and parked near the Musée de Préhistoire. Hilary did the short Petit Sagnat route while I did the longer Tour des Crêtes de Vassieux. This was an excellent heads of the valleys traverse following the long ridge over the But de Genix (1643m), Col de Vassieux, But de l'Aiglette (1524m) and down to Col de Chironne before descending to the valley to join a track near the start of the Chironne via ferrata to the car park next to the Col de Rousset tunnel. Stunning views along the cliffs and out over Drôme were enjoyed all day.



Semi-wooded plain of Vassieux-en-Vercors

In summary, the Vercors is a bigger area than the Chartreuse, with some extensive plateaus and unmanned refuges that could be used especially by pulkers on ski. We didn't attempt any of the snowshoe routes in the northern area of the National Park or east of the Vercors Eastern Barrier which will have to wait for another trip.

Narrative and photos Mick Borroff

Editor's note

It was a surprise when these pieces came in just after I had completed my own article on the area. Good though, to be reminded of places visited, usually in sunnier times.

When I walked on Charmont Som there were cattle bells ringing and pigs in pens by a seasonal cheesery and café.

As Mick said, the monuments to the resistance on the Vercors are very moving. Parts of the Vercors were the last to hold out against the Nazis who in January 1944, when they finally fought their way to Malleval, executed almost the entire village. If you have driven up the road from Cognin-Les-Gorges through the Gorges du Nan you can see how they held out so long.



Maps

IGN TOP 25 sheets 3333 OT Massif de Chartreuse Nord and 3334 OT Massif de Chartreuse Sud. 3136 OT Villard de Lans, 3136 ET Combe Laval and 3235 OT Autrans.

Guide books

52 Balades à raquettes autour de Grenoble. Julian Schmitz. Glenat, Grenoble, 2010. (18 mapped routes in the Chartreuse, 19 mapped routes in the Vercors).
Raquettes en Isère, Volume 1 (33 mapped routes in the Chartreuse), Volume 2 (32 mapped routes in the Vercors)
Guide Pratique: Randonnées à Raquette en Dauphiné. Jean-Pierre Bonfort, 2004 (45 routes in the Chartreuse, 92 in the Vercors – route descriptions only).
En Raquettes dans Les Entremont. Saint Pierre d'Entremont Tourist Office, 2001. (12 mapped and waymarked routes from 3 - 7.5 km).
Raquette a St-Pierre-de-Chartreuse. Saint Pierre de Chartreuse Tourist Office, 2001. (6 mapped and waymarked routes from 2 - 15 km).
Raquettes à Neige L'Isère. Pierre Pardon, 2001, Didier Richard (23 routes in the Vercors).
Les Bons Plans Raquettes. Vercors Drôme Tourist Office. (Leaflets for 14 mapped and waymarked routes from 3 - 11 km).

Websites

Maps and GPX files for many of these snowshoe routes can be downloaded from: Chartreuse-Tourism <http://chartreuse-tourisme.com/fr/activites/activites-neige/raquettes/idees-randos-raquettes> or Drôme Tourism: <https://www.ladromemontagne.fr/fr/hiver/activites/raquettes/raquettes.htm>
Sentiers de randonnée en pleine Nature: <https://www.sentier-nature.com>
Visorando: <https://www.visorando.com/randonnee-chartreuse.html>
VisuGPX: <https://www.visugpx.com>
Jean-Louis Negre's website: <http://jean.louis.nigre.free.fr/index.htm>

Apps

iPhiGeNie French IGN mapping app (iOS and Android) – excellent and cheap access to the latest IGN topographic maps, with >30° slopes layer and satellite images. You can upload GPX tracks to the app and then view them as overlays and follow them using your phone's GPS with cached map sections.
France Météo app for the daily weather forecast.
France Météo Ski app for the snow conditions and daily avalanche risk reports.

The team assembled at Bideford. Mike and Helen had decided that a night in the flesh pots of the town would be suitable compensation for a well located B and B. It was not. Others had driven overnight to avoid the traffic and their first experience in the town was an 0530 culinary experience at McDonald's. One member had driven down the previous day and had experienced the full force of the traffic.

We boarded the family run MS Oldenburg (61 years old) and entered a bygone age. The departure was somewhat delayed whilst the female stevedores (in dancing pumps) supervised the loading of a motor launch.

We left the quay on a high tide, narrowly missing a number of moored yachts who waved us goodbye and, ominously, wished us luck. We raced down the river on the ebb going from one shore to the other. We were unsure whether this was skilful navigation or excess play in the steering.

Fortunately the sea was like a millpond as we tacked our way across the 23 miles to Lundy under the 'control' of the autopilot. Docking was exemplary and those with a climbing glint in their eyes grabbed their kit and were off.

Others proceeded at a more leisurely pace up the hill. The location of the campsite was ideal, albeit not quite level.

There was a well-stocked shop one minute away and, more importantly, a pub 'The Marisco Tavern' two minutes away which served a wide variety of food - all at reasonable prices given the location.

The showering and washing facilities at the site were excellent - at least a 10 on the LHG scale. The island's church was a mere 3 minutes way so all our needs could be accommodated.

Pete and Simon warmed up on Alouette (S). Mike, Tim and Richard tackled (appropriately) Saturday Night (S) and Tim and Richard continued with Sunday Morning (VS 4c).

Meanwhile Helen and Felicity felt in need of a guided island orientation trip. This was slightly marred by a particularly talkative lady with blond hair who also attended later what should have been a shortish talk about the island and its wildlife, had it not been for her off-topic questions. Richard T, Felicity and Richard had to endure her cross examination of the lecturer. In the afternoon Felicity had decided to join the quest for the 29 'letterboxes' dotted around the island, in anticipation of a major prize.

On Sunday Pete and Simon tackled Saturday Night, Sunday Morning, Where Am I and Alisa B (VS 4c).



The morning started with a mass (Richard T, Helen, Mike, Tim, Richard) descent of the Montagu Steps and a circuit of the Devil's Limekiln.

They were surprised why anyone would possibly have constructed the steps in this location until they discovered that the purpose was to dismantle the wreck of battleship HMS Montagu which had foundered there in 1906. The captain and navigator were severely reprimanded and lost 2 year's seniority (and the ship).

Following this Mike, Richard and Tim decided on the classic Devil's Slide (HS) and Richard and Tim completed the dainty tiptoe traverse at the top.



**Richard on
Devil's
Slide**

Helen decided to give the benefit of her singing at the Sunday morning Songs of Praise which was being held to welcome the fleet of small planes which had come for the weekend. However as she was the only attendee the vicar agreed that a cup of coffee and a chat was more appropriate.

On Monday Mike, Richard, Tim and Felicity visited Seal Slab but a decided that with an airy hanging belay and waves crashing below that a smaller party should complete it so Felicity resumed her letterboxing.



Seal Slab

Tim and Richard continued with Horseman's Route (HS).

Meanwhile Helen and Felicity were eagerly anticipating their snorkelling and had dressed appropriately in their bikinis.

Unfortunately it had to be cancelled as the sea had been churned up and would not provide adequate visibility. As a consolation activity they were joined by Mike for an intrepid ascent of Rat Island, location of one of the letterboxes on the list

Pete and Simon continued single mindedly with their climbing quest. Stuka (VS), Captain's Arete (VS), Hurricane (HS) and Force Eight (S) fell to their assault.

The evening was spent in the pub (as were the others) and our blond acquaintance tried to persuade us to join in with her bell ringers' group quiz. Helen was most keen but we managed to deter her and completed the quiz 'off-line' and as a result she was confident that we would have won easily.



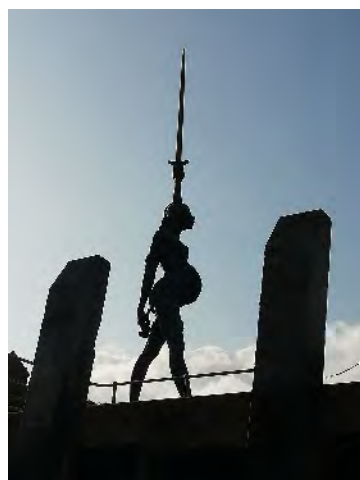
The wind had been rising steadily and Monday night tested our tent pitching skills. All passed with flying colours.

On Tuesday morning Pete and Simon decided to have a go at Seal Slabs and set off for a leisurely 11 am start. Richard T accompanied them and was able to position himself to take photos of their ascent.

Richard and Felicity completed 28 of the 29 letterboxes with the remaining one on board the ship. She cast off promptly at 1630 and as soon as she was out of the lee of the island commenced a steady roll en route to Ilfracombe. Felicity was able to find her last letterbox on the ship but was disappointed with her prize - which was to keep the folder she had been using for tracking them down.



Docking at Ilfracombe was without incident and we were greeted by 'Verity' a 20m statue of a 25 ton half dissected pregnant lady by Damien Hirst.



The general opinion seemed to be that he could keep it. A charabanc awaited us for a speedy transfer back to our cars at Bideford.

An excellent meet with plenty of variety for all tastes and a great opportunity to explore Lundy.

Our thanks to the meet leader (right)



Richard Taylor

Attendees

Peter Elliott (leader)
Simon Burn (G)
Tim Josephy
Felicity Roberts (G)

Helen Smith
Mike Smith
Richard Smith
Richard Taylor

Editors note - Lundy is strange island. It's status has been disputed several times. It was certainly a dominion under the British Empire but no conclusive evidence suggests it is in the United Kingdom. The last legal case before the courts saw the judiciary treating it as though it is though, but some doubt that validity. The island used to issue its own coins, it lies outside our territorial waters, and at the time of that court case no taxes, rates, or Customs and Excise duties had been charged. Nowadays it is treated as part of the County of Devon.

In 1969, British millionaire Jack Hayward bought Lundy and gave it to the National Trust. A conservation charity runs it deriving its income from visitors. Other than these it normally has a population of just over two dozen.

Geophysically it is different too. It is basically a plug of granite sticking up guarding the entrance to the Bristol Channel.

It is of about 1000 acres, fairly flat topped, three miles long and about half a mile wide.

Alternating between strong winds and swirling mist there are gaps of sunny weather when the walking can be exhilarating and the bird life astounding



Poet's Corner

ODE TO THE YRC

They rise from their bed, when few people would
and seek remote hills to quicken their blood.
Grabbing their gear and watching the time
they set off to cave or to tackle a climb.

Historically based, in Yorkshire so fair
members now live scattered hither and there
When caving's their aim they stay at Lowstern.
When Lakeland is calling it's LHG's turn

They climb in the autumn when daylight is dim
and in the winter when the sun is so thin
They climb in the spring, birds rejoicing in song,
and also in summer when days are so long

On along paths, route carefully planned,
They jump across streams with care as they land.
Ploughing through mud, getting stuck in the mire
passing by stable, by barn and by byre

Seeing the wild life on every hand,
taking in views often ever so grand.
Is that a hawk or a trick of the light?
Joy and relief, the top is in sight.

Onwards they push, on by thicket and bush
Why are the others in such a rush
Often through mist or in dark, murky clag
on up that crack and that dangerous crag.

And on to the summit, gasping for breath,
proud in achievement but feeling like death.
The first feel elated, success being hailed,
the others behind them wearily trailed.

Pushing up hills never giving up hope,
through slopes of boulders tied to a rope,
emerging tired and looking forlorn,
colourful outfits, very often well-worn.

Born in the Skyrack, the Club marches on
though heroes like Whymper and Slingsby are gone.
Through Botterill and Roberts the club left it's mark
in doing new routes and deep pot holes dark.

Glen Etive, The Cullin, Blencathra, Scafell
Snowden and the Glyders, many more as well
From Nepal to Norway : Ghar Parau and Spain
To Iceland and Bolivia, in sun, snow or rain

We've topped all the Corbetts; Monros as well,
been way underground more times than to tell.
From China to GG, in Douk, Alum Pot
Boggarts Roaring, Lost Johns, we've done the lot

Where's the next climb or hole in the ground
Some first ascent or new pot to be found
Summits achieved, with views all around
With quiet satisfaction, now homewards bound

Yes now to return, over moorland or fell
accompanied by, the curlew's strange yell
Hares in the heather, the laughter of grouse
Kestrels and falcons are after that mouse.

Down to the hut or a warm cosy bar
with time to enjoy a welcoming jar
stories of epics whilst eating their meal
hard to explain the contentment they feel.

Spenceley and Bridge, Edwards and Hilton
Smith and Hemmingway, Fox and Renton
Kirby and Todd, Driscoll and Nicholson
So many more; too many to mention

Woodman, Downham, Treggonning and White
Stembridge and Allan, Swindles and Wright
Stonehouse and Marsden, Chadwick and Gott
no longer with us, forgotten they're not.

Old friends remembered, replaced by the new
it seems rather lacking to talk of so few.
Move on we must, more fell-walking to do,
becking, pot holing; boulder trundling too.

ROY J DENNEY

The next two poems were found in the archives. The second is author unknown but a student with Nottingham University Mountaineering Club in 1965.

THE CLIMBER

How steep the slab above the overhang
seems from my little stance beside the lip.
For forty feet, so far as I can see
the holds arc slight, mere shadows on the face.

Below my heels the crag drops to the scree.
Far, far below the stream glints in the sun,
sending faint murmurs through the quiet air,
Shadows of clouds chase across distant hills.

Once on the slab the butterflies
that gnawed my stomach fade
and calculating calmly I can weigh
each move unflurried by the grip of nerves.

Smoothly I shift my weight from toe to toe.
Splayed finger tips now near, now reaching far
for sustenance, until, by movement
imperceptible, I gain a little height.

Now comes the crux, with nought but pressure
holds,
a balanced lift by muscles smooth and slow,
a gentle press of fingers on to rock.
My whole world centred on the next few feet.

I do not think of all the years when I,
on training bent, made my reluctant limbs
go where I willed up crag and sliding scree
until they ached and threatened to give in.

This is my harvest. Here on this sunny day,
poised upon meagre holds, high on the slab
with sinews, balance, nerves working in tune
I would not change my place with any man

Harry L Stembridge

SWEET MEMORIES OF SPRING

Up in the "Corner" here am I;
I think that I'm about to die.
Whatever made me come up here?
I must be going mad, I fear.
The rock is getting steeper still

I feel quite sick - I think I'm ill.
I must descend or else I'll fall,
Oh Lord! I cannot move at all!

The ground below looks miles away,
and now my hair is going grey!
But what is this? a thread belay,
With luck I may not die today.

I take a sling from round my neck
Oh Hell! I've dropped it on the deck!
Another sling - I make a noose -
But then I find the chock stone's loose!

Now my fate is all too clear,
I wish I'd never come up here.
My chance of living now is nil,
I haven't even made my will!

But look - a crack across the face
It might be possible to place
A piton for a good belay,
If in that crack a peg will stay.

A few hard bangs, the peg is in.
That piece of steel has saved my skin.
I used the piton for a hold,
Now that's immoral, so I'm told,

But no-one saw so I don't mind,
I have no ethics of that kind.
The holds above aren't good at all
Wish I was back in Derby Hall!

A hold breaks off where I've just trod
The peg is coming out— Oh God
Down through the air I fly at speed
At last from torture I've been freed!

I look up to the sky and see
A doctor looking down at me.
I tried to sit up, in my bed,
He shook his head and sadly said,

"When will you students learn to climb?
You've broken thirteen ribs this time"

This Cleveland meet was hosted at the Watson Scout Centre in Carlton, a small village on the North West fringes of the North Yorkshire Moors. Even before the start of the meet members were already racking up their excursions: Iain and Mick taking in Kildale, primroses, Captain Cook's monument and the broad moor of Great Ayton behind. Mike and Helen followed a similar route but also took in the views from Rosebury Topping and inspected the supposed home of the young James Cook.

Roy and Martyn walked along the Rye from Rievaulx.

After setting up base at the Watson Scout Hut Christine and Jim completed a short round walk to Faceby with many lapwings and curlews.

Carlton is a tiny village but wins awards for its floral displays and boasts a surprisingly large pub restaurant.



At 6.00 on the Friday, Roy blithely strolled over to get something to eat to be told it was fully booked. Apparently a renowned and long standing family run Thai business it can do as many as 250 covers over a weekend.

The proprietor took pity on him and said that if he could order in five minutes they could cook in ten and he had fifteen to eat before a booked table was claimed.

Saturday was also a productive day with fair, if breezy, weather. The climbing contingent of Alan, Helen B, Jamie, John, Mike, Richard and Ros headed out for some classic climbing on the Wainstones. For Ros and Jamie this was their first (and successful!) foray into outdoor climbing.

It is worth noting that some of the original pioneers here were YRC members Ernest Roberts and the Burroughs brothers, who put up many of the original routes. Somewhat later Alan Linford, with the Cleveland MC put up more.

Iain passed by the Wainstones to see the fun, before walking onto the Beak Hills ridge. After not finding an easy way down to Carleton he then went on to Scugdale and back via Faceby. Also passing the Wainstones were Fliss, Helen S, Fiona, David B and Simon who were walking the edge. The latter, upon finding a laden skip, tested his Tetris skills by discovering how much insulation could be packed in a fully laden car around the other walkers. David Hick, Tim and Mick drove over to Glaisdale Station and did a high level circuit of Glaisdale and Egton moors.

There were plenty of wild daffodils around the hamlet of Delves. They then dropped down to East Arnecliff wood to follow the Esk Valley walk back to Glaisdale, with its lengthy and well-preserved pannierman's causeway above the river, stopping for coffee and cake at the excellent Kildale Cafe on the way back.



Roy and Martyn went over Roseberry Topping with the state of Roy's back deteriorating rapidly. Resting at the bottom the debate was whether to wait there till Martyn finished the round and brought down the car or to soldier on. Perhaps not wisely, onwards and upwards with the slow and painful progress a serious challenge to Martyn's patience. Captain Cooke's monument, with over 1000ft of ascent was a severe test of Roy's bad back.

Also at Roseberry Topping were Christine and Jim who had followed a good route from the North York Moors National Park website, which took them via Great Ayton and Captain Cook's Monument; they were treated to varied terrain and excellent views. Arthur and Barbara meanwhile started from the Scout Centre and walked up the Raisdale Road to its junction with the Cleveland Way and turned south here to follow walk 1469 as listed on the web for 'Walking Britain'. Leaving the Cleveland Way in Scugdale they joined it again at the saddle at the top of Raisdale, before climbing up Kirby Bank to the view point on the northern edge of Cringle Moor. About halfway round the route Arthur had a sole destroying moment where he lost the tread on first his right, then left boot making the descents very challenging.

The evening saw good food, good company and good beer, the combination of which in front of the open fire led to a few succumbing to good zzzz's.

The beer was produced by our scribe from friends who run the Three Brothers Brewery



Sunday was windy.

Tim and Helen B returned to the Wainstones and managed five routes before retreating to shelter to defrost. Jamie and Alan also returned to the crag but were content with discussing climbing theory.

Dave, Fiona, Fliss, Helen S, Mike and Richard went for a walk, hidden from the worst of the wind around the Westerdale valley - noting that any residents of the antique bee hives on the route would have been long blown away.

Iain, Mick and Simon headed to Comondale for a short round over White Cross and Siss Cross before descending the not-so-well-preserved pannierman's causeway to pick up the Esk Valley walk. The silver birch wood of Danby Park providing them welcome shelter from the cold breeze.



Iain and Simon in Esk Dale

Arthur and Barbara went to the coast to follow the Cleveland Way coastal path from Runswick bay to Saltburn, accidentally creating a much more challenging day by walking headlong into the strong winds.

Christine and Jim completed walk 23 (Whorlton Castle) from “North York Moors (western)” by Paul Hannon.

Starting and finishing in Swainby, they noted the lovely round would be even better when the profusion of bluebells along the route were out.



After clearing up and securing at the Hut, John and Ros made their way to Fountains Abbey for a walk around the grounds.

Thanks must be given to John and Ros again for organising the meet and providing us all with substantial and tasty subsistence throughout the weekend.

RS

Attendees:

Alan Linfood
Arthur Salmon
Barbara Salmon
Christine Harrison
David Booker-Smith
David Hick
Fiona Booker-Smith
Fliss Roberts (G)
Helen Brewitt
Helen Smith
Iain Gilmour
Jim Harrison
Jamie Parker (PM)
John Brown
Martyn Trasler
Michael Smith
Mick Borroff
Richard Gowing
Richard Smith
Rory Newman
Ros Brown
Roy Denney
Simon Raine
Tim Josephy



**Simon and Iain
on
Danby Low Moor**



**Christine,
Roseberry Topping**

**Meet
Report**

**Joint meet with
Wayfarers, Lowstern**

**20 - 22
Sept**

The weekend meet began with 20 people sitting down for a welcoming meal at Lowstern. Both clubs were enjoying being sociable around a roaring fire: a good time was had by all! Michael Smith told us of his afternoon of ornithology at Attermire Scar. Colin Smith, Steve Auty, Bruce Hassell, and Mike Godden went to Austwick via Thwaite Lane and returned to Clapham across the fields.

On Saturday we awoke very early and were blessed by unseasonably, gorgeous weather. After a hearty breakfast, and some discussion, people began to levitate towards the hills.

Dave Ormerod, Bruce Hassell and Steve Auty from the Wayfarers, scaled Ingleborough via Trow Gill, then descended via Little Ingleborough, down to Cold Coates, returning to Clapham. While Martin Tomlinson and Steve Crossley also from the Wayfarers, climbed on the bolted limestone routes of Giggleswick South. Martin said, "Neither of us had done much climbing for a while, so having bolts made for a more relaxed experience. It was a lovely sunny day it's not often it can get too hot in late September."

Bill Gibbs, Michael Smith and Dottie climbed Ingleborough via the Norber Erratics: en route they met up with Martyn Trasler. John and Carol Whalley decided to go it alone and walk from Lowstern, via Newby and Newby Cote. "We only met one person on the Newby track...when we arrived at Little Ingleborough it was thronging with hoards of walkers enjoying the fine weather.



Bill beside, and Dottie and Michael climbing an erratic

We sat for lunch at the top of Ingleborough where we were met by BG, MS, MT and Dottie. The wind was fierce so we didn't hang around for long," said Carol.

They descending via Sulber Nick and Long lane, whilst Dottie and her crew descended via Gaping Ghyll and Trow Gill, where they went their separate ways: Dottie via the Estate; Bill and Martyn headed back via Clapham Beck; and Michael via Moughton.



Colin Smith and Mike Godden drove to Hutton Roof and did a circular walk around Farleton Fell.

After a pint in the Bunkhouse we were in good time for a marvellous meal cooked by John Sutcliffe and not forgetting our MC Alan Clare.

Alan Palmer and guest's arrival was delayed until Saturday morning by hold-ups on the motorway. They ascended Ingleborough.

Two camped, John and Michael. In the early hours of Sunday there was a brief light shower which was soon dried this up by the breeze. Knowing of forecast: early heavy rain, they struck camp at first light while their tents were dry and made an early start on preparing breakfast. The heavens opened within an hour or so and lightning soon followed so most people drifted off home after a very enjoyable meet.

Attending:

Alan Palmer
Brian Coupland
Bruce Hassall
Carol Whalley
Colin Smith
Dave Ormerod
Dorothy Heaton
George Chambers
Ian Crowther
John Jenkin
John Sutcliffe
John Whalley
Lulia Squires
Martin Tomlinson
Martyn Trasler
Michael Smith
Mike Godden
Mike Wallis
Steve Auty
Steve Crossley
Susan Whittle
Trudie Philpott

**The Sulber
Nick Path
receiving
serious
repair**



**Michael, Carol,
Martyn, Dottie
and Bill**

South Africa Carol Whalley Hands Across the Water

2018 was not the best year for me as I had two eye operations, which meant that John and I missed out on quite a few club trips. We decided to put all that behind us in 2019 and thought of various ways we could become involved once again. We'd heard a few murmurs about a possible trip to South Africa at some stage.

John and fellow CPC member Dr Stephen A. Craven were both members of the Ghar Parau Expedition of 1972. Stephen had worked in various countries and has lived in Cape Town for many years, so I decided to email him for advice on areas to visit and club huts etc. Stephen's reply was immediate, and he offered us accommodation in his rather grand house in Newlands and he would introduce us to key members of the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA).

After 2 days travelling we arrived, tired and weary, at Cape Town International Airport. Our host was there to pick us up in his usual prompt manner. It was a great relief after all the things I'd read on TripAdvisor re: crime. It was also very comforting to be welcomed by Stephen and have an ice cold beer thrust into our hands as we reached our destination.

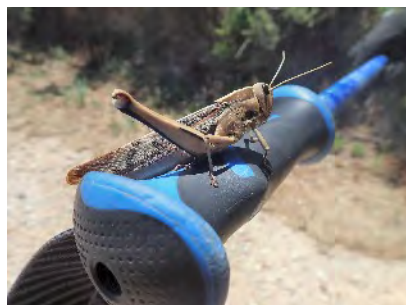
I looked at Table Mountain which was just behind Newlands and thought, "Cripes that looks steep!"

Day 1: We walked through Newlands Forest to Kirstenbosch which was the first botanical garden in the world to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site: Cecil John Rhodes purchased the land in 1895, he died in 1902 but bequeathed his land to the people. Lots of land, where schools; hospitals; and many important buildings including the University were built. We finished the day with a BBQ at MCSA. It is not what you would expect! Unlike British clubs, they have a permanent staff in the office; a conference hall holding about 200 people; a very full library; a climbing wall and their own bar fully stocked with wines and beers. They were always very welcoming and interested in what we had to say. We watched an intriguing video presentation of a scientific expedition to Heard Island in Antarctica.

Day 2: After another sleepless night, we were awoken at 5am ready to greet the day...not really as neither of us had recovered from our flight. To climb Table Mountain, you should have a very early start and carry a great deal of heavy gear: the mountain has its own weather system. Although it was a hot day about 29 to 30 degrees C, we had to carry the following: 1.5 litres of water; a fibre pile jacket and full rain gear; food and a hot flask. The steps of Porcupine Gully, our route today, were very steep and became a scramble higher up. I didn't get that far as the combination of short legs, heavy rucksack, in extreme heat didn't work for me. The dozen or so other climbers had to be back by 2.30 and I was holding them up. Luckily, a friendly doctor called Andy Young decided that, as tomorrow was going to be a very long and arduous day on the hills for him, he would be glad of an easier day showing us around the pipe track.

This allowed us time to acclimatise and really enjoy the magnificent fynbos biomes (local flora). By early afternoon we were sipping ice cold beer with Stephen at Mostert's Mill: the only working windmill in Africa. Stephen is involved with the restoration of the mill.

A friendly visitor



Day 3: A steep walk up to King's Blockhouse which is on the slopes of Devil's Peak, adjacent to Table Mountain, and commands fine views over False Bay and Table Bay: built by the British between 1795-1803 for the strategic purpose of keeping an eye out for hostile ships.

Capetown and the Lion's Tooth



Day 4: Walks around Newlands Forest were never boring and hardly ever flat. The forest not only has a lovely relaxing quality but incorporates history: The Woodcutter's Cottage and Lady Anne Barnard's forest retreat called Paradise. Lady Anne was of Scottish descent, she was a travel writer, artist and socialite and much influenced the people of the Cape in the late 18th Century.

Day 5: Today we enjoyed the best climb yet: Skeleton Gorge up to the back Table along the Nursery Gorge and down Cecilia Ridge. It was led by another Scot called Christie Smith. I think 13 people were on this walk and everyone really "gelled" – it was like a YRC walk in the sunshine. We were well matched as these walkers were in our age range. My failed attempt was with a much younger and more dynamic group.



Skeleton Gorge and Table Mountain from the Steenbergs

As Christie put it, “What on earth were you doing on the advanced climber’s track anyway?” I thought, “Good point!”

Day 6: Our host very kindly drove us to Muizenberg where we started an interesting and rather beautiful coastal walk towards Simon’s Town. Stephen’s knowledge of local history was invaluable, and we learned all about the invasion of the Dutch Cape settlement by the British in 1795. I noticed huge nets in the sea: they are to keep bathers safe from white sharks. We arrived at St. James, a lovely holiday spot adorned with brightly coloured beach huts.



Then Kalk Bay, where apparently lots of sandstone caves are to be found but we were on a mission. At Fish Hoek we were waylaid by a huge Elephant Seal by the name of Buffel: named after Buffel Bay where he was tagged a few years ago.

He’d come ashore to moult which takes a couple of months and during this time they do not feed, so I expect he was not in the best of moods; although he looked friendly enough.

By the time we got to Glencairn we’d had enough and so we all decided to catch the train back to Muizenberg. That in itself was quite an adventure! The train arrived, more or less on time, which is unusual. The three of us climbed into an empty carriage: only one seat was not slashed, with the fillings pulled out. The ceiling and walls were covered in stickers advertising abortion and Viagra. The plus side was that the train travelled along the Cape Peninsula, so we had an uninterrupted view of rollers coming in from the Southern Ocean.



Day 7 & 8: We decided to have a couple of days of culture, so we drove to Simon’s Town to visit the various maritime museums – lots of interest there. Next day in Cape Town we spent many hours in the Iziko Museum and Art Gallery situated in the Company’s Gardens. The name comes from the Dutch East India Trading Company.

We had a tour of the Castle and ended the day with a BBQ at the Mountaineering Club of South Africa’s amazing ‘Club House’ followed by a talk on the Coelacanth by Mike Bruton.

Day 9: Another lovely sunny day in paradise – we played at being tourists and visited the jackass penguins at Boulders Beach followed by a lovely BBQ (Braai) with some of Stephen’s colleagues from the University: Jean Paul van Belle, a Belgian academic; his wife Eva; Caroline Brawner from USA, and a friendly, smiling neighbour: Richelle Steyn. We had a lovely evening followed by Jean Paul’s amazing Irish Coffees overlooking a very beautiful False Bay.



Day 10: Constantiaberg was today’s climb (927 metres) it looked rather like Pendle Hill only higher with better views. We started from the Silvermine area and walked up to Elephant’s Eye; the fynbos here was striking. Looking back at the Mother City (Cape Town) we could see the Table Cloth (cloud) over the Mountain – it was stunning! Neil Sutherland & Tina Koyounoglou, Stephen’s hospital colleagues, were our guests this evening.

Day 11: Our host decided we should see more of South Africa and so we jumped into his car and drove to Paarl in the Cape Winelands. There we saw the Taal Monument, or as Stephen called it, the Prick of Paarl: it celebrates the Afrikaans language. We visited the picturesque Bain’s Kloof Pass constructed in 1854 built by convicts and named after the Scottish Engineer Andrew Geddes Bain who made quite a career of road building. I loved the dramatic scenery including Dacres Pulpit.



Then onto Du Toit’s Kloof Pass named after a 17C Huguenot pioneer who settled in the region. We had a lovely surprise on this pass as a baboon was striding along the road towards us...I thought at first glance that it was a dog.

Day 12: Another walk with MCSA followed by lunch at Kirstenbosch, from there we got a lift home with Roy Mee in his faltering Land Rover. Stephen invited Carolyn McGibbon, Executive Officer of the Royal Society of South Africa, for tea which we enjoyed on the back patio.

Day 13: Today we attended an afternoon lecture of the Royal Society of S.A. at the Astronomical Observatory given by Prof. Michael Meadows, a physical geographer from UCT, followed by the customary port and biscuits.

Day14: Farieda Khan: A social and environmental historian, is writing a paper on Women in Mountaineering/Caving. She'd heard about me from Stephen and was happy to meet up at the University Club. We had an enjoyable hour talking about life. We exchanged emails so that I could fill out a questionnaire, for her, with my own personal take on women being involved in the outdoor life over a period of 50 years. I also forwarded an email to Lisa Bauman (Extraordinary Women Leaders in Speleology), to see if she could recruit a veteran female caver from the USA to add to the paper. In the evening we attended a talk on the future of the EU by Brexiteer: Robert Jackson.

Day 15: Red bus day: we boarded a tourist bus which took us on a scenic tour of the Cape. I loved it as for once I wasn't lathered in sweat and could enjoy the Cape scenery. By now my feet were a painful mess – I think they had swollen in the heat. We wanted to travel on the canals, but the ferry didn't turn up, so we hightailed it over the bridge and into the Mother City. We had agreed to meet Stephen at 6.15 at MCSA, we didn't want to be late. We found a lovely old-fashioned pub which was called Roxy Late Night, it wouldn't have looked out of place in Amsterdam. It was by then 'Happy Hour' beer was only 10 rand. Happy Days!

Day 16: We had to do some shopping for tomorrow's special concert at Kirstenbosch, then we had a much deserved Newlands Forest walk to wind down and enjoy the lovely fresh air.

Day 17: I was limping a bit but still managed the walk to Kirstenbosch with Carolyn & company where we enjoyed an amazing concert of Mozart and Beethoven with Table Mountain as a backdrop. We had to walk back in the dark, which was unusual because people don't normally walk about after 6pm.

Day 18: Feet feeling slightly better, we picked up Brian Lambourne from Tokai and drove to gate 2 at Silvermine East to look at Higher Steenberg Peak; another lovely area to discover. I started to get cramp in my calves, so Brian very kindly gave me some of his Slo-Mag which enabled me to reach Abdullah's Cave. Later we made our way to the 'Toad on the Road' pub to enjoy a few pints and a pub lunch. A lovely time was had by all.

Thanks Brian!



**Steenberg with views across
Contiabergh and Table Mountain**

He mentioned that he was going to the Drakensberg Mountains and he thought that it would be a better proposition for a YRC meet as the trails are much longer and incorporate good climbing.

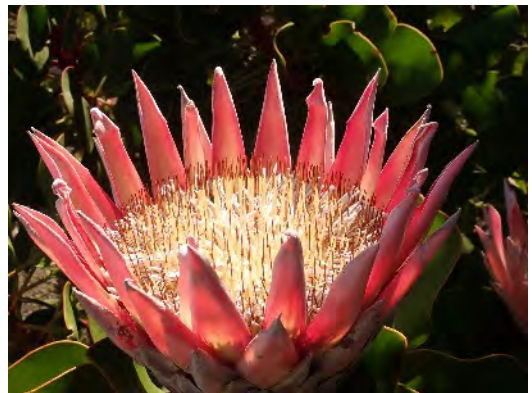
Day 19: Today was our last day on the Cape and our host very kindly took us to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope. We had a terrific day enjoying the beautiful scenery for the last time. We stopped for lunch right by the last car park of the famed peninsula and I thought of all the adventurers who had passed this way.

My thoughts then turned to baboons. I asked Stephen if he had ever had any problems with them, as we were surrounded by signs warning everyone of the dangers. Suddenly from out of nowhere came a small troupe of marauding baboons hell bent on grabbing whatever food they could. I turned when I heard Stephen's dulcet tones: he was having a fight with one of the baboons which had stationed itself on the roof of his car and was trying to pinch his empty lunchbox.

What an amusing end to a very, very interesting trip.

One of the many wonderful plants seen; a King Protea

Many thanks to Stephen and we hope one day he will join us in the UK either at our home or on a YRC meet?



Attitudes change W. B. Coolidge

Extracts from 1890-1900 letters by W. B. Coolidge (1850-1926) to Thomas Gray our early Editor. Quotes have not been taken out of context and written whilst he was living in Switzerland.

Coolidge commenting on Gray's holiday, first day out, a 10000ft summit at Lake Lucerne. Regards the hills around Lucerne as hills not mountains. Would deny the title Mountaineers to rock scramblers. Scrambling in the British Isles is not mountaineering.

Gablehorn climbed by unfair means, ropes and ladders. Small band bringing disgrace on Alpine climbing. Sunday free clerks and apprentice boys from Zurich not real mountaineers, a higher kind of excursionist.

Amused about the Climbers Club. Believes there can be no mountaineering where there is no eternal snow. Cannot see the connection between Mountaineering and Caving.

Unlikely the Jungfrau Railway will get beyond the Eiger Glacier.

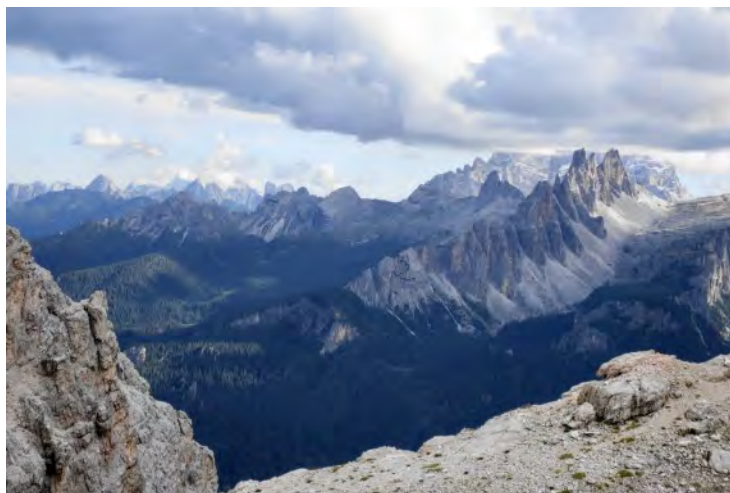
Alarmed by the number of women on bicycles.

**Overseas
meet**

**Dolomites
Italy**

**August 31
September 14**

The Dolomites in northern Italy are undoubtedly one of the most beautiful mountain groups in the world and the seventy-odd via ferrata climbing routes mostly put up during the First World War conflict are an added attraction. The first two weeks of September were selected for the meet as the Italian holidays are over, but the lift systems and huts are still open.



The leader had been to the Dolomites over half a dozen times before, and hired a large comfortable self-catering chalet in Arabba, a centrally located village which offered good access to seven different mountain groups.

As a venue for a meet, the spires, peaks, ridges and valleys of the Dolomites offer plenty of scope for a wide range of activities: walks, mountain biking, via ferrata climbing routes, scrambling and both sport and traditional rock climbing. The lift infrastructure makes using a valley base compatible with reaching most routes and summits without resorting to nights in refuges. This made for a relaxed and sociable meet with shared catering and nightly opportunities to share experiences and plan outings.

The two-week trip gave those members only able to manage a week some flexibility with dates while those with more time found no difficulty in finding interesting routes to fill every day. The weather was mostly good but with a couple of wet days when waterfalls and salamanders became the main attractions.

At the start of the second week, precipitation plastered the mountains with snow down to below pass level creating new challenges for the next few days but enhancing the mountain views. Gentians, edelweiss, various saxifrages, autumn crocuses and many other flowers together with some late-emerging butterflies enriched our days out, complementing the stunning scenery.

The proximity of Venice tempted several members to spend a day there tagged onto the meet.

Sat 31st August

Arrived and shopped etc.

Sun 1st September

Mick, Michael, Helen, Richard, Fliss (on her first via ferrata), Kjetil and Ann-Karin climbed the new VF Sottotenente Fusetti installed on Sasso di Stria last year, then walked to the summit cross and down via the First World War trench systems dug by Austrian troops opposite the Piccolo Lagazuoi.

Ged, Becca and Tim climbed the excellent VF delle Trincee above Arabba with its great views of the Marmolada, enjoying the fine situations along the airy Padon ridge.

Mon 2nd

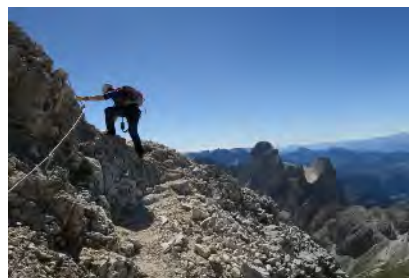
On a wet day, Mick, Tim, Michael, Helen, Richard, Fliss, Kjetil and Ann-Karin drove through Cortina to the Val di Fanes and walked the Sentiero de Canyon e Cascata with its easy via ferrata up to the 120m Cascade di Fanes, with several black squirrels and numerous black salamanders seen along the way.

Becca and Ged did various sport climbs on Sass di Stria, including Enemies and Friends both 4a, dodging the showers.

Tue 3rd

In lovely weather, Mick and Becca completed a fine VF traverse of the Catinaccio d'Antemoia (3002m) and returned to stay at the Rif Vajolet.

Meanwhile Ged and Tim climbed the sensationally exposed Piazz Arete on Torre Delago (featured recently in a BBC documentary about the iconic Welsh climber and adventurer Eric Jones) and stayed overnight in Rif Vajolet with Mick and Becca.



VF Catinaccio d'Antemoia



Michael and Helen, Fiona and Dave took a convoluted route from Passo Campolongo taking in the Rif Franz Kostner and Lech de Boa.

Richard and Fliss visited the Lech de Boa.

Vajolet Towers

Kjetil and Ann-Karin followed the historic military supply line of the VF Kaiserjäger from the old Austrian Tre Sassi Fort at Passo Valparola up to Piccolo Lagazuoi and descended via Monte de Lagazuoi and Forcella Salares back to the pass.

Wed 4th

Mick and Becca walked up to the Passo Principe, then ascended to the summit cross on Cima Scialeret (2889m) with its fantastic views of the Vajolet valley and the towers opposite. Returning to the Rif Gardeccia via the VF Scalette, they saw a herd of nine chamois.



Torri del Vajolet and Rif Re Alberto from Cima di Scialeret

Ged and Tim descended from the refuge and drove over to a crag at Passo Fedaia which is a buttress on the north flank of the Marmolada and climbed five sport routes: Zaino blu, La dieta, La regola della rigola, Scacco matto and the three-star 5a Statica. The ropes only just reached with a bit of stretch!

Michael, Richard, Fiona and Kjetil made up our second party to visit the classic VF delle Trincee. Helen, Dave and Ann-Karin walked from Passo Pordoi to Passo Padon via the Sentiero Viel de Pan to meet the others at the far end of the VF in time to take the last cable car back down to Arabba.

Thu 5th

Mick and Becca drove up to the Passo Fazarego and in a queue, slowly climbed the excellent but too-popular VF degli Alpini to the Col dei Bos, then walked up to the Piccolo Lagazuoi.

A descent was made down the famous Lagazuoi Tunnels and out onto the Martini Ledge, with its poignant WW1 remains, then down to the Bar Strobel.

Ged and Tim climbed the renowned South Arete on Sasso de Stria, an exposed eight pitch route culminating in a stiff corner leading almost directly to the summit cross. With time to spare they climbed on the lower sport crag and did Incas 4b, before returning for cooking duties.

Helen, Michael and Ann-Karin walked in Alta Badia to Lago di Lunch and Lech da Sompunt returning to Badia alongside the river with Fe and Booker's dog.

Richard, Fliss, Booker and Fe attempted the Sella Ronda by mountain bike with Richard getting a gravel rash.

Fri 6th

On another wet day, Mick and Becca did an easy walk to the Rif Palmieri for lunch situated beside the delightful Lago di Croda but did not try and sample all 47 different home-made grappas on offer.

Ged and Tim decided to walk up from the Sella Pass to do VF Col de Rodella despite the wet and afterwards enjoyed a good lunch in the refuge. They were somewhat held up by a large party of young Czechs, allowing Ged to exercise his considerable instructional skills.

Mike, Helen and Ann-Karin headed up to the protected path over Col di Lana, the scene of several WW1 mine explosions and followed the interesting fortified ridge and trench systems past the military chapel.

Richard and Fliss walked to the Cascata di Retiz near Pieve di Livinallongo.

Dave and Fe walked along the waterfall path from Corvara to Colfusco to see the Cascate del Pisciadu.

We all went out for an evening meal and after starters, most were defeated by the enormous pizzas and finished them for lunch the next day.



Sat 7th

Ged, Richard and Fliss returned to the airport for their flights back to the UK. Mick and Becca walked up to Rif Bec de Reces via the Panorama path and back to Arabba. They then drove to Cortina to collect Esther and Lloyd who had arrived at the bus station from Venice.

Tim walked up to the Col di Lana and along the protected path. In gathering clouds and quite alone, wandering among the atmospheric ruins of a futile war was an unforgettable experience.

Kjetil, Michael, Helen, Dave and Fe - walked up Pizac (2213m) and back to Arabba before attempting the Cascata di Retiz walk but didn't find the waterfall due to trees felled in last year's major storm.

Ann-Karin had a relaxing day in Arabba.

Sun 8th

Snow was forecast to below pass level, so Kjetil, Ann-Karin, Michael, Helen, Mick, Esther and Lloyd drove up to the Pordoi Pass and visited the new WW1 museum with its extraordinary collection of military artefacts and thought-provoking insights into the "White War" fought here.

After lunch at the chalet, Mick and Tim did the Cascata di Retiz walk and did find the waterfall.

Becca did a run up to Rif Plan Boë and back to Arabba via the ski pistes.

Esther and Lloyd walked from the Chalet to the Rifugio Bec des Rocas (eerily deserted), and an excellent strudel at the Hotel Monte Chertz.

Michael and Helen visited Alan and Angie at their hotel for tea and cakes.

Dave and Fe drove up to the Col Alto and stayed on the plateau in the snow.

Mon 9th

Mick and Kjetil took Esther and Lloyd on their first via ferrata outing selecting VF Ra Gusela on the Nuvolau followed by VF Averau to make a high-level circuit above the iconic Cinque Torre from Rif Col Galina. This was made more interesting by the covering of new snow and everyone enjoyed it hugely, especially the magnificent views towards Monte Pelmo, the Civetta, Antelao, Sorapis and the not far-off Tofana di Rozes.

Tim, Michael, Helen, Becca and Ann-Karin struggled up snow-covered scree from Passo Pordoi to Rif Forcella Pordoi

then traversed towards Piz Boé, reaching the rock bands at 3,000m.



**Becca
below
Forcella
Pordoi**

Mike and Tim continued up the last 150m to Rif Boé in soft snow up a steepening slope. The zigzag descent above a significant drop and in light boots was thought provoking; both heaved a sigh of relief on reaching safe ground. The party regrouped at Rif Forcella Pordoi before returning on the cable car to Sasso Pordoi.

Dave and Fe repeated the delightful Sentiero de Canyon e Cascata in Val di Fanes.

Tue 10th

Mick, Lloyd, Esther, Tim, Becca, Kjetil and Ann-Karin followed the protected path up Sassongher (2665m) which towers above Corvara, hand-feeding the noisy alpine choughs some lunch at the summit cross with its outstanding views.

Again, the summit snowfield required concentration in descent.





Michael and Helen descended from the Piz La Ila to Alta Badia with Alan and Angie. Dave and Fe completed the Sella Ronda by mountain bike.

Wed 11th

Mick, Becca, Tim, Lloyd and Esther made a highly recommended circuit of Tofana di Rozes from Rif Dibona, including going underground on the VF Grotta di Tofana, then ascending the unique stemple ladder of VF Scala di Minighel (possibly the oldest VF in the Dolomites).



This was a splendid tour, encompassing easy but spectacular ferratas, caving, WW1 battlefields and stark lunar landscapes, culminating in a much-anticipated beer at Rif Giussani, where they were reunited with Kjetil and Ann Karin, who had missed out the ferratas.

Michael, Helen, Dave and Fe parked at Rif Col Galina, walked to the cable car and did the Giro di Cinque Torre and VF Ra Gusela to the Rif Nuvolau

Dave and Fe returned via Cologne and Bruges on their drive to the cross-channel ferry.

Thu 12th

Mick, Esther and Lloyd took the Dantercipies gondola from Selva and walked across the Altiplano Crespeina to its lake and on to Rif Puez for an espresso, then descending via the textbook deep glacial trough of Vallunga, and pausing to visit the charming tiny chapel of San Silvestro and its 300-year old frescos, uncovered in 1993. This varied walk was very enjoyable.



The glacial trough of Val Longaru

Tim, Becca and Kjetil drove to the Gardena Pass and did the famous VF Brigata Tridentina with its suspension bridge, immortalised in the film “Cliffhanger”.

Although the route was very busy, everyone was moving smoothly and there were no delays. After a lazy lunch they descended by the very steep Val Setus, more of a gorge than a valley, with the winding pass road visible far below.

Michael, Helen and Ann-Karin did VF Santa Croce in Alta Badia from the midway chairlift station.

Fri 13th

Tim and Becca left early for a last day in Venice.

Mick, Esther and Lloyd motored over to Misurina and paid the exorbitant toll to drive up to the Rif Auronso parking. They then enjoyed VF Senterio Della Forcelle and summited Monte Paterno (2744m) to with its amazing views before following the second part of VF De Luca/Innerkofler to Forcella Laveredo and back via refreshments at Malga Langalm to complete a magnificent circuit of the Tre Cima di Laveredo.



**Tre
Cima
Di
Laveredo**

Michael and Helen did the Kaiserjäger Steig then descended the Lagazuoi tunnels, reascending to Forcella Lagazuoi for their return via Forcella de Salares to the Valparola Pass.

Alan and Angie explored Selva and later the Forcella Sassolunga via the “coffin” lift from Passo Sella and Kjetil and Ann-Karin repeated the lovely high-level circuit to the Rif Puez from the Dantercipies gondola in Selva.

Sat 14th

On his route to the airport, Mick drove to Passo Staulanza and enjoyed a last walk up through the pine forest to see the three tracks of dinosaur footprints from the late Triassic period imprinted on a huge block of dolomite collapsed from the flank of the towering Pelmo massif above.

Michael and Helen drove back to the airport the scenic way exploring the town of Treviso en route.

Kjetil and Karin-Ann dropped off Esther and Lloyd for an extra day in Venice, visiting the Biennale and the Accademia and taking in an incense-laden morning service at St. Mark's.

Participants

MB

Mick Borroff (Leader)

Dave Booker-Smith

Fiona Booker-Smith

Ged Campion

Esther Chadwick

Lloyd de Beer (G)

Becca Humphreys

Tim Josephy

Alan Linford

Angie Linford (G)

Fliss Roberts (G)

Helen Smith

Michael Smith

Richard Smith

Ann-Karin Tveranger (G)

Kjetil Tveranger

Is it connected with memories of Yorkshire's maritime adventurers such as Cook and Scoresby or recalling crossings to mainland Europe *en route* to the Alps that make those few minutes on the Corran Ferry set our meets on Ardgour and Ardnamurchan apart from the usual run of meets?

On Thursday, the three cars from Wales, Sheffield and Leeds arrived at the Ariundle Centre's bunkhouse all within half an hour of one another – all complaining of the rain blighting their journeys. The bunkhouse had everything required though is in need of a bit more care and attention. Associated with it is a restaurant and a mile away is a shop. All that was lacking on Friday morning was good weather and our two absentees: one from overwork and the other from catching a bug while cycling in Scotland. So the persistent seven constituted the meet.

Two erstwhile canoeists searched the shores of Loch Moidart for a suitable launching area but were disappointed by wind, wave or poor terrain.

More successful were two of the troglodyte persuasion who headed up the valley above Strontian over rough trackless ground in search of an entrance in the Whitesmith lead mines.



JW

They found it and one managed to squeeze past the guarding gate but soon found the passage too collapsed to be a sensible venture. They subsequently found a more recent entrance and explored it for some way before the reliance on only one light dictated a return.

One drove back whilst the other splashed across the moor and returned through the ancient Ariundle forest.

Three tolerated the 90-minute drive out to the Point of Ardnamurchan, veered right before the end and parked at Portuairk. From there, reaching Sanna Bay involved a couple of swollen stream crossings. Arrival at the northern end of the Bay was carefully timed to coincide with low tide for a crossing to Sanna Island. This was thwarted as the sands never emerged from the choppy seas of a neap tide. Instead, a windy and boggy circuit was made of Sanna Point taking in the scant remains of the Dun Ban fort before returning and visiting the lighthouse for a tour and a cuppa.



Helen and Peter at the Sanna Bay fort

MS

Each evening most ate in the bunkhouse restaurant which had a different menu every night, good food, a small selection of wines and unrushed service, all of which suited us nicely.

Saturday dawned drier and tempted us to aim for greater things. Harvey drove Tim's car out towards Ardnamuchan before parking below Garbh Bheinn and paddling some way up its boggy valley on the stalker's track.

Paddling of a more serious nature, in a two-person kayak, was achieved by launching near Strontian and heading round the head of the loch then west through showers. The trip nearly didn't get underway as the slippery slipway resulted in John taking a tumble. On the return the wind behind made steering more difficult and almost back they encountering a curious seal before returning.



The remaining four were parked by the River Tarbert below Garbh Bheinn for an attempt on the Pinnacle Ridge scramble, drawn by a dryish forecast. They were misled. Splashing up Coire an Lubhair to the supposed foot of the ridge, they chose instead to continue to the Bealach Feith 'n Amean.

Close inspection of the contours on the 25k map suggested a possible way almost due south from the tiny lochan to Garbh Bheinn's summit.

Despite a hail shower this was attempted by starting up a steep grassy gully to emerge in a hanging corrie.

Keeping a little left, the summit was reached with a little easy scrambling. That same general line took them to the subsidiary south summit after a short excursion westward in error.

A rare moment of bright sunlight produced a brilliant Brocken spectre. Heading south-east they eventually regained their car after a rough but rewarding circuit.



Photos
MS



Sunday, most were heading straight home, back across the sea to their everyday lives.

Three though, seeing Sunday's good forecast extended their stay and walk up from the Resipole campsite up the Corbett, Beinn Resipol.

The long moorland approach was boggy but the last kilometre improved once the path was abandoned for an easy scramble over mica bearing schist. The summit has a reputation for good views and it did not disappoint: Coll, Muick, Eigg, Rum, Skye, Torridon and lochs Sunart, Sheil and Moidart were readily identified.

Also spotted over the extended weekend were: sea eagles, buzzards, little grebe on a sea loch, otters and a pine marten. Stags were rutting and their bellowing was heard across the glens.

Thanks go to Peter for organising our breakfasts and the Ariundle Centre for the accommodation and dinners.

Attendees:

Peter Chadwick
Tim Josephy
Harvey Lomas

Helen Smith
Michael Smith
Carol Whalley

John Whalley

Stringing Along Reflections on my father, Cliff

Learning the other way, an ascent of Patey's Route, Coire an t-Sneachda

I recall knowing it was going to snow. It always did, without fail. My Dad went on this annual trip to Yorkshire and it snowed. It was mid-November, the Yorkshire Ramblers Club Annual Dinner and my Dad was a Yorkshire Rambler. But why? What drew him back each year? What was a Yorkshire Rambler? What was it about my Dad that made him not just a Yorkshire man but a Yorkshire Rambler? Now some 45 years later as I reflect on his life and digest the messages received after his death I get closer to the essence of my father.

Growing up I knew little of the YRC until I started hill walking. Our first father and son outing was Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin from the south, a good round with a little scrambling. I was hooked.

Drawn to my Dad's accounts of mountaineering in the Alps, and the UK, the more I heard the more I wanted to experience. But the most important thing, that led me to becoming a mountaineer, and something that I would like to think is characteristic of the YRC, was my Dad's encouragement to become independent, self-reliant and learn by experience.

Bad weather or darkness was never to be feared. Turning back wasn't failure and often accompanied by the mantra "the mountains will always be there, you won't". When myself and a few friends looked to start rock climbing in the 1980s my Dad took us to a disused quarry, showed us basic rope techniques, how to waist belay with his 1950s hawser laid nylon rope, provided a few ancient karabiners and slings and few weeks later we independently did our first climb; as 300ft Diff on the Cobbler (no helmets or harnesses etc).

How many would start that way today?

More likely several training courses later and bedecked in £100s worth of gear your first lead would be a single pitch near vertical VS. Something my dad would have considered recklessly overstepping your experience.

On returning from Glencoe, covered in bruises after a substantial fall from a verglassed shelf my Dad joked that he had a similar misfortune himself and like him it was probably best not to tell my mother.



Cliff Large in 1950

Photo Neville Newman

As I headed out the door for another mountain adventure he would often say “don’t do anything I wouldn’t do” and then add with a chuckle “well may be not”.

Recklessness wasn’t encouraged, but rather learning on the job with a cautious incremental approach.

David Large

Four go off in a train A Dolomite Reminiscence

Raymond Harben

The Sheffield Four that is to say Bill Woodward, Keith Barker, Don Henderson and myself, decided in 1959, to go on a climbing holiday in the Dolomites. We travelled overland by train to Bolzano then by bus to Canazei. From Canazei we followed a path upwards through a pine wood looking for somewhere to camp for the night and came across a byre with a large overhanging balcony and as it was getting late, we decided to bed down on this for the night.

The following morning the farmer came round and opened the doors to the top half of the barn and invited us to stay there which we did for a number of nights. Fortunately there were no animals in the lower part.

A couple of days in we decided to climb on the Sella Towers and walked up to the Sella pass only to find ourselves amongst a Carabinieri exercise.

Bill and Don borrowed a couple of soldiers hats to try on. In charge of the exercise was an Italian general to whom we indicated the route we proposed to climb. It seemed that parties of soldiers were to climb every route on the towers at the same time!!

We set off on our route with the general shouting instructions to us through a megaphone when we reached a chimney high up on the tower the instructions were “face to Bolzano, arse to Corvara.”





Shortly after we reached the summit of our climb the Carabinieri, on reaching the tops of their routes, let off coloured smoke flares for the benefit of a British general who had arrived from SHAPE (The Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe) to see the exercise .

As we descended the Italian band played the national anthems of Great Britain and Italy.

On reaching the base the Italian general introduced us to the British general.

Bill in his usual fashion asked “ what do you think of this lot then?” the general being somewhat diplomatic said “ I don't think it would be much good in a war”.

The rest of our holiday was spent climbing many routes without the benefit of a megaphone.

What goes around comes around

Writing in the Alpine journal this year, its Editor Ed Douglas said “it's tempting to wonder what alpinists fifty years in the future will make of the bizarre photograph that appeared in newspapers and on television all over the world this May, of a long, snaking queue on the summit ridge of Everest. Will they be appalled that such things were allowed? Or will they simply see it as a step along the road to a wholly commercialised mountain?

Perhaps by then there will be a pressurised cable car or funicular, an easy way down for those tourists who still bother to walk to the top, much as climbers now rely on the cable car at the Aiguille du Midi in the Mont Blanc range.

Perhaps 2019 will seem a more innocent age, where life was simpler.”

So what's new?

Trawling our archives we find a piece in the Yorkshire Post covering our annual dinner in 1966 quoting our guest speaker. Mountaineers and others that like doing things the hard way were praised by Sir John Hunt, leader of the British team which made the first ascent of Everest; their spirit contrasting with the jelly bellied effeteness of society.

Sir John was guest of honour at the Club's dinner at the Hotel St. George, Harrogate. Recalling his visit to the Matterhorn centenary celebrations that year, Sir John wondered what the 2053 centenary celebration of Everest's conquest by his expedition would be like.

Would the party be hoisted to the summit by cable or would they drop in by helicopter? Or would they be shot up by rocket in preference to the route pedestrians had used 100 years before?

In fact, Sir John joked, he wondered if the mountain would still be there. It was possible it would have been bought by an American and set up as an attraction somewhere outside New York.

Sir John deplored the mechanical devices being installed to hoist people to mountain tops. It was salutary at the Matterhorn festivities, that when man liked to think he had gained control of nature the elements should have caused a postponement.

As is traditional after the dinner, he proposed a toast to the Club and in reply Dr. W. P. B. Stonehouse (Pat) the then President' recalled that Edward Whymper, whose party first conquered the Matterhorn in 1865, was one of the Club's first members.

Pat added: "One reason we are a sane and balanced group of people is because we are good mountaineers. In this modern life there is something lacking which mountaineering brings, with its sense of adventure and achievement and the comradeship - one relying on the other.

If one is desperately clinging to a crag face and is told "your house has been burned down, old man" it does not worry you all that much. Neither does your bank balance."

Nothing really changes does it.

As we reach the grumpy old man part of our lives we look back and despair at the future but it was ever thus. I cannot speak for the female of the species.

Not many members will remember Pat Stonehouse but in my early days going out with the Club he was a very respected elder statesman, a true gentleman, never more apparent than when, on a meet I organised in the South Pennines, when he was no longer able to attend, he left money behind a bar to quench our thirsts

Those were the days my friends.

Your Editor



Pat Stonehouse

Chippings

TOO MUCH SUN ?

When you have been out in the sun too long you can start imagining things.

Richard Smith spent some hot days in the western states and came across these.



He thought he could see a face in both and even thought he recognised the first one.

CRACKLING SOUND USING AN ICE AXE!

Has anyone else had this experience? I have twice noted in Scotland a distinct and very disconcerting “crackling” sound coming from an ice-axe. On each occasion I was on a ridge in the Mamores, in cloud and dry snow; the first and more dramatic occasion was on the South ridge of Binnein Mor, collecting winter Munro summits and Tops with Sue.

We didn’t want to leave the ridge, or abandon the axes (the ridge was snow-covered, both sides are steep, and both were heavily corniced in places), but we were alarmed in case this indicated approaching lightning strike. Raising the ice axe above the head (perhaps not the most sensible experiment, even to advance the cause of science) produced an impressive increase in crackling. We scuttled rapidly along to the ridge end and escaped down, and the crackling ceased as we descended.

This doesn’t seem to be the same as the (apparently similar) alpine phenomenon, which is associated with approaching thunder and lightning; there was no hint of thunder on the Mamores, and it would be unlikely in the sort of winter weather we were having.

Could dry snow rubbing together produce an electric charge?

Is there anything about the Mamores which makes them prone to this phenomenon?

I would be interested in any similar experiences.

Rory Newman

BOOK REVIEW?

We normally seek reviews of new books. This is not a new book nor even a new reprint / re-release. I recently came upon a book produced by National Geographic and fascinating it was. Many members may have read this or the original and we may even have a copy in the library but if not this one will end up there.

This version was issued in 2002 but the original copyright dates back to 1871. The book in question is *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* (in the years 1860-1869) by Edward Whymper.

Much has of course been written about the man a truly legendary climber if a miserable companion.

Despite his epics including the first ascent of the Matterhorn and having seen a number of climbing companions killed, he lived and climbed into his 70s and is buried in Chamonix. This memoir covers numerous first ascents.

THERE ARE BRIDGES AND THEN THERE ARE BRIDGES

A few editions ago we did an article comparing and contrasting some fairly hairy bridges in Nepal to some modern masterpieces soaring into the sky with spectacular examples from China.

Albert Chapman has provided another classic example.

He comments:

“When one’s age reaches the mid 80s it is better to leave the high mountains and walk gentle horse-free paths where a fall is not as life-threatening providing you can swim.”



KNOW HIM ?

Did you make out anyone familiar in Richard’s rock?



LIVING THE HIGH LIFE?

Back in May a number of members and families had their now traditional break together. Not for them the vagaries of camping or hostels but somewhere offering creature comforts. This year they returned to the hotel used two years previously the Derwentwater Hotel, Portinscale, Keswick. Attending were Paul and Anne Dover, Richard and Ann Dover, Peter and Ann Chadwick, Mike and Marcia Godden, Tim and Elaine Josephy, Ian and Una Laing and Alan and Angie Linford. Joan Armstrong's family persuaded her to attend following the death of her husband Dennis but Richard and Elizabeth Gowing had to cancel due to ill health.

Derwentwater and the surrounding hills were bathed in glorious sunshine and on the Tuesday eleven walked up the Newlands Valley to Little Town, the attraction being the sumptuous homemade scones, cream and jam lunch. The return was via the flank of Catbells except for Paul and Richard who chose that at least one summit was an attractive 'must do' and the climb and descent of Catbells was greatly enjoyed.

The group reunited to enjoy ice creams at Nichol End. Tim and Elaine walked the Dalemain Loop extension of the Ullswater Way, from Pooley Bridge along the River Eamont to Dalemain then through parkland and pasture via lunch at the Horse and Farrier in Dacre and back to the start. Very pleasant, more like the Dales than the Lakes.



Meanwhile, Peter and Ann went up Skiddaw from Keswick, continuing northwards to join the Cumbria Way, returning along the main track via the Youth Hostel. They watched some vintage gliders being towed off the steep grassy field, an exciting bonus. In the afternoon they visited the gardens at Mirehouse, at the south end of Bassenthwaite, which were stunning.

Wednesday, the Linfords, Goddens, Laings and Joan Armstrong took the boat trip to Grange and walked back on the lakeside, Paul and Anne walked to Keswick and round the impressive Hope Park gardens and park then visited the gardens at Mirehouse.

Tim and Elaine walked down the lake to Grange and also visited Mirehouse gardens in the afternoon. Peter and Ann drove to Little Town in the Newlands valley and did the round of Robinson, Hindscarth Edge and Dale Head . There were a lot of people out walking the tops enjoying the views and the fabulous weather. In the afternoon they visited some more gardens at Askham Hall, near Lowther Castle, which were equally impressive and enjoyable.

Richard and Ann were celebrating their wedding anniversary by visiting the renowned furniture designer in Staveley, taking afternoon tea in Grasmere. The celebration was rounded off with a champagne party for the whole group after dinner before holding a review meeting at which all agreed to plan a meet in 2020 with the Peak District the preferred location.

Thursday, the Linfords, Goddens, Laings and Joan were again attracted to the lake and enjoyed a full circular boat trip of Derwentwater, the Dovers enjoyed the open deck bus from Keswick to Seatoller and learned not to choose the seats on the nearside due to the many overhanging trees. They walked back via Seatoller Force which had little water, to lunch in Grange and then the lakeside walk back to the hotel.

Friday most went home but the Dovers visited Muncaster Castle overlooking the Esk estuary ahead of attending a family wedding in Wigton. Most of the numerous rhododendrons were in full bloom and were truly stunning. they also enjoyed a close up well organised display of many species of owls and hawks.

WHAT THREE WORDS CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE (WHAT3WORDS)

Back in 2013 a Hertfordshire man created a location system which is becoming ever more popular and being used by rescue services. Eight figure latitude and longitude is pretty accurate but rarely used and cumbersome and post codes a waste of time as I found out when I called the AA out to Lowstern when a battery died overnight.

He has worked out that using 40,000 random words gives you enough combinations in threes that every 3m by 3m (10ft by 10ft) square in the world could be allocated a specific address. They divided the world into 57 trillion squares, having a unique, randomly assigned three-word address. His company now has 100 employees based in London and the system is being widely used. It is even used as the official postal system in Mongolia.

You do need a smart phone to download the App. But if you have it and need help your location can be accurately defined.

ROUTES AT RISK - THE CLOCK TICKS REMORSELESSLY ONWARDS

After the 31st of December 2025 any historic path which is not formally recorded on the definitive map of paths will be lost unless still being well used. If it is still in current regular use then as always it can be claimed as a de facto public path based on unhindered usage.

If however it has fallen into disuse for now it is still technically a path regardless of obstructions on the ground and with historic evidence it can be added to the map of recorded and therefore protected paths. The CROW Act created a cut off point after which historic evidence will not be accepted.

This gives certainty to landowners when planning the use of the land. 25 years was allowed to find and claim all these routes but it has proved a mammoth task and the scale of the task massively underestimated.

Estimates vary widely but it is thought that close to 150,000 miles of paths exist in England that we know of. There are possibly another 10,000 miles of desire paths; paths regularly walked by people but with no legal status and possibly as much as 15,000 miles of legal footpaths not recorded and not in use. The reasons do not matter but with the rate of building of new communities, shopping precincts and industrial estates; new roads and HS2 many of these links will become very advantageous again.

This network is the envy of the world having evolved over many centuries before records began. We do however have records going back quite a long way. These paths link villages to other communities, to paths and roads, to the mill or the pub, to shops or to the fields they worked. Nowadays leisure walking is widespread but we are increasingly encouraged to use this free facility both for exercise and as a means to get out into the countryside for our general health and wellbeing.

If the unprotected miles of paths are to be enjoyed by generations to come we have to get applications in to local Highways Authorities to have them added to the map. Some have major obstacles on them now and some would be very inconvenient to landowners and managers but if a right is established it should encourage them to offer an acceptable alternative. If they dedicate such a route we could call a halt to any claim but if it has got that far then we could accept a diversion order.

Numerous user groups are finding the gaps and the anomalies and building databases of the problems but volunteers are needed to tease out the evidence. The process is fairly simple but time-consuming and if the evidence is not there to be found, frustrating. If hard evidence is not there but there is a fair bit of circumstantial evidence we can still claim as it is hoped any claim in process at cut off will not be extinguished giving us more time to find that silver bullet.

The starting point is comparing old maps with those of today. Old maps often show lost rights of way that may have fallen into disuse and many can be found and studied online - every area also has local early maps and they also turn up in old books.

The National Library of Scotland has a digitised copy of maps of the UK which you can zoom into. Old maps have giveaways like a footpath (F.P.), bridle road (B.R.) or a 'road' which is not on a current Ordnance Survey map – There are many other sources which can be accessed. Your County Archive will have dozens and you can spend hours of fascinating research there.

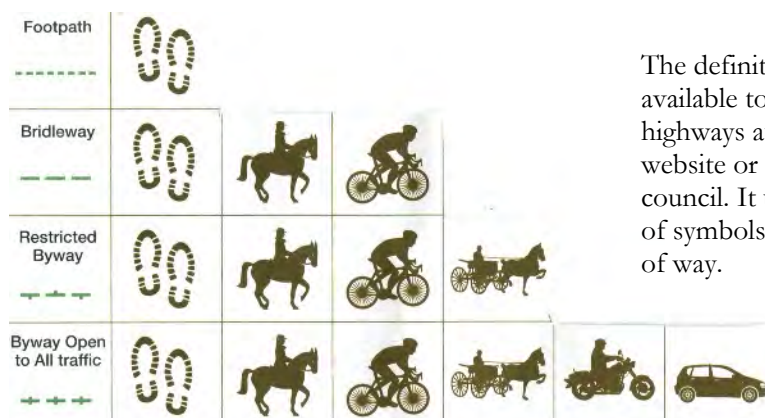
You don't even need an old map as just studying a present day map shows up anomalies. If things that don't quite make sense, then the probable answer is that something is missing like an old path.

The system whereby they were put on the map was that each parish listed them. Some interpreted the rules differently and some were perhaps not as diligent or left things off for ulterior motives. The chairman of many parishes was often the large local landowner. If one parish has an abundance of paths and is next to a parish with relatively few it begs the question why?

One thing you can take as read is that paths did not go nowhere. It is rare that a right of way will be a dead-end, so what is missing? It could be it used to go to a mill which has gone but if it ends at a parish boundary it almost certainly means one parish listed it and the other did not for whatever reason but the path will have continued.

It is best to look at the definitive map rather than the OS where some things are not as clear but you may see a path doesn't quite reach the road. The road may have been moved and nobody thought to divert the path officially even though everybody still walks it.

If you are not a records buff and prefer legwork, you can look for clues when out and about. There are a number of things which may reveal the traces of historic paths or even bridleways.



The definitive map should be available to view at the local highways authority, on their website or at the local parish council. It uses a standard set of symbols for different rights of way.

A sunken line on the ground may indicate where a path has been "hollowed out" by use over time. It may have parallel rows of hedges either side which is a dead giveaway that it was probably a drovers' route where cattle were moved.

You may see remnants of an old stone surface in a field which may indicate a historical road or even cobbles in a river which might suggest an old ford. If walking along an old stone wall you may see what looks like an old worn stone stile which may indicate an old route existed at this point. If there is a tunnel under a raised rail bed what was it for?

Each Highway Authority is tasked with researching its 'lost ways' but few have the resources to do much. Most welcome volunteers assisting and in most cases it is through the good offices of their Local Access Forum or user groups like the Ramblers Association or British Horse Society.

If you are interested in helping contact one of those organisations.

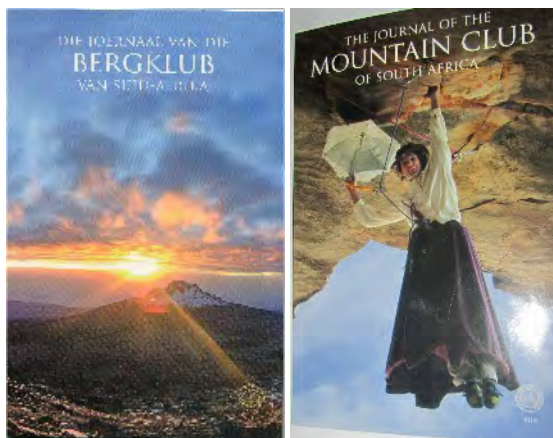
Mountain Club of South Africa

The 2017 edition of their dual-language journal is now in our Library. It contains reports on a crossing of Iceland, and trips to Patagonia and the Balkans, Peru and Ethiopia.

2018's has just arrived and will find its way to Lowstern shortly. This edition has an interesting piece on Hochvogel, the mountain which is splitting in two.

It also includes efforts in Nepal, Peru and the Sierra Nevada.

They are so much like the YRC as a club and were founded one year earlier than us. Their journals are always a very good read.



Grampian Speleological Group

We also have the latest copy of the journal of the which includes caving in Pakistan, Mawsynram in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya state in north eastern India and in the Basque area of northern Spain.

In Pakistan they explored Dohzaka Tangi which is a narrow, deep and winding gorge with an unsurfaced bulldozed road that clings, often somewhat precariously, to its sides and connects Ziarat to the town of Sharigh lying some 70 kilometres to the south and more significantly the other side of the mountains. The nature of the gorge and the road is aptly summed up by the translation of its name which in broad terms is 'Hell's Way Path'.

Alpine Club



The Alpine Journal is as usual full of fascinating articles but this time I found a series of pieces on the far west of Nepal of particular interest. They have in effect created a comprehensive guide to the largely unexplored peaks in the area. Bhutan is known to us and the Arunachal Pradesh is visited but otherwise the area is largely neglected principally because of its remoteness. The guide concentrates on the 6000m plus summits along the Tibetan border, an area known as the Karnali Pradesh. Specifically we are talking about Mugu and Jumla.

There are over 90 peaks of this magnitude of which about two thirds are unclimbed. And if you throw in those over 5750m, often very technical and also unclimbed you can see the attraction to climbers tired of the queues on the more popular giants.

There is another interesting if disturbing piece on climate change in the high mountains.

Club Proceedings

PRESIDENT

At the AGM, our President, Rory Newman, led members in a tribute to the members who had died this year.

He went on to say it had, as usual, been a busy year. He feels the Club is in good shape at the moment: are aware of our past, active in the present, and planning for the future.

“Looking first at the past, as our history as a “senior” club is important, I’m pleased to report that work continues on the Library at Lowstern, and on the club archive now mostly housed in Northallerton, and I want to thank Arthur Salmon our librarian and Alan Linford our archivist.

More recently, we have had a generally varied and successful meets program, so thanks to all the meet organisers. Another success in the last year has been the publication of the new-look journal. I know Roy Denney put a lot of work into this; he is unable to be here today, but thanks to him for all the work, and let’s hope he is back on his feet soon. I’m sure if anyone wants to put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, he will be grateful for any articles for further editions.

In the present, we have two excellent huts; Low Hall Garth has new cookers, Lowstern has new doors and windows, so do go and try them out. Thanks here to our hut wardens Richard Sealey and Alistair Renton and to Richard Josephy for managing the bookings. Thanks also to Bill Gibbs who is generously donating a complete new set of cutlery and crockery to Lowstern.

The club keeps going because a number of people give up their time and energy to make it happen.

Apart from those already mentioned, I’ve had a great deal of support (*what this actually means is that they do all the work, I’m just the figurehead*) from the officers and committee, so big thanks to all of them.

I’d particularly like to mention Tim Josephy who has done a tremendous amount of work as Secretary, and who is handing on the job – he’s obviously a masochist as he is staying on as Meets Secretary.

Looking to the future, we have an attractive and varied meets program for next year; with I hope something for everyone. We have a healthy list of prospective members – Helen Smith is doing a great job. I’m assured that the new and much better website is finally near completion, and as I know very little about IT I’m particularly grateful to Andy Syme and Mick Borroff for pushing this on.

127 years of the YRC so far, and we’re looking good for plenty more yet.”

He went on to thank Michael Smith for organising the speaker and dinner and all officers and committee and all those others who have kept the show on the road for another year.

Roll of Honour

PRESIDENT

1892-93 Geo T Lowe
 1893-03 Wm Cecil Slingsby
 1903-06 Alfred Barran
 1906-09 Rev LS Calvert
 1909-12 Lewis Moore
 1912-19 Walter Parsons
 1919-22 WA Brigg
 1922-23 JC Atkinson
 1923-25 EE Roberts
 1925-27 F Leach
 1927-29 HH Bellhouse
 1929-30 TS Booth
 1930-31 T Gray
 1931-32 AE Horn
 1932-34 WV Brown
 1934-36 A Rule
 1936-38 JM Davidson
 1938-46 C Chubb
 1946-48 H Armstrong
 1948-50 CE Burrow
 1950-52 Davis Burrow
 1952-54 J Hilton
 1954-56 HL Stemberidge
 1956-58 S Marsden
 1958-60 TH Godley
 1960-62 FW Stemberidge
 1962-64 RE Chadwick
 1964-66 WPB Stonehouse
 1966-68 EC Downham
 1968-70 EM Tregoning
 1970-72 AB Craven
 1972-74 BE Nicholson
 1974-76 JB Devenport
 1976-78 FD Smith
 1978-80 JP Barton
 1980-82 WR Lofthouse
 1982-84 WA Linford
 1984-86 JD Armstrong
 1986-88 PC Swindells
 1988-90 AC Brown
 1990-92 DA Smithson
 1992-94 GA Salmon
 1994-96 CD Bush
 1996-98 TW Josephy
 1998-00 WCI Crowther
 2000-02 AR Chapman
 2002-04 TA Kay

2004-06 K Aldred
 2006-08 FM Godden
 2008-10 AD Bridge
 2010-12 PRP Chadwick
 2012-14 M Smith
 2014-16 JC Whalley
 2016-18 MJ Borroff
 2018- RR Newman

HONORARY MEMBER (PAST)

1892 Edward Whymper
 1892 Wm Cecil Slingsby
 1892 Clinton T Dent
 1892 8th Duke of Devonshire
 1892 Charles E Matthews
 1892 The Earl of Wharncliffe
 1893 Charles Pilkington
 1893 Charles F Tetley
 1893 Gerald W Balfour, MP
 1893 Sir W Martin Conway
 1900 Horace Walker
 1907 Sir Alfred Hopkinson
 1907 EA Martel
 1907 G Winthrop Young
 1909 Dr Norman Collie
 1909 James Anson Farrer
 1921 George Yeld
 1921 George T Lowe
 1923 Charles Scriven
 1925 Canon AD Tupper-Carey
 1939 Sydney J Farrer
 1939 Walter Parsons
 1946 Robert de Joly
 1949 Ernest E Roberts
 1955 Sir R Charles Evans
 1956 Harry Spilsbury
 1959 Fred Booth
 1959 Davis Burrow
 1965 Clifford Chubb
 1965 Jack Hilton
 1968 E. Cliff Downham
 1968 Stanley Marsden
 1968 HG Watts
 1977 HL Stemberidge
 1985 A David M Cox
 1988 Dr John Farrer

1998 Major W Lacy
 1990 F David Smith
 2001 Alan Brown
 2008 Gordon Humphreys

HONORARY MEMBER (CURRENT)

1997 Derek Bush (m. 1968)
 2003 Alan Linford (m. 1957)
 2008 Iain Gilmour (m. 1990)
 2008 John Lovett (m. 1950)
 2008 Motup Goba (m. 2008)
 2010 Albert Chapman (m. 1955)
 2012 Arthur Salmon (m. 1951)
 2014 Alan Hinkes (m. 2014)
 2016 Andy Eavis (m. 2016)
 2017 Michael Smith (m. 1977)
 2019 Maria Farrer (m. 2019)
 2019 Philip Farrer (m. 2019)

VICE PRESIDENT

1892-93 H Slater
 1919-22 EE Roberts
 1892-93 G Arnold
 1921-23 F Constantine
 1893-94 G T Lowe
 1922-24 P Robinson
 1893-94 L Moore
 1923-25 JF Seaman
 1898-00 Rev LS Calvert
 1924-26 M Botterill
 1899-01 JC Atkinson
 1925-27 L Moore
 1900-02 A Barran
 1926-28 W Villiers Brown
 1901-03 Dr T Anderson
 1927-29 CE Benson
 1902-04 Dr FH Mayo
 1928-30 CE Burrow
 1903-05 W Parsons
 1929-31 WA Wright
 1904-06 JA Green
 1930-32 C Chubb
 1908-10 F Leach
 1931-33 GL Hudson

1909-11 C Hastings
 1932-34 FS Smythe
 1910-12 A Rule
 1933-35 JM Davidson
 1911-13 JH Buckley
 1934-35 GA Potter-Kirby
 1912-14 CA Hill
 1935-37 J Hilton
 1913-19 AE Horn
 1935-37 H Humphreys
 1914-19 H Brodrick
 1937-46 A Humphreys
 1919-21 CRB Wingfield
 1938-46 H Armstrong
 1946-48 D Burrow
 1946-48 AL Middleton
 1948-49 GS Gowing
 1948-50 GC Marshall
 1949-50 HG Watts
 1950-52 S Marsden
 1950-53 J Godley
 1952-54 FS Booth
 1953-55 FW Stembridge
 1954-56 RE Chadwick
 1955-57 GB Spenceley
 1956-58 CW Jorgensen
 1957-59 JA Holmes
 1958-60 JE Cullingworth
 1959-61 J Lovett
 1960-62 WPB Stonehouse
 1961-63 MF Wilson
 1962-64 EC Downham
 1963-65 BE Nicholson
 1964-66 JA Dossier
 1965-67 FD Smith
 1966-68 MD Bone
 1967-69 AR Chapman
 1968-70 JD Driscoll
 1969-71 J Hemingway
 1970-72 EJ Woodman
 1971-73 WA Linford
 1972-74 AJ Reynolds
 1973-75 JG Brook
 1974-76 JP Barton
 1975-77 WR Lofthouse
 1976-78 J Williamson
 1977-79 N Newman
 1978-80 J Stuttard
 1979-81 GA Salmon

1980-82 PC Swindells
 1981-83 DA Smithson
 1982-84 TW Josephy
 1983-85 DJ Atherton
 1984-86 GR Turner
 1985-87 AC Brown
 1986-88 R Cowing
 1987-89 CR Allen
 1988-90 DRH Mackay
 1990-92 WCI Crowther
 1992-94 H Robinson
 1994-96 K Aldred
 1996-98 IFD Gilmour
 1998-00 DA Hick
 2000-02 DJ Handley
 2002-04 G Champion
 2004-06 FM Godden
 2006-08 RA Kirby
 2008-10 MJ Borroff
 2010-12 PA Dover
 2012-14 HA Lomas
 2014-16 RM Crowther
 2016-18 CDB Hilton
 2018-20 JF Brown

**MEMBERS ELECTED
 TO THE ALPINE CLUB
 (CURRENT)**

MJ Borroff
 G Champion
 AR Chapman
 PRP Chadwick
 R Gowing
 DA Hick
 A Renton
 M Smith
 CM Goba

MEETS SECRETARY

1996-09 JH Hooper
 2016-18 P Elliott
 2018- TW Josephy

LIFE MEMBER
(after 35 years in Club)

Aldred, K
 Blair, AJ
 Bush, CD
 Casperson, JD
 Chadwick, PRP
 Clayton, WD
 Crowther RM
 Crowther, WCI
 Denney, RJ
 Duxbury, AJ
 Elliott, PA
 Ellis, JR
 Errington, RD
 Farrant, DJ
 Gowing, R
 Hamlin, JF
 Handley, DJ
 Harben, R
 Hobson, MP
 Holmes, D
 Hooper, JH
 Ince, GR
 Jones, G
 Josephy, TW
 Kay, TA
 Kinder, MJ
 Laing, IG
 Lee, R
 Lee, W
 Lofthouse, TR
 Lomas, H
 Marr, AM
 Middleton, JI
 Middleton, JR
 Middleton, RM
 Moss, PT
 Papworth, HM
 Pomfret, RE
 Renton, K
 Roberts, PD
 Robinson, H
 Rowlands, C
 Rutter, HA
 Salmon, TW
 Selby, PL
 Short, J

Smith, M
Smith, SH
Smith, TH
Smithson, DA
Stembridge, DW
Stembridge, SW
Sterland, JH
Tallon, A
Tetlow, DM
Thompson, MJ
Varney, JA
Whalley, JC
Wilkinson, F

TREASURER

1892-93 HH Bellhouse
1893-99 H Slater
1899-04 J Davis
1904-21 AE Horn
1921-24 C Chubb
1924-51 BA Bates
1951-78 S Marsden
1978-83 D Laughton
1984-90 JD Armstrong
1990-98 TA Kay
1998-12 GA Salmon
2012 - MB Trasler

AUDITOR

1967-83 GR Turner
1983-90 JH Sterland
1990-93 JA Schofield
1993-97 D Lawton
1997-14 CD Bush
2014- RM Taylor

SECRETARY

1892-93 JA Green
1893-98 HH Bellhouse
1898-09 L Moore
1910-20 F Constantine
1920-24 CE Burrow
1924-29 J Buckley
1929-46 D Burrow

1946-52 FS Booth
1952-56 JE Cullingworth
1956-57 CR Allen
1957-66 EC Downham
1966-68 FD Smith
1968-79 EC Downham
1979-83 J Hemingway
1983-93 CD Bush
1993-96 JA Schofield
1996-08 RG Humphreys
2008-12 RA Kirby
2012-19 TW Josephy
2019 - MJ Borroff

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

1894-10 F Constantine
1910-12 JR Green
1912-19 L Moore
1919-24 J Buckley
1924-26 AS Lowden
1926-46 FS Booth
1946-52 FW Stembridge
1952-53 P Stonehouse
1953-54 CIW Fox
1954-57 EC Downham
1957-62 J Hemingway
1962-64 TW Salmon
1964-68 WCI Crowther
1968-73 FD Smith
1973-79 J Hemingway
1979-83 CD Bush
1983-85 J Hemingway
1985-92 M Smith
1992-95 MJ Kinder

EDITOR

1899-09 T Gray
1909-20 W Anderton Brigg
1920-49 E E Roberts
1949-70 HG Watt
1970-83 AB Craven
1984-90 AC Brown
1990-93 DJ Atherton
1993-03 M Smith
2003- R J Denney

ASSISTANT EDITOR

1947-58 RE Chadwick
1958-59 RB Whardall
1959-60 HL Stembridge
1960-70 AB Craven
1970-77 DP Penfold
1985-92 EC Downham

HUTS SECRETARY

1955-57 GB Spenceley
(Low Hall Garth)
1957-59 JD Driscoll
(Low Hall Garth)
1958-62 PR Harris
(Lowstern)
1959-66 FD Smith
(Low Hall Garth)
1962-66 FD Smith
(Lowstern)
1966-67 AR Chapman
1967-82 WA Linford
1982-91 K Aldred
1991-96 DM Martindale
1997- R Josephy

WARDEN LOW HALL GARTH

1952-55 GB Spenceley
1955-59 A Tallon
1959-73 JD Driscoll
1973-76 FD Smith
1976-78 GP Postill
1978-84 N Newman
1986-89 WA Linford
1986-98 FD Smith
1998-01 D English
2001-02 M Edmundson
2002-07 IFD Gilmour
2007-08 G Dootson
2008-12 RG Humphreys
2012-14 GA Salmon
2014- A Renton

ARCHIVIST

2009-11 JH Hooper
2012- WA Linford

**WARDEN
LOWSTERN**

1958-64 J Lovett
1964-67 J Richards
1967-72 CG Renton
1972-74 JTM Teasdale
1974-76 A Hartley
1976-78 JA Varney
1978-79 GP Postill
1979-82 WCI Crowther
1982-86 C Bauer
1987-88 J Lovett
1988-90 H Robinson
1990-93 FM Godden
1993-96 GR Salmon

1996-00 FM Godden
2000-05 RA Kirby
2005-09 J Lovett
2010-12 DB Wood
2012- RJ Sealey

WEBMASTER

2001-08 CG Renton
2008-09 A Renton
2009- A Syme

TACKLEMASTER

2010- G Campion

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

2008-16 MJ Borroff
2016- H Smith

LIBRARIAN

1899-03 F Constantine
1903-24 JH Buckley
1924-27 C D Frankland
1927-29 JK Crawford
1929-30 W Allsup
1930-35 J Buckley
1935-39 R Rimmer
1946-48 HS Booth
1948-49 DS Blair
1949-58 HL Stenbridge
1958-62 JG Brook
1962-71 AB Craven
1971-79 JG Brook
1979-96 R Harben
1996-98 MP Pryor
1998-03 WN Todd
2003- 12 AR Chapman
2012 -14 RG Humphreys
2014 - GA Salmon

AGM

Over the year we gained 2 new members and two new Honorary Members were voted in but we lost 7, 4 having died. This leaves is with 159.

Positions for the new year were filled:

The President	Rory Newman	Committee & Tacklemaster	Ged Campion
Vice President (President Elect)	John Brown	Committee	Robert Crowther
Hon Secretary	Mick Borroff	Committee	Chris Hilton
Hon Treasurer	Martyn Trasler	<i>Non-committee</i>	
Huts Secretary	Richard Josephy	Hon Editor	Roy Denney
Warden Lowstern	Richard Sealey	Hon Auditor	Richard Taylor
Warden Low Hall Garth	Alister Renton	Hon Librarian	Arthur Salmon
Committee	Harvey Lomas	Hon Archivist	Alan Linford
Committee	Becca Humphreys	Membership Secretary	Helen Smith
		Webmaster	Andy Syme
		Meets Secretary	Tim Josephy

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**NOTE FROM THE ARCHIVES**

The archives include a collection of songs and poems penned over the years if any member is interested, including collections from Cliff Downham and Harold Spilsbury amongst others.

It includes numerous versions of Yorkshire. This Annual Dinner song originates from 1909 and was composed by Alfred Barron, W Cecil Slingsby and Rev. L Samuel Calvert under the composite pseudonym Alfred Cecil Calvert and the current version dates from 1966.

## Dinner

Following the AGM members enjoyed an autobiographical presentation by the Cleveland Mountaineering Club's John Dale. His exploratory adventures in caves and mines were illustrated by his excellent photographs spiced up with a few graphic video clips of some less edifying moments clearing obstacles.

The log fire at the Falcon Manor provided a warm welcome as all arrived for a drink and a chat before the meal. In the lobby were displayed photographs and videos of from this year's meets to give those who hadn't had the chance to be there a flavour of our activities. During the afternoon, the Club's guest from the Wayfarers', Dave Ormerod, contacted the organiser by mobile apologising for his impending absence at the dinner due to a bug following his recent return from India. All credit to the Wayfarers', within 20 minutes they had found a replacement, Martin Tomlinson, who dusted off his dinner jacket and made his way to Settle.

The Falcon Manor's food drew many compliments and the extended pauses between courses gave plenty of time for conversation and mingling but caused anxious moments for those with taxis arranged for the return to Lowstern. The brevity of the toast speeches suited the hour and the singing of 'Yorkshire' followed, led by Peter, Arthur and Ian accompanied by Anne Dover on the keyboard.



The Club's guests were:  
Principal Guest, John Dale  
Cleveland Mountaineering Club  
Chris Elliott  
Midland Association of Mountaineers  
Martin Tomlinson  
The Wayfarers' Club Treasurer

*Also attending were:*  
Rory Newman, President  
Mick Borroff  
John Brown  
Derek Bush  
Ged Campion  
Bev Campion  
Aaron Campion  
Imogen Campion  
Peter Chadwick  
Robert Crowther  
Ian Crowther  
Richard Dover  
Ann Dover

Paul Dover  
Anne Dover  
Andy Eavis  
Lilian Eavis  
Christine Elliott  
Darrell Farrant  
Ken Coote  
Richard Gowing  
Dorothy Heaton  
Christopher Hilton  
Jeff Hooper  
Fiona Humphreys  
Jason Humphreys  
Judy Humphreys  
Rebecca Humphreys  
John Jenkin  
Tim Josephy  
David Large  
Geraldine Lally  
Karen Levine  
Alan Linford  
Angela Linford  
Anne Lofthouse

Tim Lofthouse  
Harvey Lomas  
John Lovett  
John Middleton  
Valerie Middleton  
Anca Pordea  
Jason Lees  
Ann Salmon  
Arthur Salmon  
Trevor Salmon  
Barbara Salmon  
Conrad Murphy  
Michael Smith  
Helen Smith  
Richard Smith  
Felicity Roberts  
Richard Taylor  
Gail Taylor  
Martyn Trasler  
Nick Welch  
Carol Whalley  
John Whalley  
Frank Wilkinson

Friday afternoon saw a few arriving at Lowstern. Two took a walk from Stainforth over Smearsett and Pot Scars and back along their northern flank. Passing Stainforth Force they saw several salmon leaping at the main waterfall but only one of them successfully gaining the next level. November is late in the season and given the swollen river it is unsurprising that most failed.



**Smearsett**

That evening a round was made of the Clapham watering holes, the Reading Room and the New Inn. The latter is now in new ownership and back in favour.

Saturday was cold and started damp. Four ascended Ingleborough from above Cold Cotes via Little Ingleborough. Their descent passed Crina Bottom before heading south to Slatenber and back to their car. The rest of the day was taken up by the AGM and the 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner

An inspection of water flow in Clapham Beck and the Ribble early on Sunday morning caused cancellation of the planned through trip from Short Drop Cave to Gavel Pot.

This increased the numbers on the traditional Sunday walk to eighteen. Mick Borroff planned and led the party which was reduced by a few late arrivers at Stainforth who took modified or shortened versions of the 18km planned route.

The official route started with Stainforth Force but increased flow rates now prevented any salmon leaping. After Smearsett and Pot Scars a course was set for Wharfe crossing along the way the Large party heading for Feizor.

Onward to the head of Crummack Dale via the sheep wash where lunch was taken and a text message was sent to Albert and Rachel back at Lowstern to delay the planned ham 'n eggs meal as progress was a little slower than anticipated – not everyone has legs the length of Mick's. The long wall on the eastern edge of Moughton was followed south to Foredale Quarry . The surprisingly exposed traverse of Moughton Scar's ledge and descent of Moughton Nab led past Dry Rigg Quarry to the minor road to Little Stainforth and a re-crossing of the Ribble.



The route covered new ground for several who thought they knew the area well.

The four-o'clock return to Lowstern was precisely timed to the preparation of the tea and a dozen hungry walkers tucked into the meal generously provided by Rachel and Albert.

Most then made their way home though a few lingered in Lowstern to tidy up the place on Monday morning.



**The President admiring Stainforth Force in spate**



**Members and guests on the clapper bridge above the Wharfe Wash Dub**

This annual meet went well and gave all the novices chances to improve their climbing and caving. For James it was his first experience of caving.

On Friday, Michael walked over Ingleborough and Simon Fell to check the water levels in the Alum pot area. They were rather too high after recent heavy rain. He saw the Ingleborough summit shelter's direction indicator being removed for refurbishment. It is still missing as the year draws to a close.

Saturday dawned with an excellent forecast for outdoor climbing. So, six went to Hutton Roof Crags where Fliss, James and Lucy climbed on natural rock picking up skills and applying them.

The routes were initially climbed by Richard facilitating various members of the party to follow with the safety of a top rope. Routes included:

Hanging Crack (D)

Wrinkled Slab (VD)

The Flake (VD)

and Pablo (S)

That last one was seconded by Michael followed by Lucy who got there after several attempts to surmount the crux.



**Lucy on Pablo (S)**

After this enjoyable session, hot, weary and with arms aching, we returned via Ingleton to enjoy delicious ice creams and buy waterproofs ready for caving on Sunday.

The Linford party arrived and (uncle) Alan provided basic instruction in climbing equipment and techniques ready for Sunday.

The Whalleys went up Whernside and Martyn went up Ingleborough.

On Saturday evening we enjoyed a fine meal prepared by Martyn.

Sunday, the water levels having had a chance to go down since the rain earlier in the week, Long Churn was chosen for the caving trip.

Richard, Fliss and Michael took James and Lucy over to Selside where they kitted-up in glorious sunshine before sweating their way up to Alum Pot. Taking great care on the narrow muddy ledges they peered into the abyss to find two surprises.

The cold waterfall meeting the hot moist air had filled the pothole with mist and the sun beaming over their left shoulders produced a Brocken spectre. The magical spectra-shrouded shadows were accompanied from a voice from the deep.



**Michael and Fliss with James and Lucy**

The message was not so magical though being a warning to watch our step and not knock pebbles on the potholers below.

Onward to the entrance to Lower Long Churn where a short excursion was made to check lamps and make sure all were happy being underground. Lacking any dissenters, the system was entered at Upper Long Churn and a handline used to assist the descent into Dr Bannister's Handbasin. Richard went first to offer a hand for the step right onto the ledge and avoid a dunking in the pool. Fliss followed but the water spout caught her legs while making the step and she swam across the pool. The others followed keeping pretty dry.

Making their way down the stream passage, they met a family who were later discovered to be CPC friends of John and Carol. They were assured that our handline was well secured and they used it to make their exit. Onward, bypassing the waterfall and the two pools without further dunkings, Yorkshire caving's best-known squeeze, the Cheesepress, was reached and wriggled through with only a few grunts.

From there the descent towards Dollytubs was protected and care taken to peer round towards the Bridge and daylight streaming in from Alum Pot. So, Lucy who had been in the system last year, had completed two new sections, James had thoroughly enjoyed his first encounter with caving and all were ready to return. The Cheesepress was bypassed and an exit made through the wet crawl of Diccan Pot with Richard making sure nobody ended up down its waterfall.

Wellies were emptied and socks wrung out on the warm grassy slope above before they trudged back to the car and a change of clothes.

A police officer was met by the cars, investigating reports of a dog distressed after being left in a locked van. The owner soon appeared and made his excuses and reassurances to her.

The Linford party having been fitted out with harnesses and some basic guidance at Lowstern on Saturday visited the Ingleton climbing wall where Isaac and Eli and their mum Debbie were introduced to indoor climbing safely belayed by Alan and Paul.



After a strenuous session it was time for lunch at Bernie's café. As they left, the caving party appeared ready for another round of ice creams.

The Booker-Smiths spent Sunday visiting Hardraw Force and then swimming in the pool of Stainforth Foss. On Monday they went up Pen-y-ghent.

Lowstern is an excellent location for the younger members of the party to enjoy the freedom it provides. Full advantage of this was taken at this meet especially with the warm sunny weather which was enjoyed by all.

Richard and Michael provided excellent tutorship and leading for James and Lucy and although they could have coped with up to four at a pinch it would mean less activity for each of them.

Thanks go to Martyn for the catering and to all who helped instruct and supervise the activities.

Attendees:

Paul Dover, James Dover-Sarakun (12) (G), Lucy Dover-Sarakun (10) (G), Adam Linford (G), Debbie Linford (G), Isaac Linford (12) (G), Eli Linford (6) (G), Martyn Trasler, Fiona Booker-Smith, Dave Booker-Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Felicity Roberts

**All  
except  
Martyn  
Trasler  
who took  
the  
photograph.**



This club meet provides an important opportunity to introduce another generation to climbing and caving and also encourages families to attend. However, we are very reliant on volunteer belayers and caving supervisors attending and more would always be welcome.

It is that time of the year when there is excitement in the air and everything feels special and this meet was no exception. To spend time with friends from scattered places around Britain for laughs and chat is something that the YRC is good at.

We also made some new friends and there were three prospective members present Jennifer, Peter and Ann.

First arrival for the meet was Mike Godden on the usual Wednesday walking group get together, this was a good opportunity for him to secure a bottom bunk in the members' room at the weekend. Richard Sealey was not far behind carrying out some quick repairs to make sure Lowstern was in tip top condition.

The Smiths arrived on Thursday evening from another celebration in Barnsley. Dotty Heaton helped to put up the Christmas tree at Lowstern on Saturday morning, but could not stay for the meal because of a family celebration.

There had been a good turnout for the meet and all beds were taken with several electing to camp, this was not such a good choice as the wind reached speeds of over 40 miles an hour and I can certainly vouch for that!

As usual there was a mix of activity with everyone despite the weather taking to the hills and paths around the dales and into the Forest of Bowland.

On Saturday, Mick Borroff, John Sutcliffe, Helen Brewitt and Daniel O'Leary did a mid-level circuit of the Kingsdale valley below the cloud base.



**Windy! The bench outside the cottage**



Having crossed Kingsdale Beck, they traversed below George's Scar to Braida Garth and dropped down to the bridge over the beck, and up to Yordas Cave, a former Victorian show cave. They donned head torches and went underground to find evidence of recent flooding where the water had backed up from the gravel choke to a depth of two metres. Back in daylight, they climbed up to the Turbary Road and into the mist doing some pothole spotting before returning to the car via the Cheese Press stone.

Richard Josephy went on a low level walk with a round of Norber, and Crummackdale, then back via Clapham Bottoms and the estate.

John and Ros Brown with Paul and Phil Dover and Peter and Ann Latham and had a pleasant walk around Stocks reservoir. The weather was damp and cloudy but it gave ample opportunity to catch up with each other's exploits over the last year.

On Friday Helen and Mike Smith walked to Ireby Fell Cavern and looked in as far as Ding pitch, then with very wet underfoot conditions went up to the three men of Gragareth then back along Leck Fell road and the Lancashire Way to Ireby and the car.

On Saturday Helen and Mike, with Peter Chadwick, Richard Taylor and the two Prospective Members Peter and Jennifer did a challenging walk from Lowstern, up Ingleborough, to Horton, Pen-y-ghent and Brackenbottom where they packed into Tim's car to return to Lowstern but arrived back after the slide show had started. Tim meanwhile had completed the reverse of the route in an hour's less time probably as he was facing into the rough weather and less likely to pause.



Before our evening meal we were entertained by slide shows from Mick Borroff and John Sutcliffe respectively of the Dolomites and walking in the Pyrenees.

The main event of the weekend was the Christmas Dinner prepared by Bill for more than thirty people.

It was also a great surprise that all the crockery and cutlery were donated by Bill to the club for future use, and wine donated for the meal ensured that there was a great deal of bonhomie and chat during the evening whilst the storm outside of the hut was forgotten in the revelry.



**Bill preparing the meal  
and members enjoying it**



On Sunday morning Peter Chadwick, Richard Taylor and Philip Dover felt the call of the wild (winds). The decision was helped by the prospect of escaping hut cleaning and the desire to work off the effects of Bill's generous wine provision and the 160 degree proof chasers of white rum.

Peter was self-appointed navigator and despite this they went by way of Clapham - Long Lane on a circuit of Thwaite Scars, Crummackn and Nappa Scars, sensibly avoiding the pub on the 8 mile circuit. The weather was much improved from the Saturday. It would have been difficult to have been worse.

Helen and Mike parked in Earby and went over Thornton Moor to Pinhaw Beacon using a section of the Pennine Way. They returned via Elslack and the remains of both the Roman Fort and the Beeching-axed railway. Weather was hail showers and strong winds.

It goes to say, without exception that Bill's generosity and hard work made the 2019 Christmas Meet one that will go down in the annuals of the club history for many years to come. Thank You Bill!!!

PD

**Attendees:**

Alan Linford  
Ann Latham (G)  
Becca Humphreys  
Bill Gibbs  
Carol Whalley  
Daniel O'Leary  
Helen Brewitt  
Helen Smith  
Iain Gilmour  
Jennifer Tennant (PM)  
John Brown  
John Jenkin  
John Sutcliffe  
John Whalley  
Michael Smith  
Mick Borroff  
Mike Godden  
Paul Dover  
Pete Latham  
Peter Chadwick  
Peter Tennant (PM)  
Philip Dover  
Richard Gowing  
Richard Josephy  
Richard Sealey  
Richard Taylor  
Robert Crowther  
Ros Brown  
Simon Raine  
Tim Josephy

Saturday Dinner Only  
Albert Chapman  
Ged Campion



**Prospective Members  
admiring the folly**

# Obituaries and Appreciations

## **DENNIS ARMSTRONG**

Member 1955 to 2019

President 1984 to 1986

Dennis joined the YRC in 1955 having had reasonable experience in Skye, Glencoe, and Snowdonia and was a dedicated member of the club, attending meets as often as possible, gaining a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction through the years with his fellow members.

Early highlights he recalled were an early Lyke Wake walk and camping on Rhum.

A change of job took him South and when first married and living down there, getting to meets was more problematical, with a young family and being so far from the Yorkshire Dales, the Lakes, and Scotland.

The YRC provided him with the necessary outlet for his energies, and company was always rewarding and friendly.

In 1970 they moved north to Cheshire, hence a renewal of activity. He said he “was impressed by the warmth of my welcome on returning.”

Regular attendance led to him joining the Committee in 1974.

He was very involved in the rebuilding of the new hut at Lowstern when he was President, a position he was honoured to attain.

Looking back he fondly remembered interesting meets in Glen Etive, the Monro Meet, and in 1987 the launch of the Alpine meets.

There was two mountain skiing meets in Norway, followed by the Centenary Meet in Norway in 1992. Dennis went on a reconnaissance trip with Derek Smithson, a month camping/exploring to assess difficulties.

Before and after his Presidency he was Club Treasurer



His association with the club had been unwavering and his membership was something he really treasured, and he made lifelong friends through it.

One of his proudest moments was climbing Mont Blanc du Tacul with Alan Brown, a feat he never forgot. Another achievement was when he walked through the Lairig Ghru in Scotland with Mike Godden - a hard slog which they both felt proud to have completed.

As his wife said “ I can honestly say that after his family, the YRC was the most important part of his life.

He revered it. It supplied him with friendships and satisfaction, and turned him around on the weekends away, into a satisfied and happy man.”

After his Presidency he went to as many of the Alpine summer meets as possible - Arolla, Lauterbrunnen, Neustift, Morteratsch, and many more.



As a student he had been quite a good rock climber but later on this was curtailed because of being a family man, and lack of practice lead to an enthusiasm and love for hill walking. "Getting to the tops" as he put it.

Dennis sang “Yorkshire” for 21 years at the Annual Dinners. He added humorous recitations and devised other amusements, duets with Arthur Salmon, and little ‘turns’ poking fun at the climbing/potholing world, and the YRC in particular.

In his last years in Stockport, after his retirement from his career as an accountant, he had been in reasonable health until January this year.

Since then he had developed Parkinson's disease which eventually overcame him.

At 90 he had had a long and fulfilling life.

He leaves his wife Joan, and four children and twelve grandchildren.

# PHILIP W SYKES

1927- 2019

Member 1956 to 2019

Life Member Philip Sykes died at the age of 92 following a stroke and several weeks spent in York Hospital.

He joined the Club at the age of 29 and completed 63 years as a member.

Philip was an Alpinist and fell walker first and foremost with a love of the mountains which endured until his eyesight failed just a few years ago.



Philip was born an identical twin in Milnsbridge, Huddersfield and his adventurous spirit soon showed through. As children he and Stanley, his identical twin, packed a suitcase and ran away from home and made it as far as Woolworths in the centre of Huddersfield where the lure of the 'pick and mix' counter led to them being challenged and their parents contacted.

Philip attended Royds Hall Grammar School, Huddersfield up to the age of 16, when financial necessity arising from his father's ill-health, meant he needed to become a family breadwinner so he joined ICI as a laboratory technician at ICI Blackley, Manchester and later on for ICI Huddersfield. Over 14 years at ICI, Philip worked on the project that led to ICI manufacturing the US-developed fabric Nylon. Philip then worked on the industrialisation of the Polyester fibre known as Terylene and this led Philip from Blackley to the pilot production plant in Huddersfield. Pilot production also meant shift working which made a weekend on the fells with friends much harder to achieve. Shift work along with twice waking up in the ICI ambulance on the way to hospital made a career change inevitable and so he became a teacher.

Not long after teacher training Philip joined Dewsbury Technical College and it was at interview, he met his future wife Shirley, who was the Head Teacher's secretary. In 1961 Philip married Shirley in Batley and they shared a love of walking and travel. Although Munro bagging got off to a shaky start when they reached the summit of Ben Nevis for Shirley to discover that lunch was tinned sardine in tomato sauce sandwiches - a taste Shirley never acquired!

Philip's younger brother, Geoffrey, was also a keen hill walker and it may have been through Geoffrey's father-in-law, our vice-president George Cyril Marshall that Philip was introduced to the Club.

There are not so many members remaining who might have memories of days out on or under the hills with Philip but John Lovett recalls going caving with Philip and E E Roberts.



He can clearly picture the two of them, standing on the Allotment having a discussion after a trip. Trevor Salmon remembers a camping meet on some jubilee or anniversary when Philip and Roberts were present and that was somewhere on the slopes of Ingleborough but not at GG so it may have been the same meet.

Later, Philip taught at Huddersfield Technical College and then lectured in chemistry with a specialist interest in the science of dyeing fabrics. This resulted in a sense of déjà vu for some students as his identical twin also taught at that College. Geoffrey taught mathematics in a local secondary school further intensifying the sense of 'how many of them are there' for Huddersfield students.

All three were highly regarded for their dedication to education and their students. Philip's sense of his own unfulfilled potential in not having the opportunity of a university education resulted in a rare moment of emotion as he saw his eldest board the train for Dundee University to study Biochemistry. The Sykes' sense of service may well be in the genes as there is more than a smattering of doctors, dentists, veterinarians and the like across the family.

Philip attended a number of Dinners in the 1950s or a little later including the 1959 one in Harrogate at the Majestic Hotel. He also attended the 1958 Joint Meet with the Wayfarers' and Rucksack Clubs based at RLH and climbed on Gimmer, Tarn Crag and Raven Crag on "warm rock sheltered from the cold East wind".

In the '50s Philip was characteristically seen about in something that is now a rarity on our roads, a motorbike and sidecar. He was also maintaining his fellwalking across northern Britain and trips to the Alps. As his family dispersed, a true Yorkshireman, Philip reminded them each time they left, to call and allow the phone to ring three times then hang up to signal safe arrival home - no need for needless expense on a conversation.

Philip's love of mountaineering is appreciated by his children, Michael, Catherine and Andrew, who recalled long hot car journeys in the 1970s to and from the alpine countries - Switzerland was Philip's favourite mountain area. The caravan stocked with all their food supplies other than bread and milk - his Yorkshire canniness showing thereby minimising the need to purchase expensive food out there.

Michael followed his father's interest and became a spare-time mountain guide in the Lake District leading groups of 25-27 for Lancaster Walking Club in the early 90's.

To celebrate his 70th year, Philip asked to be taken to Low Hall Garth by Michael for a few days. for his birthday.



They traversed Crinkle Crag the first day walking from LHG, descending via the Band into Langdale and returning via Blea Tarn. On the second day the walk started at Wasdale Head ascended Brown Tongue, Mickledore onto Scafell Pike then descended via Lingmell to Sty Head and back to Wasdale Head in 6.5 hours. To Michael's relief on the third day, Philip admitted to feeling a bit tired and they had an easier day with a walk in Eskdale.

Soon after that Philip and his wife Shirley moved from Mirfield, near Huddersfield, to Pocklington in the East Riding. They walked in the East Riding and Philip and his twin had a productive vegetable allotment.

In his later years he was not active in the mountains but when his daughter asked him why he still remained a member he replied that it brought back memories and let him know what members were doing now.

Philip has six grandchildren and this year held his first great grandchild, though sadly he could not see him.

The celebration of Philip's life was held at the East Riding Crematorium on Friday 27th September and his ashes are to be scattered in the Langdales. The Club was represented at the service by Michael Smith.

Our sympathies go to Shirley, and all the family on the loss of such an adventurous and benevolent patriarch.

## **CLIFF LARGE**

**1926 – 2018**

**Member 1953 to 2018**

Born on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 1926 in Leeds, Clifford was born when his father was 73 and after five years he and his sister were left with just their mother.

Running a corner shop in Leeds while raising two children must have been hard but Cliff never gave any hint early hardships but reminisced of summers staying with relatives on farms, milking cows by hand and exploring the countryside developing a lifelong passion and curiosity for the natural world.



With his love of the outdoors, becoming a Boy Scout was a natural, next step and he remained actively involved in the Scout Association for some 80 years until his death.

It was also through Scouts in Leeds that he and his friends Neville Newman and Bill Lofthouse were invited to join the YRC in the early 50s.

Leaving school aged 14 Cliff worked as a joiner. Conscripted into the army in 1944 he learned to drive tank transporters in the Peak District and the end of the war was serving in Egypt.

The 1950's brought his first trips to the Alps, North Ridge of the Weissmies, descent of the Aletsch Glacier, the Finsteraarhorn, Norway, the Pyrenees, the Lakeland 3000's from LHG, the Lyke Wake Walk, placing pitons on the West Buttress of Suilven. Nearly all with the YRC (Salmons, Tallon, Gowing, Lofthouse and Newman, Allen etc.).

Moving to the Glasgow area in the late 1950s, met his Catherine and married. During the 60s and 70s YRC trips were few and far between. His young family was his focus, as was lifelong learning.

Possibly making up for leaving school at 14 he continued formal education in the background eventually getting both a bachelors and masters degrees from the Open University in the 1980s.

By the 1980s with both children at University he re-engaged with the YRC, initially organizing and attending Scottish meets and later going on international meets the highlight of which was possibly the YRC meet to Norway, his final fling on serious rocky mountains being the ascent of several of Slingsby's peaks in Lofoten.

As his overall fitness declined he had a remarkable ability to enjoy whatever he could do, walking on lower hills, assisting with meets, a round of golf per week, monitoring bird populations for the British Trust for Ornithology, assisting family and neighbours with his building skills, supporting various committees and of course working at district and area level for the Scout Association.

On family outings Cliff rarely stuck to paths. There were more adventures to be had off the beaten track and his detours into thickets in search of birds, plants, insects or fungi became legendary.

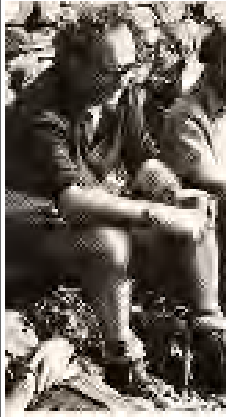
Cliff made many friends and helped many people along the way and on his death the family received hundreds of messages.

The former Scouts he had taken caving and camping from 1940s to 1960s, the people he had taught, deeply emotional notes and letters from his former YRC climbing contemporaries, those he had helped from all walks of life, appreciations from the numerous committees and organizations in which he had some involvement and underneath it all a sense of someone who had made difference to the lives of many, many people.

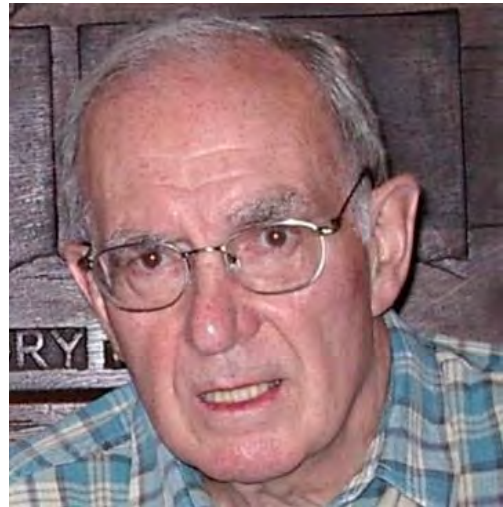
## BILL LOFTHOUSE

1951- 2019

Bill was a very active member before time and health issues intervened and was on the Committee 1953-56, Vice President 1975-77 and then President 1980-82.



**Taking a breather during the Long Walk in 1974**



Bill died in June after spending the last few years in a care home following a stroke.

His funeral was in Darley, Nidderdale attended by members of the Club. His wife died in 2017 and he is survived by daughters and son Tim who is a member of the Club.

## ROB IBBERSON

Member 2002 - 2018

Rob joined the Club in 2002 and soon got heavily involved helping with many meets and taking charge of the Club memorabilia even after deteriorating health reduced his ability to get involved in meets

My lasting memory was of Rob's kindness to my wife when a bit distressed, fighting her way across Kinder and chatting later in the bar about China.

There had been talk of our cavers out there but Rob was telling us of a trip I think in 2005 which included walking three miles along the Great Wall and of climbing the steep steps to actually get up there.

In 2011 Rob and his wife Gabriel were on the YRC trek in the Quimsa Cruz, Bolivia

Gabriel died in 2014 and her son Andy remains an active member of the Club.



Roy Denney



**The YRC has two properties available for hire by kindred organisations.**

**To book either cottage contact Richard Josephy [bookings@yrc.org.uk](mailto:bookings@yrc.org.uk)**



**Low Hall Garth,  
Little Langdale, Cumbria**



**Lowstern,  
Clapham, North Yorkshire**

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## **THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB**

**EXPLORATION, MOUNTAINEERING  
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