



**YORKSHIRE
RAMBLERS'
CLUB**

**JOURNAL
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CONTENTS

2	Introduction	Roy Denney
5	Mountain Cards	Alan Linford
6	Meet report	Low Hall Garth?
9	Patey's Route	David Large
12	Meet report	Ogwyn, Snowdonia
15	Cave History,	South Africa
17	Meet report	Crianlarich, Scotland
22	Gallery	Members' photos
26	Spring Chippings	
34	Poem	
35	Charnwood Forest	Roy Denney
42	Rocks of Charnwood	
43	Percy Robinson	Archives
46	Overseas meet,	Morocco
61	Weekend in Wales	John Colton
65	Mountain Artists	Alpine Club
66	France Snowshoeing	Mick Borroff
75	Drama in the past	
77	Lakes Schooling	John Colton
81	My Garden	Roy Denney
83	Early Days	Arthur Tallon
87	Members' Activities	
114	Meet Report	Swaledale
119	Addlebrough	Mick Borroff
125	Lady Mountaineers	
129	Wild Silence	Roy Denney
132	National Trust	
134	Coast to Coast	Esther Chadwick
142	Meet Report	Ravenstonedale
146	Madagascar Caves	J & V Middleton
147	The Matterhorn	Ged Campion
155	Drôme, France	Mick Borroff
167	Dinas y Gromlech	John Colton
170	Archive photographs	Ray Harben
171	Pennine Way	Michael Smith
179	Social Events	Paul Dover
184	A vintage year	Richard Gowing
196	Underground	Ged Campion
204	Curtain Pot	Frank Walker
211	Meet report	Christmas
215	My first YRC Alps	Richard Gowing
226	Winter Chippings	
244	Club Proceedings	
251	Obituaries	
282	Climbs round Clapham	John Richards
287	High with Grimper	John Colton
291	Index	
299	Club Properties etc.	

FRONT COVER:

Helen Brewitt on
Sahara, Ksar Rock
Morocco meet

BACK COVER:

Ged and Imogen Campion
on top of Breithorn

That Was The Year That Nearly Wasn't Traditions And The Past

Not a lot of organised walking has been done in the UK over the last 12 months and flying abroad severely restricted. People managed to get out in small social groups in some areas but many were restricted to solo exercise. Wind caused lots of damage and made any attempts to get out and about a challenge and then we had the start of the virus putting paid to our organised meets. Easter came and went; we were restricted into the summer and here we are, Christmas behind us; a year gone with not a lot to show for it.

In any event Easter meets have very variable weather partly as Easter moves about so much. Questions have been raised about why Easter is when it is. Many people think the strange way Easter moves about each year is something to do with religion, but it is actually an astronomical phenomenon. It obviously has historic connotations for all the religions 'of the book' but is actually based on the movements of the moon. This is a bit odd, given that so much of the Church calendar hangs on the date of Easter Sunday, but when this is fixed is actually based on it being the first Sunday after the first full moon, after the official spring equinox (March 21). There you go! Simple isn't it!

Confined to our home, as many of us recycled teenagers were, one is inclined to feel sorry for oneself, but many generations have faced similar interludes. My parents generation had Spanish Flu to contend with and going back much further Black Death was the pandemic.

Over the years we have fought many wars – too many, but we have normally seen our enemy, which made fighting Covid-19 doubly difficult. Not a human enemy this time, but no less threatening, putting paid to all semblance of normal life, including of course, our meets programme.

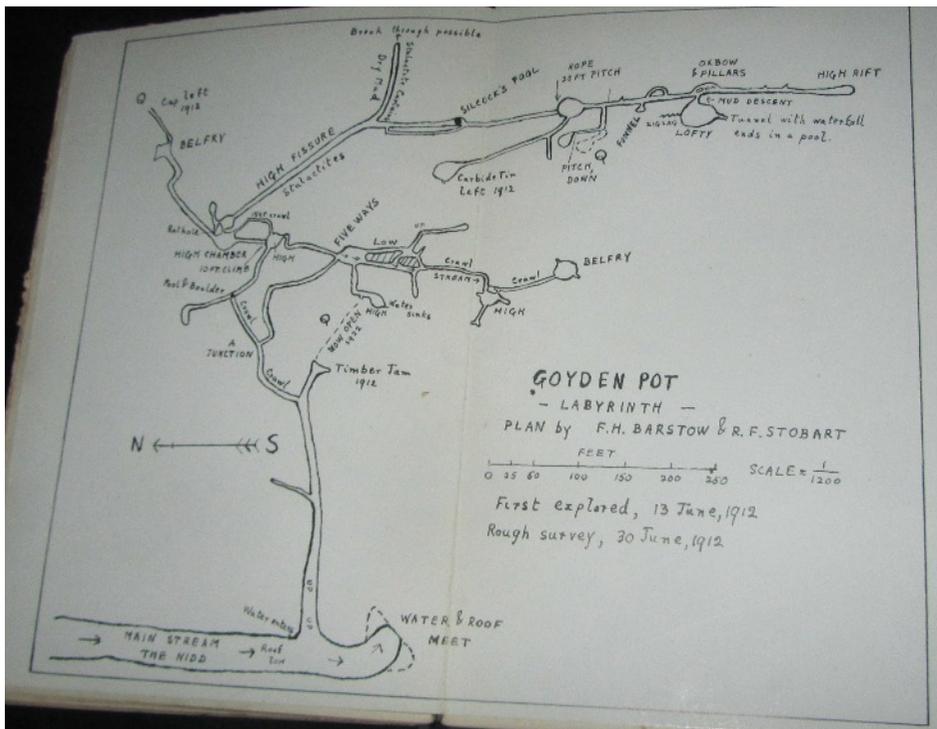
In referring back, to cross reference something, I found myself reading the journal of 1922 after the long break for WWII. There were reminiscences of fighting in the Balkans, but no obituaries which I found surprising.

Also surprising by today's standards, about half the edition was taken up by caving. Not surprising, the editor complains that those doing the exploration would not put pen to paper and he had to piece together the articles himself. A strangely familiar feeling.

I was surprised though by the surveys being done and the quality of the photographs, even allowing for the poor print technology of the time.

Goyden Pot had first been explored and surveyed just before war broke out but, in October 1921, 15 members were on a meet to return there and continue the exploration.

I am not in a position to verify the accuracy of the survey but the drawing looks fairly comprehensive.



Above:
 Crystal Pool, Barnes Loop.

Right:
 The White Way, Barnes Loop

In the same edition, a member visited Swildon's Hole in the Mendips and produced stunning photographs.



Mountaineering and climbing also resumed.

Below is a picture of three of the members in the Saarsgrat, following the ridge from the Lenzspitze to the Nadelhorn.



They ascended the approaches to the Rimpfischorn onto the north peak, looking out over and photographing the Great Gendarme.

Collectables From The Past

Alan Linford has discovered a set of cards from Brook Bond teas which depict geographic pictures, including mountains of the world. The backs have a pocket history and description.

Before looking at the backs it is interesting trying to identify them and Alan pointed out that he has visited several of them.

Here are a few of the more interesting ones. The series included a few caves, icebergs, volcanic eruptions and canyons and must have been fascinating when we had no Internet and most did not have a TV.

The mountains shown are (their description titles) The Matterhorn, Devils Tower Wyoming, Table Mountain, Mount Everest, The Andes, Kilimanjaro, Mount Fujiyama and The Dolomites

FEATURES OF THE WORLD

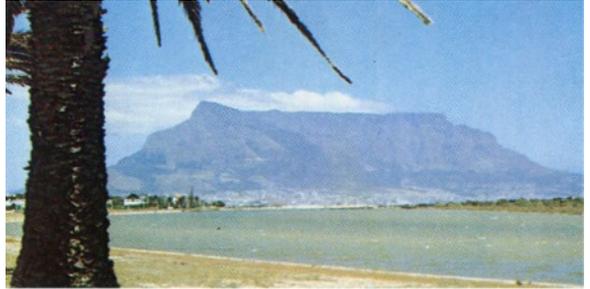
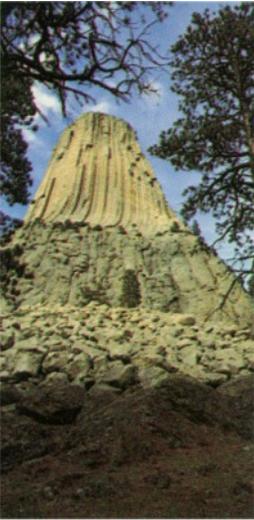
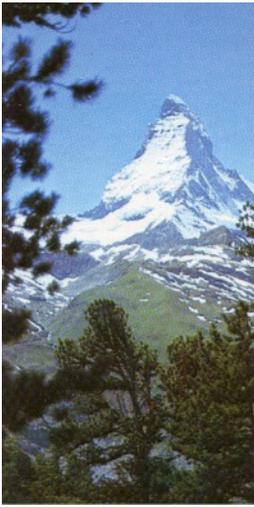
A Series of 50 Cards

40. The Dolomites - Italy

Unlike most of the European mountain ranges the Dolomites are jagged massifs with near vertical faces rising 1000 metres or more above the undulating meadows and valleys of the South Tyrolean Alps. The incredibly sheer faces provide an horizon of silhouettes which resemble spires, needles and castle battlements. The highest peak is Mount Marmalada, 3343 metres above sea level. The Dolomite range was once a coral reef lying in ancient shallow seas. The reef was forced upwards millions of years ago when the Alps were formed but the hard magnesian limestone which formed the Dolomites resisted the weathering effects which have created the more usual evenly sloped mountain ranges.

Courtesy of Daily Telegraph Picture Library

Save all 50 cards in this series in a super album. Just send a 20p coin for postage with your name & address to: Brooke Bond Oxo Ltd., Dept. GS, Parkway House, Sheen Lane, London SW14 8LU.



The usual Low Hall Garth January Meet recruited well, with a handful of prospective members also signed up. Robert Crowther had done his calculations and already bought the non-perishable foods when he heard that there was no water supply to the cottage. Our Secretary and others tried alternative venues without success – clearly a post-holiday weekend away was what many were doing that weekend. Expecting a full house, Robert had no real alternative but to cancel the meet at just a few days' notice.

This did not deter everyone though. Come wind or rain – and there was plenty of both forecast – many quickly made alternative arrangements.

Prospective members from Hull, Tom Spencer and Laura Baynes, booked into Keswick Youth Hostel together with visiting student Johanna Michel from Germany. Meanwhile, Helen and Michael Smith had decided on three days at the Patterdale Hotel.

In Kentmere on Friday, the Smiths scrambled up a mossy Raven Crag (grade 1 and just above The Grove, for those who recall the Christmas meets there), traversed Yoke and Ill Bell in cloud, to descend steep, soft, snowy slopes to the reservoir.



Raven Crag

Helen on
Ill Bell



There was precious little luck around that meet weekend. The Saturday weather was foul. The German visitor had hoped to reach the highest England can offer, but the Pike was threatening 5°C and gusts over 80mph.

The more modest objective of a circuit of Carrock Fell was attempted but abandoned when remaining standing at 358m proved tricky.

A valley walk to within sight of Skiddaw House along the Cumbrian Way was substituted. That succeeded in getting all five sufficiently wet to call it a day. Restorative coffee and cake at the Youth Hostel was called for.

Persistence in the face of adversity was rewarded on Sunday afternoon with some sunny patches, only the briefest spell of light drizzle, wind speeds halved, and good views below 700m. The Hull group tackled Skiddaw in bitterly cold winds to a cloud-shrouded summit. Then, with Laura's ailing vehicle, they were trailered back to Hull. The Smiths traversed Ullswater's Place Fell from north to south, seeing only a handful of walkers before reaching the summit.



Place Fell

Monday's forecast heralded the afternoon arrival of storm Brandon. A short low walk was called for and Helen picked out a round of Dubbs Reservoir and Latrigg Tarn opposite Town End and Troutbeck, some exercise before heading home.

Back at Lowstern, timed to coincide with the meet, were meetings of the Club's Committee and Meets Sub-Committee. Various members were either already at Lowstern for these or on the way there, so the meetings went ahead.



Lowstern at dawn

Plenty of hill walking was done by those gathered there. On Thursday, Helen and Michael spotted first a fox above Attermire then, below it, one of the juvenile choughs seen around there over recent months. Friday saw Chris Hilton make a pre-dawn moonlit ascent of Pen-y-Ghent over icy rocks before driving off for a day's work. Later, from Twistleton Lane, Mick Borroff and Martyn Trasler were joined by John Sutcliffe for an anti-clockwise round of Kingsdale. This less-travelled ascent via the five-mile wall to the misty snow-capped summit of Whernside was new to both Martyn and John. After descending to the Kingsdale-Dentdale col, they returned via Yordas Cave and the Keld Head rising.

Instead of walking in Little Langdale as planned, the Whalleys were on Ilkley Moor but *vi'ats* as John put it.

Their round took in the Twelve Apostles stone circle. Ex-member Peter Hodge was also out the same day walking above Austwick.

MS

Carol Whalley on Ilkley Moor with caving friends



View over Derwent Water from Skiddaw



Helen with view over distant Brothers Water



Stringing Along II

David
Large

An Ascent of Patey's Route, Coire an t-Sneachda

Following his article (YRCJ 2019, 14(2):156) covering his rudimentary introduction to climbing' David now recalls something a little more precarious.



“The previous day’s stormy winds and rain had subsided to a steady gale. Ahead lay Aladdin’s Buttress, to the right the Fiacail ridge was barely visible through a cloud of spindrift. Conditions were more typical of December than March: thin, little ice or rime, and gullies only just filled with snow.

A few hours earlier we had sorted our gear. My climbing companion Matt had, one might say, kept up with the times. Two suitably ergonomic ice axes. A fine collection of modern ice screws and appropriate wired rocks for those thinly iced cracks.

On the other hand I had remained firmly in the late 80's. A highly distorted deadman (apparently new to Matt), a collection of pitons, a 55 cm Mountain Technology ice axe that now looked more like a walking stick than the technical acme of its day and another with straight shaft and dropped pick.

And so to the ropes. My offering was 50m of 10.5 mm, (no it didn't date from the 1980s) and Matt proposed climbing on two 60m lengths of 7.5 mm. "7.5 mm!" I said. "it looks more like my boot laces!". "Yes, but you have to climb on a double rope, and it's very light" Matt replied. The last comment sold it to me, I was going to climb on string. If it's light it must be OK. I was really out of condition with little mountaineering of any note for several years, so light was good. It was also at least 10 years since my last ice climb so anything I could do to keep me energetic was welcome.

Staring up from the relative calm of the corrie floor a route was beckoning, but which one. Matt, a far better climber than I, was looking for a challenge. I was looking for something I would get up. High on the buttress just left of Aladdin's Mirror is the thin cleft of Patey's Route. Two climbers high on the route had been stationery for some time, but they had clearly made decent progress to within about 20ft of easier ground. I reckoned grade IV was my limit and the guidebook indicated three main pitches, III, IV 4 and IV 5. My arms, strengthened from regular trips to the indoor wall, should hold out and if Matt could lead the harder bits I reckoned that, with decent placements, the route should go. So Patey's Route it was. First soloed by Tom Patey in 1959. Graded for well-iced conditions on the lower and upper bulges.

First failing was my belay device – too wide for 7.5 mm. Fortunately Matt carried a spare.

Pitch one was mine. Not bad, grade III as predicted, sufficient ice and sugary snow.

Pitch two – no ice, sugary snow. Matt overcomes the bulge by gracefully performing the splits while hooking his axes on rock placements under crumbling snow, followed by a steeply iced runnel to a small cave below the crux. After about 10 minutes untangling the string, I follow. Amazing how such thin rope tangles. Got up into the splits but the string caught on a rock making the move impossible and so to my first fall of the day. Amazing how much stretch you get on 7.5 mm.

Re-arrange the rope and try again. Ice axe placement tenuous, but over the bulge I go. Matt shouts down that the ice chimney is hard and the crux above looks desperate. A retreat is suggested, but still confident in Matt's ability and barely dented by the first bulge, I suggest he continues. So we agree that I will belay half way up the chimney from his gear and he will then lead the crux with a bombproof runner in the cave.

The crux is obviously hard (this is concerning as Matt climbs many grades harder than me on rock) but up he goes, and keeps on going almost to a full run-out.

It takes him an age to construct a belay on poor snow and by now I am frozen. No communication is possible in the wind. Eventually the rope goes tight and up I go.

Now at this point there are several key flaws. First, I am wearing Dachstein mitts, very warm, but no good at removing nuts from cracks. So every time I need to remove protection the gloves come off. Next, my ice axes struggle to get any placement on the thin technical crux and the stretch on 60 m of 7.5 mm is considerable, so no rope assistance is possible.

The moves at the crux are obvious. Step left out of the cave onto a rising narrow snow ledge, work your way along this ledge. Insert left axe in narrow crack high above head and take a huge step right into boot sized snow pocket above cave, find placement for right axe and pull across blank wall into upper gully while at full stretch.

“Find placement for right axe” – could I ****. Three falls sent me 10 ft back into cave. The fourth left me suspended by left wrist loop, feet on nothing, followed by a tumble back into the cave.

By this time I was exhausted, the snow on the ramp was getting thinner, the step across longer and the rope just as stretchy as ever. Meanwhile above, Matt was struggling to assist and contemplating counting to 500 then throwing the rope down for me to abseil off. However, I had the map and the minute we parted company Matt would find himself on the Cairngorm Plateau in a blizzard without map or compass. One more attempt was required, and thank God it was successful.

By now I could see Matt’s head torch and up the gully I went, utterly knackered.

What happened next was a failure of memory and rationale. Imagining the head wall of Coire an t-Sneachda I had known well from 20 years earlier, I suggest we descend rather than embrace the gale on the plateau. As long as we went far enough right before we started to descend. We didn’t. We stayed roped and I went first, only realizing the error of my ways when my next step was into space at the top of Aladdin’s Mirror Direct, a 20m icefall. Frantic shouting stopped Matt in his tracks as I struggled to regain composure on the soft snow at the top of the icefall. Back up we went and onto the plateau. Slow, paced navigation took us to the top of Coire Cas and a rapid descent through the ski resort.

As to my lasting memory of the day, well, it isn’t the falls or near disastrous descent, but lying on the plateau in a gale engulfed in a thin ground layer of spindrift and looking up through the layer to the moon and star filled sky.

We returned to the hut at 10:30pm.

“Matt, how would you summarise the day?”, “Awesome”

P.S. The party ahead of us reported their ascent on UKC forum logbook. In thin conditions they rated Pitch 1 III, Pitch 2 IV 5, Pitch 3 V 6.”

Twelve members of the European Union gathered at Helyg for a wet and windy meet. By the end of the evening they had all quit. Luckily they were all made of stern stuff and it was only the EU they left, not the YRC. Although one member very nearly made a rapid exit from the Ogwen Valley in an easterly direction when he chose to brave the gales and camp outside the hut.

A few arrived early enough on the Friday to get in a short walk around the environs of Capel Curig and the banks of the Afon Llugwy.

Saturday morning dawned bright, but with strong winds, forecast to increase with afternoon showers.

Most opted to stay relatively low, various parties and individuals making use of the leat which feeds Llyn Cowlyd, to traverse the hillside (one doesn't expect to encounter roadworks in such a remote place!). Some continued above Capel Curig before returning alongside the swollen river.



A large party of Dovers, Lathams and a Brown continued NE beside the wild waters of Llyn Cowlyd to the dam, where they climbed south to cross a col, then through bog, forest and more bog down to the head of Llyn Crafnant.

Another col took them over to Capel Curig.

By now thoroughly soaked, the forecast showers having turned out to be persistent heavy and horizontal rain, some repaired to the pub to watch the rugby whilst the others returned to the hut and the rather inadequate drying facilities.

The final party elected to test the accuracy of the forecast and slogged up the water board road to Ffynnon Llygwy reservoir before climbing up to the narrow ridge above. Here the wind prompted Chris Hilton to abandon his plan of continuing to Carnedd Llewellyn, the party turning right instead and scrambling to the summit of Pen yr Helgi Du. The wind was becoming troublesome and by the time they reached Bwlch y Tri Marchog, had the eponymous three horsemen been there, they would surely have been unhorsed.





Pen Yr Helgy Du and Pen Llithrig y Wrach

The subsequent ascent of Pen Llithrig Y Wrach was almost abandoned as the violence of the gusts increased, but steel nerve and determination prevailed.

The summit was passed without pause, then the descent along the broad and sheltered NE ridge was pleasant by comparison. Just above the Cowlyd dam, the remains of an Avro Anson, crashed in 1944, were discovered.



Lunch was taken in the shelter of a wall which hid the sight of the approaching weather.



The subsequent return into wind along the lake and the leat is best forgotten, Welsh weather at its worst.

The stove in the Helyg common room gave the appearance of warmth rather than the actuality so the company congregated in the kitchen where the meet leader was preparing an excellent meal of pea and ham soup, braised ox cheek, stewed autumn fruits and cheese.

Conversation flowed freely and few felt motivated to leave the warmth of the kitchen table until it was time for bed.

Friday night had been fairly quiet' but it has to be reported that this night the gusts outside were sometimes drowned by the snores within.

Sunday dawned less windy but with rain forecast. Most, faced with wet clothing from the previous day decided to head for home.

The Smiths took advantage of the lee side of Tryfan and made an ascent via the Heather Terrace.

It was a first ascent for Helen; in her words, she

“Thinks she enjoyed it”.



Tryfan, Adam and Eve
Michael and Helen

The local member, having fettled the hut, drove to the North coast where, in sunshine and moderate winds he enjoyed a few hours' walk around the numerous summits of Conwy Mountain and Penmaenmawr.

In common with most of the recent Welsh winter meets this one was not blessed with good weather. However, judging by the talk over dinner, everyone had enjoyed their day and as usual the food and company were of a high standard.

Attendees:

Richard Josephy, Michael Smith, Helen Smith, Philip Dover, Richard Dover, Paul Dover, John Brown, Harvey Lomas, Pete Latham, Anne Latham (PM), Tim Josephy, Chris Hilton.

Historical Nonsense

In this era, where people are trying to re-write history and are making judgements about the past based on the morals of today, the facts are being conveniently overlooked at times. It is also the case that if things had not been done in the past which now, quite rightly, are seen to have been outrageous, the longer term outcomes may not have been better although they probably often would have been. Slavery and then, effectively, a form of apartheid in the southern part of the USA, are still causing major problems as is the caste system in India. The people of northern Africans have nothing to be proud of as they enslaved other Africans, many of whom were passed on to British ships to our shame.

Stephen Craven from South Africa writes about an apartheid situation which shows how absurd people can get. He has an extensive article on it published in the Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa (Dec. 2018) 72. (2), 135 – 150. In 2019 it was reprinted in Cave and Karst Science, 46. (1), 30–36 if members want to read it in full, but this is the gist of it.

It is an account of the effects of apartheid legislation on the management of Cango Cave. This resulted not only in much bad publicity but in structural alterations to the Cave that would have affected its internal environment.

Cango Cave, is situated in the Swartberg foothills of the southern Cape, and is South Africa's best known and best documented cave, discovered in the late 1700s and had been owned by the State which provided no facilities, but in 1921 it was passed over to the local municipality and their committee recommended the provision of "two dressing rooms, one for men and the other for women". No racial segregation then.

However, in 1945, a party of white visitors refused to enter the Cave with a party of Coloureds and Africans that had arrived simultaneously and separate tours had to be arranged. By 1952 segregation had become official policy and a new cave-mouth building included separate restaurants with equal floor space, but there was a problem with the Cave, as far as the segregationists were concerned, in that it had only one entrance and subsequently an artificial entrance for "non-Europeans" was blasted through without demur by the Historical Monuments Commission, the successor to which later claimed, incredibly, that the new entrance was a "natural opening".

You couldn't make it up could you?

Tours were sent in at staggered times so they would not accidentally meet in the passages. Separate car parks were created but the juxtaposition of the two entrances and the location of two car parks caused much debate as high as the national government.

The debate raged on; on the one hand they had to obey the laws of the land; on the other hand it was important that overseas visitors were not embarrassed by the signs. The Council eventually decided to compromise by erasing only the English versions of the offending car park signs in the expectation that overseas visitors would not understand Afrikaans. Things got even more complicated as to how the facilities at the Cave could be used by all races without contravening the liquor laws.

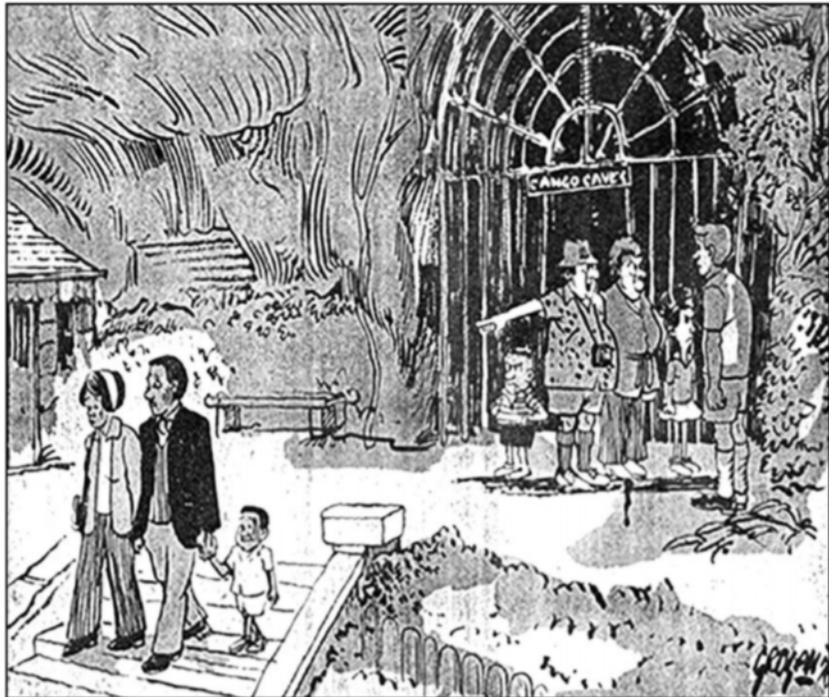
Things came to a head in 1981 when two prominent coloured visitors, were taking photographs outside the whites-only restaurant, and were asked by an official to leave. This caused a furore in the newspapers and in 1982 two professional visitors from Bombay were turned away from the whites-only restaurant at the Cave – an incident that received even more publicity in the newspapers than did that of the previous year. Because they had arrived from overseas, they had “international” status and hence they were legally entitled to be in the whites-only restaurant. The victims said that there was no sign reserving the restaurant specifically for white visitors. The effects of apartheid legislation on the management of Cango Cave resulted, not only in much bad publicity, but in structural alterations that affected the internal environment. For many years the natural entrance gate was covered with a fibreglass screen. The gate on the artificial entrance was not covered and these structural alterations changed the air flow in and out of the Cave, which in turn affected the Cave atmosphere.

As you can imagine the less racially committed press had a field day including this cartoon.

This appeared in the Cape Times with the Caption.....

“I demand that you stick to Apartheid.”

“ It was so dark in there I didn’t realise they were black”



The journey north, as is often the case, was accompanied by fair weather. A brief stop was made at Callander to purchase the final provisions and have a cheery chat in the butchers and bakery. The forecast was for strong winds and a continuation of the previous very wet weather but the timing, the estimates; well it might be possible to get away with it.

We soon arrived at Inverardran; this comfortable and well appointed hut owned by the Ochils Mountaineering Club.



The kitchen was extended a few years ago providing a dining area and somewhere convivial to sit and chat. Mick Borroff and Chris Hilton had brought some well-seasoned logs and soon had the stove in the sitting room looking, but not feeling, cosy.

The Best Western Hotel in Crianlarich proved a surprisingly good venue for dinner with a broad menu, smart surroundings and cheery staff.

Sixteen places were booked, however, only ten bunks were taken; Bob Clark arrived on Friday evening, just in time for dinner, that's the kind of timing I like. A member of the Ochils MC was already ensconced for a week and could confirm that the weather had been awful.

Friday dawned with faint promise, all very wet and windy. Anca Pordea, David Large and Bob Clark headed east and walked up Beinn Ghlas in the shadow of Ben Lawers, finding the conditions rather unpleasant. Jamie Parker, Mike and Richard Smith had planned with Bob Peckham, Mick and Chris to take a low level walk in Glen Orchy.

The two vehicles approached the car park from either end of Glen Orchy, but never the twain did meet. The rendezvous point was flooded for some considerable distance and a

farmer passing in his mud splattered 4X4 leant out of his vehicle window in a nonchalant manner, recommending we leave Glen Orchy as the way we had come was also likely to flood. Calamity!

The Smith party, ever industrious, turned south and drove in the direction of Killin to walk several miles of the Rob Roy Way. It is not recorded whether this included impressions of Liam Neeson.

The Falls of Dochart

These were filmed
by Michael and
have now featured
on the YRC
Facebook pages.



The Borroff party were far more organised and having failed to complete the shortest of walks from Victoria Bridge, being unable to cross the first flooded stream a couple of miles along the Glen, turned back to Bridge of Orchy to drink beer.



The Orchy
in spate
at Catnish

The greatest exertion was expended by Chris Hilton who chased after and retrieved Mick Borroff's beloved boot bag.

The Inveroran Hotel on the road between Victoria Bridge and Bridge of Orchy was under renovation.

Saturday, a glimmer of hope, best to get off early, but all for naught. Mick and the two Bobs drove to Inverarnan, parking at the Drovers Inn. They had hoped to cross the bridge to Beinglas Farm and the West Highland Way but the bridge was closed due to flood damage. An alternative start was fashioned and the three walked to Tyndrum in wind snow and hail.



Bob Peckham & Bob Clark on way to Tyndrum

Following afternoon tea, the train took the strain back to Crianlarich and Chris took Bob Peckham back to his car.

The Smiths, Anca and Jamie, the latter whose enthusiasm is second to none, headed for An Caisteal via a snow gully.



Lunch break

The final scrabble to the top was achieved on hands and knees as the wind reached gusts of 60mph.

Sitting out a squall,
Jamie and Richard



Chris had set out for Ben More.

The steady rise to the col, just to the south of Ben More, was hampered by increasing winds swirling in all directions. Determined to at least reach the col, this lonely traveller was thrown to the ground on a couple of occasions. Taking scant cover against a boulder, Chris pushed his leg through the strap of his rucksack to avoid it being swept away like a flimsy rag.

David and Matt headed to Glencoe and in particular the North wall of the Chasm on Buachaille Etive Mor, over-looking the Glen Etive road. The climb is graded II to III. However, the grading was immaterial in the conditions. The rotten ice forced the pair to rope up. The strong winds hampered the crossing from the pinnacle to the opposite wall. Close to the top, Matt saw a small wall of ice to climb. Wedging his hefty rucksack in the snow against a rock, he was half way up when he saw his rucksack rise into the swirling cloud and out of sight. Climbing gear, helmet and car keys!

The walk back via the tourist route was difficult in the tempestuous wind, though David said the day was compensated for by the great views. The pair managed to hitch a lift back to the hut. The one sided phone calls that evening to Matt's wife, and the Police, were like a Bob Newhart show.

Sunday dawned a little brighter. Hurried farewells and shuttles to the bus stop saw Anca, Bob, David and Matt down the road. Bob e-mailed me later to say that, after the bus to Glasgow, then another to Coatbridge, they drove to Nottingham and the next day, with spare keys, Bob and Matt returned to Glen Etive where Matt collected his van in one piece.

The return journey was via Coatbridge for an overnight stay before Matt returned home.

All this to'ing and fro'ing is redolent of those dim and distant days when a trip to the hills seemed to have a one in ten chance that your car wouldn't see the distance.

Jamie, Michael and Richard, in reverence to the Ochils MC, ascended the snow covered tops of the Ochil Hills in conditions that were almost as windy as Saturday. They made it up The Law and, after a rather undignified stagger around the top, retreated. The indignity continued lower down as wet snow on steep grass resulted in many slides. Michael makes note of and recommends for future return trips the impressive Mill Glen; a gorge with numerous small waterfalls as an attractive return route to Tillicoultry.



Derrydarock showing the sort of damage being done



Jamie admiring cup and ring marks in Glen Ogle

As Meet Leader, I arranged the catering, but Richard Smith, as sous-chef made things happen.

I extended my gratitude to all who attended for their hard work with the cooking, washing up and, above all, leaving the hut clean and tidy on departure.

A big thank you to the Ochils MC for the maintenance and provision of this excellent Hut.

Will ye no' come back again?
Well, that depends on the weather.

Attending:

Chris Hilton (meet leader) Anca Pordea, Bob Peckham, David Large, Mick Borroff, Richard Smith, Michael Smith, Jamie Parker (Prospective member) and Matt Clark and Bob Clark (Guests)



Chris sorting the catering

They Share Our World

Among our members we have very keen and knowledgeable geologists, botanists, ornithologists, zoologists, entomologists, lepidopterists and several other 'ists' but as lovers of the wide outdoors, we all take an interest in the other creatures that share our world with us.

Some members are very experienced photographers with expensive cameras, but even those of us with more modest equipment have captured good photographs over the years, some better than others.

Here is a selection of fauna pictures and I wonder how many you can identify. Unfortunately, I can only identify a few photographers so I am not adding members' names to them.









Spring Chippings

Creatures

As best they were identified at the time, the creatures shown in members photographs were:

Gelada baboons, pelicans, Alpine marmot, gentoo penguins, bullfinch, ibex, shark, seal pups, a full-blood yak, white hares, puffins, crimson rosella, wallaby, damsonfly?, Dartmoor ponies, fallow deer, elephant seal, goanna, Welsh mountain goat, kangaroos, seal, otters, kia, sperm whale diving, koala, Manx shearwater.

Unfortunately not all pictures are as pleasing to the eye.

This is one of George Spenceley's photographs of whaling on South Georgia.



England rocks

With modern techniques some of the oldest rocks in the country are giving up their secrets and some are of a very distant past indeed.

Specimens found during the last century are opening up prehistory to us as we now learn to fully appreciate them.

Fossils on Everest are a classic indication of how the world has been changing as continental shelves push up against each other and drift around the globe.

The February Dalesman points out that tiny footprints found in a rock by Hardraw Force are now thought to be the earliest from an amphibian found in the country and probably the oldest of any four-legged creature.

These are comparatively recent in origin being only about 340 million years old. Older by far are the rocks of Charnwood near where your Editor lives.

The discovery in 1957 of the Charnian fossils in the ancient volcanic rocks was of international importance as they provided evidence that primitive lifeforms existed in the Precambrian period. Charnwood has one of the best Precambrian fossil assemblages in the world. There is only one other place that has these earliest lifeforms and that is Newfoundland, part of which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the other part has submitted an application to become a UNESCO Global GeoPark.

Charnwood is at least as important with rocks about 650 million years old.
(See article page 35)

Chewang Motup Goba

Motup has been conferred with the award of Padma Shri which was announced on India's Republic Day last January; roughly the equivalent of an MBE.



Motup

The Padma Awards are one of India's highest civilian honours and are conferred in various fields of activities, including trade and industry.

The Padma Shri award is given for distinguished service and has been given to Motup as an entrepreneur and for his unstinting efforts in helping develop Ladakh.

YRC members have trekked many times with Rimo Expeditions, the eco-friendly adventure company he founded with his wife Yangdu.

We take great pleasure in Motup's company when he has been free to trek with us, with his attentive crew practicing 'Leave No Trace' camping.

Under Motup's direction, Rimo Expeditions' guides have collectively rescued hundreds of people when climate-change-triggered disasters have struck northern India over a number of years.

As founder and race director of the Leh Marathon, Motup has put tremendous efforts into its development year on year and it has become recognised as a prestigious world-class event.



The main objective behind these races was to create a real platform for the youth of Ladakh to show their potential in long-distance running, and nourish the local economy, as they bring in an influx of tourists in the lean month of September.

Motup is also the new President of the illustrious Himalayan Club and used his inaugural speech to set out some of the challenges faced by mountain communities.

"Our beloved mountains are under siege today through the ravages of climate change, the clearest indication being the disappearing glaciers we see with our own eyes.

As a young boy of 7 years in September 1972, I remember crossing the Khardungla pass for the first time. When I think back to that time, I remember clearly that the whole north face used to be covered by glaciers and snow.

Today those glaciers have all but disappeared!

In 1986 when I visited Siachen on an expedition to Sia Kangri it used to take about 40 minutes to get onto the glaciers from the snout of the glacier.

When I got a chance to visit the Siachen again after a gap of about 16 years, I was horrified to see that the whole stretches up to Camp III which is 3 days walk had turned into moraine.

The speed with which these glaciers are receding and vanishing is threatening the very existence of all living beings on this planet is a huge concern and a symbol of the fundamental challenges we have to address.

The significance of this cannot be overstated!

More than 1.6 billion people are sustained by Himalayan rivers that start in these disappearing glaciers.

For thousands of years, these mountains have been our spiritual homes while at the same time nurturing and providing rich natural resources and a home to diverse cultural and ethnic groups. At the same time, the number of people who head to the mountains for recreational trekking and mountaineering or just to enjoy the flora and fauna is increasing every day.

We must understand that this is having a profound impact not just on the mountains themselves but also the communities that live in the mountains.

It is my belief that, building on the good work of the past, the Himalayan Club including its chapters across the country, must broaden the conversation beyond mountaineering. We need to be the voice that articulates and sounds the alarm about the environmental pressures facing the mountains and mountain communities.

Even as climate change threatens our glaciers, it is also making trekking and climbing more and more risky through avalanches, rock falls, landslides and cloudbursts. Unpredictable weather is making what we and so many others enjoy doing, more dangerous.

The Himalayan Club needs to be a leader in ensuring safety on the mountain, through standards such as the training of guides through reputable organizations such as the UIAA.

Our UIAA program must be scaled up if we are to ensure that the increasing number of people who visit mountains do so in a safe manner. We need to ensure that we never forget the impact mountaineering and visitors to the mountains have on the communities they pass through.

Climate change and increasing recreational trekking, mountaineering and other activities is having a profound impact on mountain communities.

We have a social responsibility to improve local economies in a responsible and sustainable manner.

We need to facilitate and train the youth of the Himalayan regions to be able to sustain themselves economically and environmentally through trekking, mountaineering and other naturalist activities.

We need to encourage waste reduction and make sure that leave-no-trace trekking, mountaineering and other recreational activities in the mountains are practiced by everyone.

It is my belief that the Himalayan Club, while focusing on its core activities, also has the will, the membership, the influence and history to lead on all three fronts."

Motup was made an honorary member of the YRC in 2008

Climate change

Climate change is a massive threat to humanity, but on a more parochial level it is wreaking havoc with the areas we love to take our leisure. Moorlands are drying out, glaciers are melting as Motup mentions, avalanches are more frequent and heavy rains are eroding hillsides.

We can all live more sustainably and waste less, but steps need taking on a more national level.

The public purse has been badly hit by the virus, but we cannot afford not to spend money mitigating the effects of a worsening climate.

We will not be protected by EU environmental legislation but can instigate even tighter rules ourselves if the political will is there.

Farmers especially have just taken a massive hit and need help but that must be targeted to assist the environment.

One much debated area is, of course, renewable energy in its many forms. For technical reasons we can only rely on a certain percentage from such variable sources as sun and wind but they do have a role to play. What we do not want though are massive pylons or turbines in our few remaining wilderness areas. A lot of power is lost during transmission from such areas to where they are needed anyway.

Off-shore wind farms near the cities which will use the output are welcome and these shipping-excluded areas are actually good nurseries for many sea creatures.

Early Europeans

Wandering the remoter upland areas of Britain, as we do, it is easy to wonder how they all developed their own languages but we must turn that surmise on its head.

In reality, the speakers of what are known as Celtic languages, once inhabited most of what we know as Europe, reaching as far as the Black Sea by the fourth century BC. They went under various names with Gauls in most of north Europe, the Galatae in the Baltic and the Celtiberi in Spain. Gaelic Celts reached Ireland then the Isle of Man and Scotland and Brythonic Celts (British) were in southern England, Brittany and Wales.

They were not actually one race, more a culture and trading block with largely shared values and interests bringing about similarities of language as they met and mingled. It was, in all probability, local tribes becoming Celticised.

The reason they are now only found in the extremities of our country is because those areas were hardly worth conquering by invading Angles and Saxons and what was left of the existing English tribes were pushed there by the Anglo Saxons.

They were fragmented and in each area, dialects changed, diverging again and became almost separate languages. Thus we have Cornish in Devon & Cornwall, Welsh in parts of Wales, Cumbric in Cumbria and part of Scotland and Breton in Brittany. Cornouaille is a historic region on the west coast of Brittany and is pronounced something like Cornwall.

The form spoken in Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland itself diverged to be quite different when spoken today, although the percentage using these languages is small.

The garden wilderness

Britain is now one of the most nature-poor places in the world with agricultural practices having a disastrous impact on our wildlife. Widespread forestry plantings after the war did more damage and overgrazing by domesticated and wild animals does not help

Strangely urban areas are among the most bio-diverse areas in the country with important populations of wildlife in green oases, but these need to be linked together for these populations to thrive. Streams, rivers and canals provide wildlife migration corridors and reservoirs, woods and parks attract the species that were more usually found in rural areas. Indeed some species are struggling in the wild, but doing nicely thank you sharing our local areas; foxes and peregrines for example.

Gardens can include wild areas to attract wildlife and, if we dig tunnels under our fences, it will help small creatures especially hedgehogs to move between gardens. We should all have a mini-wilderness corner. Planting native plants and creating havens where creatures can hide, rest and feed should be high on the agenda along with nesting sites. Sparrows, bats, house martins and the hedgehogs have largely vanished and we must try and get them back.

Joe Brown

2020 was far from being a good year for anybody and a disastrous one for many. There were wide regional variations in the effects of the virus probably due to demographic, ethnicity and employment situations.

Your Editors home county of Leicestershire was more badly hit than many areas but he was struck by how many casualties there were from South Manchester where he was brought up. Some he had known personally, but also several well known personages.

One who could have been classed as a true legend was Joe Brown. Born in Ardwick, near where I started work, like many of us from Manchester he took every opportunity to escape to the Peak District to explore both above and below ground. It was almost a right of passage that we also explored the old mine workings at Alderley Edge.

Joe went on to become one of the world's top climbers and mountaineers for whom the term legend is not an exaggeration, perhaps the climax being his first ascent of Kanchenjunga

Moorland and mountain magic

As we wander the high places it is wonderful to catch a view of a raptor soaring above the mountain top or a peregrine swooping down for a kill; hear the mournful cry of a curlew and the song of a skylark, but this magic is fading and man is to blame.

Raptors are still being persecuted and as fast as these species are being reintroduced or helped to spread by some people others are trying to kill them off. In addition burning off of heathers to stimulate new growth is the subject of much argument. It does favour grouse and some wild birds but also kills off other creatures.

Controlled burning is on balance probably OK, but it is all in the word 'controlled'. As our uplands get dryer the risk of igniting the peat is greater and that releases large amounts of greenhouse gas. It also stops the moors acting as sponges holding back flood waters. Whether the practice should be allowed to continue is being debated.

Perhaps more frustrating is the treatment of those killing birds of prey. It happens on some grouse moors in England and Wales but is a far bigger problem in Scotland.

This is possibly because there are massive estates there owned by the incredibly rich often foreign non-residents. On the rare occasion a keeper can be convicted of the offence' any fine is paid by the estate owner who hardly even notices it.

A recent report commissioned by the Scottish authorities has suggested what sounds like a good solution to both of these problems.

If all shooting moors had to be licensed and the licenses could be suspended if evidence suggested that, on the balance of probabilities, wrongful practices were being employed it would hit them where it hurts.

Another magical sight in the high mountains, mostly in the highlands, is that of the Red Deer. However this also causes a heated debate as their numbers are ballooning and they are degrading the landscape. Some estimates suggest there is now half a million of them and when you consider Scotland's human population is only about 5.5 million, it pon the Highland region.

So what is the problem?

Uplands that should be covered in native woodlands are largely bare, silent and desolate. They should normally be covered with wildflowers with a balanced eco-system teeming with birds, insects and small mammals.

10,000 square miles of the Highlands is managed primarily for red deer shooting, doing little for the local economies and is decimating the wildlife. This area is bigger than a number of European countries; even Belgium is only 12,000 square miles.

We have to learn how to balance the needs of the environment and ecology with the sustainable management of wild deer which are causing enormous damage in locations with supposedly protected status for their natural heritage value.

Perhaps a license should limit the number of deer per acre and in addition to shooting for sport there should be an annual cull to keep numbers down with the meat being promoted more.

Yorkshire post 1963

After dinner speeches are often rambling dissertations after the dessert but, if Mr Robert E Chadwick, a Leeds solicitor, has his way, that fate will not befall the YRC.

At their dinner at the Majestic in Harrogate on Saturday, he produced a 36 page manuscript entitled 'Retiring President's Address'.

It was expertly bound with green tape and sealed. He presented it to his successor Dr. W P R Stonehouse (*Pat*) of Saddleworth, as a model. No one was surprised that the manuscript was a complete blank.

Guests included Mt T Howard Somervell, President of the Alpine Club, and an international giant among climbers, and Mr Tom Weir, Scottish mountaineer and author. Mr H P Spilsbury led the traditional singing of the YRC's closing anthem, 'Yorkshire'.

Taking on a challenge

It is often said that all the great challenges have been met and done and all that remains is to do things quicker. That may to an extent be true except for space exploration, but people have a knack of coming up with personal challenges which are novel but no less demanding.

I know of a man in mid fifties, now working part time and determined to visit sixty countries before he is 60. Last count he was at thirty one and lock-down is not helping him. I also hear of three university students using a gap year to get to the highest natural point in every English county. The comment I heard was that the hardest part was knowing where these are.

Our getting members on every Munro in a weekend was a similar demanding exercise. Perhaps our next event should be a member on 130 Corbetts for our 130th anniversary. There are 222 to chose from in Scotland.

A very real challenge your editor started on once but gave up, would be to search the journals for any country we have not had an article about. I got as far as finding that the Club or its members had partaken of activities in 58 different countries and I had only scratched the surface. There are 193 to go at so there must be some of them nobody has tried which may be worth considering.

Poets' Corner - 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

HLS

Found loose in the archives and thought to be Harry Stembridge
(YRC 1933 -1997 President 1954-6)

Charnwood Forest Wood You Believe It

Roy
Denney

A few years ago I organised a cycling and walking meet in the Charnwood Forest Area. John Lovett knew what to expect having done work there but to most it came as a big surprise. Not a surprise to me though, that it was a surprise, as this wonderful location on my doorstep is largely unknown outside the area except to geologists, where it is accepted as being of international importance.

Charnwood Forest was being considered to be a National Park when they were first proposed, but it was to be turned down in favour of being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Then the M1 was cut through the middle and even that protection was dropped.

The Regional Park is a partnership of the local authorities and other agencies involved in the management of the area to work together to protect it, but it has no legal status. I have been on the board since inception and seven years ago we formed a Landscape Partnership as a vehicle to tap into lottery funding and after two attempts we have now been successful and have over £3,000,000 to use to enhance and protect the area. Now the work really begins; exciting times.

Charnwood has some of the most significant geology in Britain: from incredible fossils of some of the first living entities, to amazing ancient volcanoes that continue to shape the landscape today.

It is the underlying geology that has left us the wonderful locations that make up the Regional Park. The volcanic hard rock is evident in many outcrops and has made the land unworkable for agriculture and as such largely undisturbed for centuries. Later quarrying to use the same rock has also left big holes and rock faces and a wide range of habitats in a very small area, a Lake District in miniature. It is the nearest hard rock to London.

Dr Jack Matthews, of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, helped us in pulling together our final successful bid presentation and some members accepted the invitation to listen to him outlining the wonderful geological heritage within the region, and his ideas about how the community could work together over the coming years to protect and interpret it. The funding we have received under our Landscape Partnership Scheme will help us to enhance geological conservation and the potential for future protective designation possibly as a world GeoPark.

Significant habitats such as Charnwood's ancient meadows, woodland and heathland will be supported through targeted projects. These will help to improve habitat connectivity and the longer-term management and condition of the landscape.

Geology is the truly unique element to the park. Rocks laid down during the Precambrian period date from around 560-600 million years ago.

Primitive life began to evolve at this time, the fossils of which can be found throughout Charnwood Forest. The only other place on earth where this evidence has since been found is Newfoundland.

We are still to decide how to promote and display the fossils and basic geology without either exposing items to vandalism or negating their value, but they are virtually unique and of international importance.

During the Cambrian Period the volcanoes were worn down by erosion allowing the sea to advance over the land. The Swithland Slates represent the muddy material laid down on the sea floor at this time, probably about 530 million years ago. Fossilised animal burrows can be found within these rocks. Swithland Slate has been quarried since Roman time and continues, to a small extent, to be worked today.

All that remains to be seen of what was once an enormous volcano, is a rim of jagged rocky outcrops throughout the Forest area.

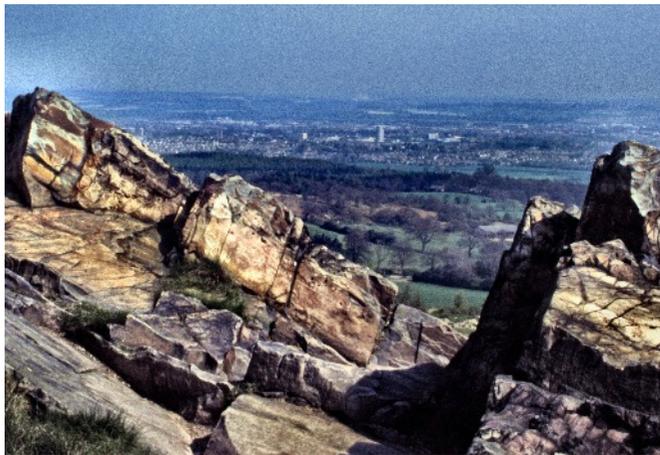
The collision of two continental plates occurred approximately 420 million years ago forming mountains, the remnants of which today form the low level Charnwood Hills that members walked or cycled through.

Local igneous rocks known as granodiorites are believed to have been worked locally since Roman times.

There is also evidence of Late Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, Early Iron Age and Norman activity.

The area has little topsoil and is still very rocky and as such of little use for farming which leaves us with the park as we know it today. It is though, much quarried and redundant rock faces offer some climbing.

This remarkable area encompasses four country parks: Bradgate, Beacon Hill, Swithland Woods and the Outwoods.



Beacon Hill rocks

Work on promoting the area was already underway and one of the first things we did was produce a walker's map of the area to help people get about. I initiated the idea and did the local surveying as detailed in the last journal. We want to promote the Park but also need to get people to explore more of it to take the pressure off these honey-pot parks.

Charnwood is a key landscape within the wider, rapidly developing National Forest's 200 square miles with its sharp rock features, ancient woodland and a rich history.

John Colton went to Art College in Loughborough in Charnwood Borough and just outside the regional park. While there he got up-close and personal with a lot of the local granite. He recalls distant memories of early mornings trespassing on a golf course and an altercation at shooting club in a big quarried hole in Leicestershire, but not actually in the Park. This was at Huncote and a part of Croft Quarry and we have a leisure centre there now with the quarry currently being extended.

Mostly though, they went to Whitwick Quarry within the Park and now closed, with it's twenty something routes including a HVS which, with one peg for protection, John contrived between 'Mangle' and 'Up and Over'. He called it Lywood Arête, named after his girlfriend.

He also remembers hitch hiking back from a session at Whitwick Quarry via a pub in Coalville (between lifts) - hungry as well as thirsty, they asked the landlord if they did sandwiches, not usual back in 1969/70. The landlord went to his kitchen and presented them with two plates of doorstep sized cheese sandwiches. Remarkably, and you don't forget such kindness, he would not accept payment.

In John's last year at the art college sculpture dept, he got involved with some fairly big pieces of Charnwood granite, which he obtained legitimately from an old quarry at the Brand, courtesy of Colonel Martin the High Sheriff of Leicestershire's whose family estate it was.

One of John's lecturers must have known him but Robert (the Colonel) was a very welcoming gentleman and would always allow people into the fascinating estate if you asked properly.

We can still normally get access talking to his son Tim, who now lives there.

(Much more detail about The Brand including my map of the area for orienteering, can be found pages 43 – 44 of the 2012 Journal Issue 13 Series 13)



John still has his Leicestershire climbing guidebook, which is no longer produced.

When the Charnia Fossil was found in Charnwood, it was the earliest life form ever found on earth and it is what started David Attenborough, a local lad, on the career path he has followed and he gave us his support for our bid.

During the process of researching and putting together the bid, I have learned a lot about our ancient history, both the rocks and the woodlands, and have come to realise just how much both products have shaped the people we are today.

The granite, still being quarried in the Park, has been used for roadstone all over the south in particular and train load after train load went down during the construction of the Olympic Park. In Swithland Wood there is a mysterious looking dark and deep hole actually cut down from the top of a hill and it is from where, in the past, the much valued Swithland Slate came.

Wood in particular could almost be said to be in our bones. We came down from the trees and can still not live without them and they are our best defence against global warming. Individual trees take up carbon as they grow and store it until they begin to decline and continuous cover woodland acts as a carbon sink (store), constantly recycling the carbon as old trees die and rot, and new trees grow

Trees benefit us by providing a rich diversity of habitats for wildlife, beautiful scenery and places for quiet recreation. Trees are the largest living things on earth and the longest lived. There is a yew in the Brecon Beacons thought to be 5000 years old. The Major Oak in Sherwood has a girth of over 25 foot and is thought 1000 years old.

On the edge of Charnwood and half a mile from my home there were fields with several veterans including one I also calculated to be about 800/1000 years old. Unfortunately, between me starting to pen this article and publication these were all cut down and we expect a planning application for a new housing estate anytime soon. I had asked the local authority that this one in particular should have a protection order on it but they did nothing.



It is probably pure coincidence that they are short of sites for housing and the protection of such trees would have made it difficult to approve any scheme which might come before them.

The local veteran we have lost. We had managed to squeeze 28 adults within its three legs to give an indication of its girth

Bradgate Park, in the Forest itself, has hundreds of ancient oaks, all with a heavy pollard obviously very many years old and local myth has it they all had their heads chopped off when Lady Jane Grey lost hers nine days after she was crowned Queen. She lived at Bradgate



Bradgate Park with one of the 'beheaded' trees

Without our oak trees we would not have had the ships to eventually defeat the Spanish and French fleets and then establish our empire.

Trees branches, leaves and trunks provide habitats for a wide variety of creatures and their presence ensures food supplies for bats and protection for birds and small mammals. Some of our rarest and most special wildlife is found only on mature trees over 200 years old. Trees also provide the 'lungs' which improve our air quality by filtering out pollutants and reducing carbon dioxide levels; they intercept the rainfall and reduce the risk of flooding; reduce soil erosion with their roots binding and stabilising the soil; they cool the air in summer and protect from chill winds in winter; screen noise and reduce people's perception of noise, lowering levels by as much as six to eight decibels.

The more stressful urban life becomes, the more we should value the calming and therapeutic benefits of green, leafy surroundings.

Trees help moderate the climate, reducing summer temperatures in towns and cities by providing shade and protection from the sun's rays, providing winter shelter, saving energy consumption through their moderation of the local climate, absorbing carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, through their leaves, slowing wind speeds and reducing the impact of rainstorms.

Wood has lent itself to many major steps in man's development. The first quasi humans came down from the trees and hunted and foraged in woods and the earliest wooden tools found date back over 400,000 years. The burning of wood to cook food and keep warm followed and wooden structures have been found over 7,000 years old. Within Bradgate, recent excavations have discovered one of the earliest known settlements in what is now England.

Charnwood, while having no overall protection encompasses four major country parks, countless SSSIs, a National Nature Reserve and numerous local nature reserves. The topography of Charnwood Forest is distinct and varied, has nowhere high above sea level, but has several hills with long views off and three long distance footpaths (*The Ivanhoe Way 36 miles, The National Forest Way 75 miles and the Leicestershire Round 100 miles.*)

There is a complete variety of habitats and creatures occupying them, reservoirs, streams, woodlands and quarry faces to climb on and, if members wished I would happily arrange another meet there.

For the technical -

Rocks laid down during the Precambrian Period are the oldest within the Charnwood area, dating from around 560-600 million years ago. At this time, what is now England lay in the southern hemisphere along a subduction zone, where the pressures from plate movement caused magma to rise to the surface and form a chain of active volcanoes. The material erupting from these volcanoes accumulated on the sea floor surrounding the volcanoes, forming the rocks of the 'Charnian Supergroup', which is at least 3.5km thick.

Primitive life began to evolve at this time, the fossils of which can be found throughout Charnwood Forest.

Igneous rocks, for example the diorites that intruded the Charnian Supergroup, are worked in quarries throughout Charnwood Forest.

During the Cambrian Period when subduction finally ceased, the volcanoes were eroded allowing the sea to advance over the land. Swithland Slates represent the muddy material laid down on that sea floor, probably about 530 m.y.a.. Fossilised animal burrows can be found within these rocks and examples are particularly notable on slate gravestones in local churchyards. Slate has been quarried since Roman time.

This was followed by the Ordovician Period and about 450 m.y.a., igneous rock, created through the solidification of molten magma was forced to the surface by subduction, forming the Mountsorrell Complex. These igneous rocks are known as granodiorites which have been worked around Mountsorrell since Roman times with evidence of Late Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, Early Iron Age and Norman activity. The Mountsorrell Quarry currently exploits a particularly large mass of Ordovician granodiorite.

The collision of two continental plates occurred towards the end of the Silurian Period, approximately 420 m.y.a. This caused the formation of mountains, the remnants of which today form the Charnwood hills. Structures produced by this movement include folds and cleavage, the latter formed when the crystallisation of new minerals cause rocks to break along parallel surfaces. This occurs in all Charnian rock but is particularly prominent in Swithland Slate.

At the beginning of the Carboniferous Period, 355 m.y.a., England and Scotland lay close to the equator and formed part of a continental landmass that was partially covered with a warm sea. Sediments from this period were rich in calcareous fossils and formed as Carboniferous Limestone, which can be found just in the northern parts of Charnwood Forest since much of Charnwood was still a mountain range at this time.

In the latter part of the Carboniferous Period the sea over sections of Charnwood was replaced by a large delta, containing humid swamps and rainforests, in which the Coal Measures accumulated. Coal seams, ironstone and fireclay deposits resulted from these environments, and can be found to the west of Charnwood Forest where they form part of the former Leicestershire coalfield.

The Permian Period of 40 million years was one of constant erosion, stripping away most of the Carboniferous rock.

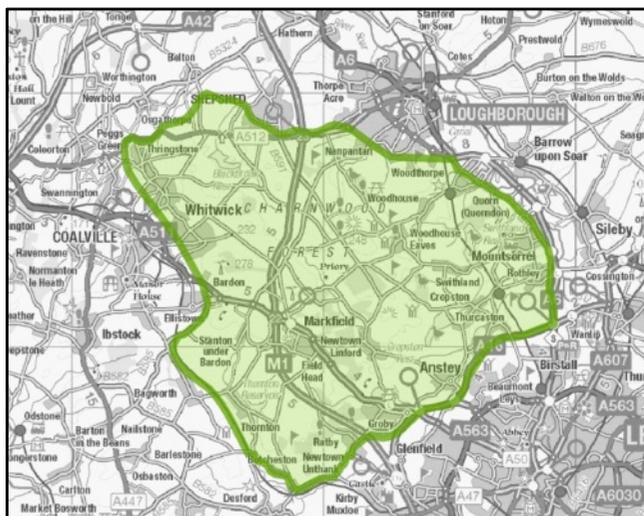
During the Triassic Period the area became covered in sediments. Initially, sand and gravel was transported by large rivers giving us the Shepshed Sandstone etc., and in the latter part of the Triassic period England moved further away from the equator and a vast desert of Aeolian dust formed the red muds and silts of the Mercia Mudstone Group. During this period, flash floods caused water deposited thin beds of siltstone and sandstone and a high, saline water table caused the precipitation of gypsum.

The Mercia Mudstone has completely buried the Charnwood mountain range. Amongst features that have been uncovered are 'tors' of granodiorite formed by wind erosion during the Triassic Period.

Once the Charnwood Hills had been buried, a tropical sea advanced across the area, depositing Jurassic and Cretaceous mudstone and limestone. This sea was destroyed by tectonic movement accompanying the opening of the Atlantic Ocean.

By the beginning of the Quaternary Period around two m.y.a, much of the strata formed during the Jurassic, Triassic and Cretaceous had been eroded.

The Anglian Ice Age, approximately 440,000 y.a., saw glaciers carrying Triassic and Carboniferous rock; and fragments of flint and chalk. As glaciers retreated sand and gravel was left and more recently rivers have formed flood plains floored by clay and silt (alluvium).



Charnwood Forest

La Salle des Guides des Roches de Charnwood

Otherwise known to everyone else but John and that generation of young local climbers and their successors, as the snug in one of the pubs in Woodhouse Eaves, this was a popular meeting place.

Wednesday evening was training night for Leicester climbers who tested themselves in the quarries of Charnwood. John has the old guide book issued by the Leicester Association of Mountaineers, much fingered and annotated in ink with comments on the climbs, most of which have now vanished with continued quarrying.

Seemingly published somewhere between the late 50s and mid 60s, it is a fascinating read to your editor as all the locations are very familiar.

More than that, the compiler and editor in his later life served on an access committee I chaired. I am not sure when or how the LAM ceased to exist but the Bowline Club were also active climbing in the area at that time and are still with us today and I have friends who are members.

The opening chapters about the underlying geology just go to show how much we have learned over subsequent decades.

Routes-wise, there are literally hundreds identified, many of which seemed quite challenging and certainly way beyond I would have ever contemplated. 'Underhand' in Bardon quarry is described as very severe "start from the right hand terrace under the centre of the large overhang. Move left up to under the overhang and to the top of a large pyramid shaped block, climb up onto a ledge and then ascend the second overhang by the slight but obvious break" 130 foot of challenge.

If you want to know what happened to this climb, take note of the many Bardon Aggregates lorries delivering bits of it all over the country. As Charnwood is the nearest hard rock to London millions of tons of Bardon are in the streets of London itself.

There are climbs listed on Craig Budden, a part of Budden Hill and Woods. When I moved to Leicester I used to orienteer in Budden Woods, but alas, where it was is now Mountsorrel Quarry, one of the deepest in Europe and currently being extended.

A fascinating look into yesteryear in an area where modern quarrying techniques have severely restricted climbing opportunities today.

There are though, still a few challenging scrambles in the old disused quarries and on some natural rock outcrops..

Early editions of the Journals contain numerous drawings of some considerable merit and research in the old archives has managed to attribute them to Percy Robinson.

It is very much the case that surnames keep recurring throughout the decades of the Club and it is often the case that son follows father etc-etc. However Percy is not a forbear of our current Robinson. I do know that Percy joined the Club in 1906, was a member of the Committee 1915-19 and Vice President 1922-24. He became a Life Member 1936 and died in 1948.

Further research by our Archivist has now put a face to the name and in this photograph he is accompanied by an 'H' Humphreys but we had a Henry and a Harold both joining in the 1920s. It turns out to be Henry, joined in 1929 and Vice-President 1935-37. Henry was Harold's father who in turn was grandfather to our present generation of Humphreys.



Robinson, Humphreys and Goggs

Also with them is Arthur Goggs who joined in 1930 and resigned when Henry died in 1953.

In this picture of Percy, Humphreys features again, pipe in mouth and we have a rear view of Harold Armstrong who joined in 1929 and served on the Committee 1931-37, became Vice President 1939-46 and President 1946-48. He died in 1961.

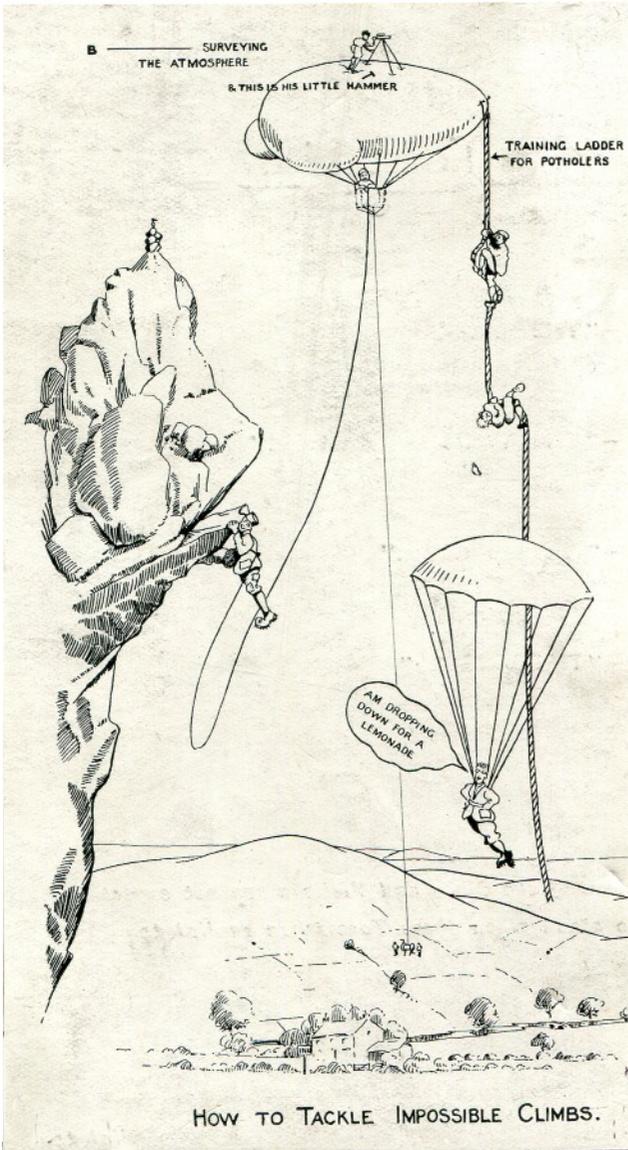


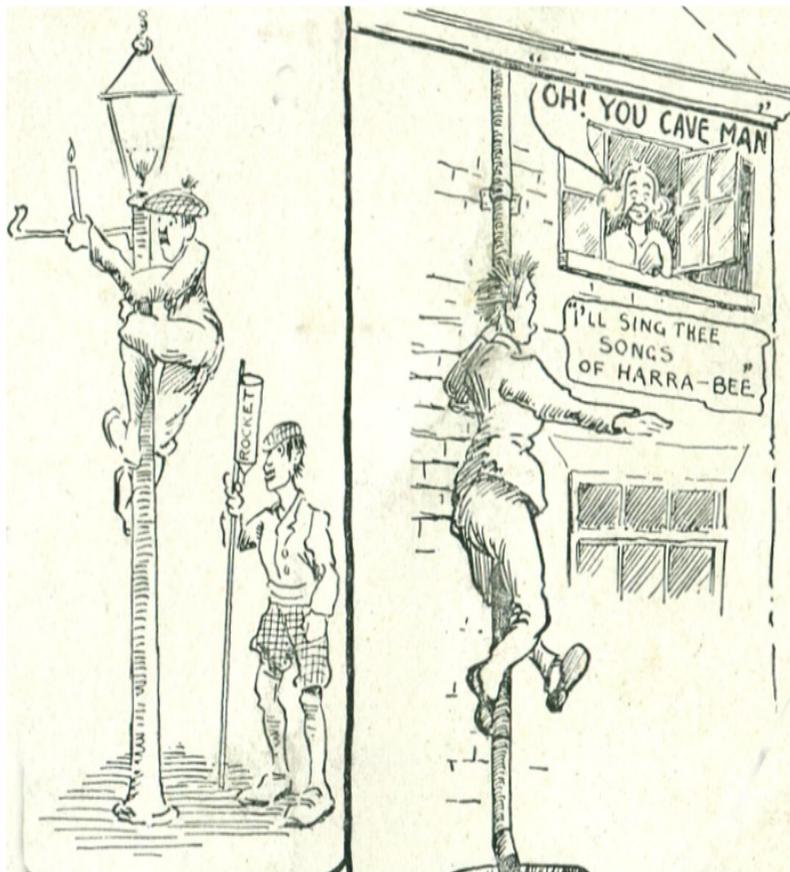
Armstrong is another name not rare in the annals of the Club.

Journal XI No 39 p348 shows Percy as quite a character.

A Gaping Gill camping meet was camping in the style of the early years of that century, with a marquee, with tables and benches for messing and a bell-tent for cookhouse, complete with an elaborate paraffin cooker and oven. Over this presided Percy described as "a fine old member who had been an army cook during the war". He turned out the most superb food. Piles of sausages and bacon and eggs for breakfast, vast stacks of sandwiches to take below and always, on the Saturday night, an enormous joint of roast beef with real Yorkshire pudding - none of your miserable individual pies, but a vast spread cooked under the joint and soaked in the fat that dripped therefrom.

Percy was apparently often seen on meets doing quick pencil sketches. We have a few examples of Percy's penmanship which are worth an airing.







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Following well-attended club meets in Tafraout in 2009 and an excellent trek across the Jebel Sarhro in 2016, we returned to the Anti-Atlas area of Morocco having planned a fortnight's meet in two halves. A dozen members flew into Agadir and hired cars to travel to the market town of Tafraout for a week of walking, scrambling and traditional climbing.

Four then flew home, while the others went to Taroudant anticipating the enjoyment of a six-day trek, culminating in an ascent of Jebel Sirwa (3305m), the highest peak in the Anti-Atlas.

The outbreak of Covid-19 and the swift lockdown of Morocco and its airspace presented us with a set of unusual and character-building problems to be resolved, not usually associated with YRC overseas meets.

Participants:

Rory Newman (President), Mick Borroff (joint leader), Alan Palmer (joint leader) Helen Brewitt, Ged Campion, Bill Gibbs, Tim Josephy, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, John Sutcliffe, Richard Taylor, Nick Welch.

Arriving in Agadir airport on evening flights, we transferred to Hotel Al Mamoun in Inezgane, a suburb of Agadir, rather than attempting the long drive to Tafraout in the dark over the sinuous, narrow and poorly surfaced mountain roads.

Sunday 8th

After breakfast and hire car collection, we drove to the Hotel les Amandiers.

Ged, Helen B and Tim went via Ait Baha to climb a route on the way, the others via Tiznit, stopping for lunch at the Kerdous

Pass. We were given a guided tour of the fabulously located hotel - which had no guests. In Tafraout, we were warmly welcomed into our hotel by Mohamed and his friendly staff.



The group and attentive staff at Les Amandiers



The climbers drove to Cheshire Cheese Crag (*left*) on the south side of Jebel el Kest, above the village of Anammer.

Here they met two friends of Helen and climbed a couple of short pleasant routes.

In the afternoon, Mick, Bill, Rory, Alan, John, Nick and Richard walked across town to ascend a granite tor known as the Elephant's Trunk, with its summit giving a great view of the town, overlooking three Muslim cemeteries, the middle one containing poignant graves of children.

Michael and Helen successfully went in search of, and eventually found, the 4000 year-old petroglyph of a mouflon known as "La Gazelle" near Tazka.



The Elephant's Trunk across the Muslim cemetery



Rory and Alan walking back from the scramble up the Elephant's Trunk

Monday 9th

All except the climbers drove south to the magnificent palm-lined Mansour Gorge. A car was left in Ait Mansour village and then setting off from much further down the valley near Gdourt, an interesting high-level circuit was made of the southwest rim and the rocky ridge linking the summits of Bou Jana (1572m) and Mansout (1768m).

The route used old mule tracks and thin paths along broad ridges with rewarding views of the higher mountains. Mick saw a smoothsnake basking on a water cistern. The party eschewed an hour's walk back along the road in favour of several rounds of mint tea in the absence of beer.

Richard surveying the gorge and above, members looking from the rim towards Adrar Mqorn



Rock strata above Ait Mansour



Rory, Mick, Richard and Nick on the summit of Bou Jana

Meanwhile the climbing party drove round to the north side of Jebel el Kest to climb the East Buttress of Ksar Rock.

**Ged on
East Buttress**



They stopped on the way in Igdouanif to feed Ged's insatiable appetite for omelettes, then, whilst gearing up by the road, they were stopped from going further by marshals controlling a wild boar hunt. Amidst volleys of gunshots they were invited to a nearby house for tea. The elderly lady of the little shack produced tea, coffee, dates, olives and bread, to which the trio struggled to do the justice that politeness dictated.

Boar hunt over, the 400ft route was dispatched in fine style with Helen rattling off the hard pitches including an excellent steep and airy final wall.

Tuesday 10th

Mick stayed in bed with a 24hr bug (though probably not Covid-19).

Michael, Helen S, Rory and Richard parked south of Tizi Ou Manouze and scrambled the Douar Tizi ridge to the east and from its 1795m highpoint spotted Cuvier's gazelle grazing beyond. Turning north they traversed minor tops to reach Tasselt (1961m) accompanied by Alpine Choughs. They descended to Tizi Ou Manouze.

Eleven years earlier, several members traversed the same scrambling ridge. The only differences Michael noticed were: the collapse of the crude shelter near the summit where there was previously a full tea-making kit; and, the drought-induced absence of lupins and marigolds in the fields.

The route remains a great day of straightforward scrambling, with only the one spot where a rope might be worthwhile at the ruined watchtower foundations.

Alan, John, Nick and Bill undertook a walk from the village of Tizi Ou Manouze up to the summit of Tasselt. Bil, wisely, called it a day at the col below and traversed under the peak to the return path, while the other three somehow managed to lose both each other and the trail itself, not only on the ascent, but also on the descent. Happily, Bill moved the car into a very visible location in the valley below to provide a useful focal point and assured that we were able to eventually reunite.

The climbers had a day best forgotten. They went to the north side of Jebel el Kest to climb a route called Wild Country, reckoned to be one of the best V Diffs anywhere.

They found the parking place, set off in high spirits, chatting away and got lost. How can you miss a 500ft high crag? You can on Jebel el Kest.

After four hours of wandering, including trying to get directions from a shepherd and his wife who were collecting herbs, they found the crag but too late in the day to do the route.

Back in Taфраout in the late afternoon, Ged and Tim climbed a bolted route, Freeway, on a granite dome five minutes from the hotel.



Wednesday 11th

Some spent the morning investigating the weekly souk in Taфраout and in the afternoon explored the countryside around the town including the granite outcrop known as Le Chapeau Napoleon. An interesting Berber house, said to be 600 years old and now a museum of country life was visited, complete with a full mint-tea ceremony.



The nearby petroglyph was within walking distance.

Later, an off-road drive allowed a walk amongst the Belgian artist Jean Verame's recently re-painted, famous Painted Rocks which were seriously faded in 2009.

During the afternoon Bill went on a 13km circular walk direct from the hotel into the Ameln Valley.

Once over a col on the outbound leg, there were fine views of the "Lions Head" on the south side of the Jebel El Kest massif. Route finding was straightforward other than an area south west of Ammeine crossing the stream bed, which had many false trails. The final leg of the return into Taфраout was via the rather untidy dry riverbed leading back into the site of the weekly souk.

It however proved overall, to be a very pleasant walk, based on one obtained from the Wikiloc website.

Another frustrating day for the climbers. After driving west along the Ameln Valley to Tanalt (more omelettes), they negotiated the notorious Samazar Hairpins on a steep dirt track, made more precarious by the huge bulldozers which were grading the road.

They were heading to Dragon Rock, but with confusing guidebook instructions they failed to find it. Cutting their losses, they carried on to Ksar Rock where they climbed the very fine VS route Sahara. (*See front of journal*)

During the abseil descent, the rope knocked a loose block off which fortunately missed Helen by a whisker.

Thursday 12th

Mick, John, Bill and Alan motored over to Ida-Ougnidif, where they separated. Mick and John ascended Amzkhssan (1804m) on thin paths, passing groves of almond trees and up a pathless valley to a col.



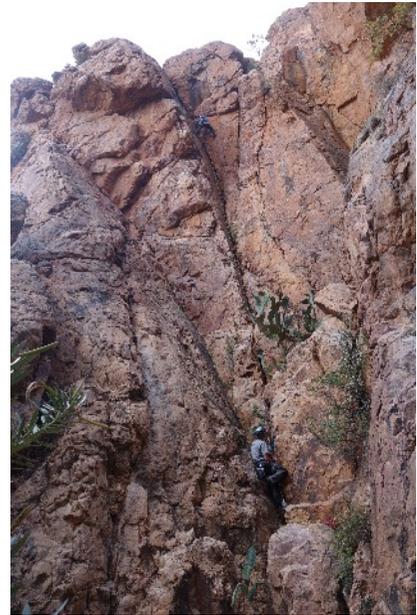
John on the summit of Amzkhssan

The summit ridge was gained by an easy scramble up a vegetated rake and then a boulder choke, with expansive views of the Tassilla summits and the Tamza valley. Careful navigation down the north side and over a subsidiary ridge returned them to the col and back to the car.

Bill and Alan meanwhile opted for a rather short, gentle walk around Tamgelochte fortress and across fields to Kasbah Tizourgane where they were hopeful of finding refreshments. Alas, the both metal doors were firmly locked, and no amount of shouting and banging could open them. So they turned their attention to completing their planned circuit, passing through a succession of sleepy villages, arriving back at the car ahead of schedule.

The three climbers stayed on the south side of Jebel el Kest today, driving the short distance to Oumsnat from where they walked up to Palm Tree Gorge.

They climbed 3 single pitch VS climbs in pleasant but only partially shady conditions.



Climbs at Palm Tree Gorge - Jarrod (L) and Howzat (R)

Helen S, Michael, Richard, Nick and Rory drove to the sleepy village of Imi Ntizeght in the Ameln valley to tackle the Tizgut ridge scramble. This is a grade 3 scramble along a ridge just 2.5km long and said to take about 5 hours. Sounds like an easy day. It wasn't.

The ridge was easily gained but soon presented a steep tower and the rope was needed. Here, Helen decided to skirt the ridge's southern flank instead. Though the rope was only needed a couple more times, the ridge presented near continuous scrambling on sound rock, generally keeping to the crest. There were down climbs, hand traverses and a small window to pass though.

Towards the eastern end, there were easier sections, but we were caught by a passing rain cloud and ominous sounds of thunder. There was no time to linger on the top to savour the achievement and thankfully the rainfall was light and intermittent.

The better descent route was to the north to pick up a vague line to Sidi Abdeljabbar where Helen had been watching out for us, but being three hours late, she had headed back to the car. Above the Sidi, a family of wild boar were sent scampering away.

Heading back along the valley, Michael headed up to the road and within seconds was picked up by the returning climbers, so was soon able to reassure Helen all was well.

Friday 13th

For something different Mick, Bill, Alan and Nick drove west to Tanalt to do a low-level walk up the lush Tirki River valley which still had flowing water.

This started as an interesting scramble from the road bridge over water-worn slabs beside the river with plenty of frogs to compete with the numerous songbirds to fill the air with sound.



The valley was lined with old, heavily overgrown cultivation terraces, once watered by leats and the 'path' required some bushwhacking, causing Bill to regret his choice of shorts.

We crossed the river and climbed up more open slopes to a concrete track leading to a hamlet and a cave used by a local potter.

He was in residence and was making earthenware charcoal braziers, using a coil-pot technique while we watched. We returned to the bridge on a good path above the north bank.

Taking a recommendation from the 100 best climbs guidebook, the climbers went north again to climb Curved Ridge HVD on Lower Eagle Crag.

Only the first pitch had any difficulty. The rest was pleasant enough, although hardly warranted a rope.

During the descent, spots of rain were evident and by the time they reached Igdouanif a steady downpour was in progress.

So they joined fellow friends from the Climbers' Club taking refuge at the café, which is fast becoming a Moroccan version of Pete's Eats, renowned for its gatherings, to sip mint tea and coffee.



**Helen on
Curved
Ridge**

Michael, Helen S, Richard and Rory drove the short distance to the village of Tazult and set off up an increasingly unlikely path between huge rock faces with impressive echoes. This walk circumnavigated the huge rock scenery above the 'Lion's Face'. A long uphill section, much of it pathless, led over the 'Lost World' col to a higher col with superb views. We tried and failed to find a route to the Lion's Face summit. A descending traverse following a mule track, led to a viewpoint where the awesome face could be seen. A steep, awkward section down loose rock, then an interesting scramble down another gully (thanks Michael and Richard for route finding here), gave a descent route even more unlikely than the ascent. A final problem, where a new house had cut the described route, was successfully resolved, and we reached the car, a bit weary but well-rewarded by the astonishing rock scenery.

Saturday 14th

Those who had not seen one of the agadirs (communal fortified Berber granaries) were keen to visit one. We were advised that the famous Agadir Tasguent with its triple courtyards, that we visited in 2009, was currently closed, so Agadir Imhailen was the nearest, just to the north of Kasbah Tizourgane.



Imhailen Agadir

Surrounded by old threshing floors, it was in good condition.

The first party to arrive managed to find the elderly guardian who unlocked the doors with great ceremony and was joined by his equally ancient wife. Their appearance matched the medieval building and we felt as if we had stepped back in time.

Nine of us were given a detailed tour of its single tapered courtyard and the roof by them.



Some then went on to visit another one - Agadir Ikounka.

Meanwhile Mick, Alan and John returned to Kasbah Tizourgane, gaining entry this time for a superb lunch of Berber omelette and Moroccan salad on the terrace. Bill spotted a large herd of the (famous) tree-climbing goats on the way back to Agadir. Others ate in Ait Baha after watching browsing camels.

Kasbah
Tisourgane



Helen B and Tim drove to Robin Hood rocks and climbed the three-star Centurion Buttress, a most enjoyable two pitch route. They finished off with a couple of single pitch routes before setting off for the airport.

With the hire cars returned, Rory, Ged, Michael and Helen flew home, while the others jumped into a minibus bound for Riad Tafilag in the walled city of Taroudant, where we enjoyed a delicious dinner and comfortable rooms. Unfortunately, we also discovered that the FCO guidance for Morocco had been updated to say "We expect flights to and from UK other destinations to be suspended in the near future" giving us no option but to cancel the Jebel Sirwa trek there and then.

Sunday 15th

After a good breakfast, Mick, Helen, Tim, Alan and Richard took the minibus to Taliouine as originally planned and were warmly greeted by Lhoussain Oufkir, our guide from the Jebel Sarhro trek, who was originally intending to come with us to Sirwa. We walked around the substantial Kasbah, sadly now badly damaged with the collapse of several of its adobe walls and a gateway, followed by a pleasant lunch together in the Safran Hotel.

In preparation for the Trek, Lhoussain had brought along a bottle of wine, which we swiftly dispatched and a full bottle of gin. which he was very keen that we sample.

Eventually, he accepted that we would drink it when we came back to complete the trek in future. Neat gin at 2pm was beyond even our most ardent gin aficionados. Taliouine grows some of the best saffron on the planet and so we bought some in the museum to take home .



Several members met up with Lhoussain Oufkir their guide from the Jebel Sarhro trek in 2016

Goats in the trees seen on the way back to Taroudant

Late afternoon, the FCO Morocco page was updated to say "Flights to and from UK will be suspended from midnight 16 March."

This prompted frantic activity, by all with smart-phones, to try to book individual seats on earlier flights with any carrier.

Monday 16th

After a good breakfast and partly successful re-booking of flights, we set up a WhatsApp group appropriately titled "Escape from Morocco", which was to prove invaluable over the coming days as a

communication tool between members at different airports, parts of the same airport and hotels or in buses and taxis.

We went for a walk around the medina of Taroudant, taking in both the Berber Souk and the Arab Souk, slightly dazed, but this was mitigated by an excellent lunch of fried fish just round the corner from the Marché de Poisson, then another superb dinner and a beer at the Riad.

We found out that the British Embassy had managed to negotiate an extension to the cut-off date for repatriation flights, to midnight on Thursday 19th, giving us more leeway on flights. The Consulate also set up an email address to send in contact details for Brits, which we submitted. At this point most had found alternative flights.

Richard, Bill and John set off from the Riad for a hotel in Marrakech in a very fast grand-taxi.

Tuesday 17th - Thursday 19th

We discovered that the British Ambassador to Morocco, Thomas Reilly, had a personal twitter feed which was rich with up to date information and Alan's local contacts facilitated our inclusion in a Covid-19 Marrakech WhatsApp group, where a group of expats, with local



contacts, did a tremendous job in assisting with information and practical assistance with the evacuation.

Ryan Air and easyJet, shamefully communicated nothing to individuals about the situation at any time during the week. In Marrakech airport the queue of customers, desperately trying to change flights, had to be seen to be believed. All being served by one easyJet Agent and who had a wait of 5-6 hours, often without success.

Mick and Tim caught the midday bus to Marrakech passing a compound of taxicabs being fumigated and their drivers being thermally imaged.

Ejected from their hotel in Marrakech, Richard, Tim and Mick were taken under the wing of a French family in a nearby Riad who were celebrating a milestone birthday. We were able to 'pay' for our accommodation and supper with a bottle of whisky (not even a malt) which all enjoyed and improved our language skills. You never know when a bottle of whisky becomes an essential item - especially in a Moslem country.

The central square of Jemaa El Fna was virtually deserted and the souks closing down under the imminent lockdown together with hotels, cafes and restaurants.

In a nutshell, those with tickets on flights which were not later cancelled by the airline, departed on time from either Agadir or Marrakech airports.

Helen did brilliantly to get to the front of the easyJet stand-by queue and caught a flight from Agadir on Wednesday afternoon, 24 hours ahead of her booked flight while, conversely, Nick had to endure a last-minute cancellation at Agadir on Wednesday night and had to take a taxi transfer to Marrakech early on Thursday, while others at home and still in Morocco, searched for and found a seat on a BA flight for him (the last one on the plane) and checked him in on-line.

It was a harrowing time for all with massive queues at each airport with passengers either trying to get information, book new tickets, get on the waiting list or pass through baggage drop and onto their flight. Gallingly, some of our planes left with empty seats but once we had communicated this to the Embassy matters improved.

Used to watching out for each other on the hill, we worked well together through the uncertainties to support each other (especial thanks to Helen Brewitt for booking Nick's flight!) and Mick was the last one out on Thursday evening, palpably relieved that all on the meet had finally 'escaped'.

Between Monday and Saturday, the British Embassy team negotiated with the Moroccan authorities to allow 49 repatriation flights (coming in empty and leaving full). Some 8,520 passengers were thus taken to the UK by their efforts, with no Brits left stranded at the airport. A great effort.

A memorable meet, but not entirely for the right reasons.

Mick Borroff

N.B. Place name spellings have been taken from those used in the Cicerone guide and OAC mapping.

Further reading, websites and maps

Walks and Scrambles in the Moroccan Anti-Atlas. David Wood. Cicerone Press, 2018.

We found this to be an excellent guidebook to the area, which describes some 40 walking and scrambling routes, with GPX files available.

Sets of modern 1-25k and 1-50k topo maps of the area are produced by the Oxford Alpine Club:

<http://www.oxfordalpineclub.co.uk/maps.php>.

Climb-Taфраout.com is a useful online resource for climbers and trekkers visiting the Anti-Atlas.

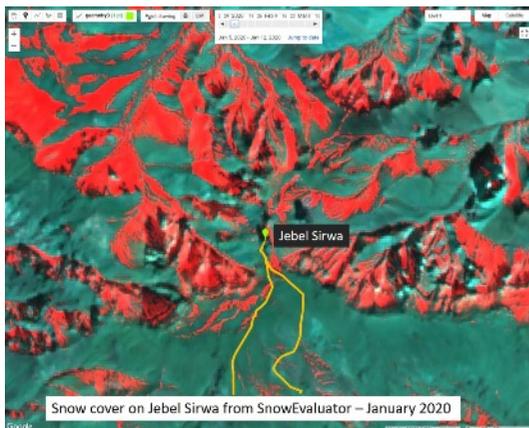
<https://www.climb-taфраout.com/>

We used the snowEvaluator website to assess historical snow cover at the summit of Jebel Sirwa for the meet dates and to monitor levels in the two weeks before the meet.

This site displays a false colour image for the selected week (red = snow) overlaid on aerial imaging.

<https://rudplatt.users.earthengine.app/view/snowevaluator>

These are two screenshots from the snowEvaluator website showing the snow cover in the vicinity of Jebel Sirwa in January and March 2020. The second image shows that the snow is confined to the northern facing gullies and our trekking route would have been snow-free.



YRC Journal



A Wet Weekend In Wales

John
Colton

Is this crag a figment of his imagination, or is insider knowledge holding him back from finding it? Four hundred yards left across the rough, broken cwm with four more lost souls we had picked up and I could sense this leering presence, neck breakingly above. Rain and cloud obscure everything up to a few yards away but I know it is close, very close.

I uncork the wine bottle and pass it round; the others head off for Great Gully which has a surprisingly small amount of water issuing from it. The Main Wall is flinging it down on us as we scramble up to the first pitch. Slanting holds and wet as the first fifteen feet warm some different muscles.

It's taken two hours to get here from the road. My suspicions about his navigation shelved with the action. Forty feet up to a ledge where a wired Clog secures me to the world and "Come on!" through the wind and splatter. Very wet here, what about two hundred feet above?

Maldwyn climbing slowly and badly, not trusting his feet, warming up. Lead through and leave me the good pitches. This was simple, in summer, he said.

Twenty minutes to climb thirty five feet; me, cold and dripping. "How is it up there?" The hardest pitch, he said, Crack that and we have it.

Up left on small holds and back right on steep ground on big holds and a flake above Maldwyn who passes the gear up.

The way forward takes a thin, smooth gangway leading up right to a chimney; left above that to a peg sixty feet above us. Like a boomerang; let's hope I don't end up back here! Commit myself now and it's awkward without crossing my feet; just so with crossing them.

Friction on streaming rock, water down the sleeves and neck.

Saturated.

Reach across, out of balance and struggle to insert a nut which I hang on before reaching a jug which is not a jug and I can't move back. A big gust of wind abates and carefully, ever so carefully I effect a delicate weight transfer and reach a hold, incut this time for a foot. Rest.

Turn round and grin away the tension; on with a runner and into the chimney. The deluge makes looking up painful; sharp, vertical cracks make pulling up painful as well.

Slide my foot out onto a ledge leftwards and push off with the right hand until more weight is on that left foot.

Gingerly, the hand is withdrawn and I'm poised on one foot on a greasy hold. Inch the left hand out to a hold and quit the chimney with the right. Out of the waterfall and twenty five feet left is the peg where the ledge slides off round a nose. Established there with some relief: I pull the ropes through and think the worst is over ----.

He comes up slowly; must be cold after that wait. "Slack!" He goes back. Five times. I occasionally see his white face in the gloom and picture myself soloing to get off, or spending a wet, cold night. We manage to flick the runners out and I recall another rope in Maldwyn's sac. Communication is not easy. We'll get off here somehow. You wanted an adventure, get on with it!

Pull the ropes up, thread a tape through the peg and one rope through that. It's awkward, the peg being at foot level. Tie them together and feed them down with my sac for weight in the gale. A steep, airy abseil and he pulls me into the ledge. White faced and shivering, my hypothermic partner inches down to the top of pitch 1. I follow. Try as we can, the ropes refuse to move with the wet and friction, one misses the bottom by about twenty five feet. The gully team are retreating too so Maldwyn uses their ropes. I continue on our two, then one, jumping about trying to free them. No luck. Come back tomorrow, early.

I empty the water out of my sac and wring my woollen jumper out. In fifteen minutes we're assembled for another drink of wine and a bite of salami and down to the Pass and a quick lift to Llanberis and dry clothes.

Maldwyn put to bed and his mother, usually so friendly, is quite short with me, after giving him the full benefit of her Welsh tongue, that fortunately is beyond me. He is out of the equation for tomorrow; I don't need to be bi-lingual to work that out!

This was autumn, 1970. A weekend of appalling weather, spent trying to get up Main Wall, Hard Severe, up on Cynr Las, above the Llanberis Pass. I was a Fine Art student at Loughborough College of Art, Maldwyn was doing Graphics. He was from Llanberis and he and I with Ian from the Isle of Man hitched here most weekends.

The saga continued with my new partner, Pete who was a 'chippie' at the College of Education.

This weekend was a Club meet of the U.L.C.M.C. Instead of being frustrated by the all too frequent bad weather I would seek out gems like Main Wall and had some torrid times getting up, and sometimes down. I went back to the Main Wall three more times.

Once in 1972 with my girlfriend Sally, in similar conditions, prior to an Alpine trip; with Ian who had his helmet smashed by stone fall, seconds after putting it on (a visit to Bangor hospital) and a solo ascent on a warm summer's day in 1978.



A very wet Sally, half way up

The wine and salami was probably a byproduct of me reading *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* rather than an early attack of decadence.

We were at the Wastad layby at 9-30 am. The crag was visible below the cloud and not raining, blowing quite a bit though. After thirty minutes we could see the ropes; the crag still dripping with huge wet patches.

I took the wrong way to the start and nearly fell off before the climbing proper began and then found 'pitch one' harder than yesterday.

Hanging ropes on this forbidding face conveyed an aura of desperation and struggle. What happened here? Someone tried and failed and presumably escaped. It was like a crime scene and the criminal was back.

Yesterday seemed like last year.

The third pitch again gave trouble though it was not so wet and we had a view. At the back of my mind, a theory that running water on the rock is better than just damp, not as slippery. I think the man who introduced me to multi pitch routes told me that. He climbed in nailed boots so I think the weather was irrelevant to him. I had a pair of Richard Stanley's Bryn boots on, still wet from yesterday. Pete also found it hard and we assembled at the peg and sorted the ropes out.

The delicious tension of uncertainty still strong as above was a new world for both of us. The next pitch was remarkably hard, greasy and unprotected. With much relief I fixed a good wire in opposition to a tape in the dihedral above.

Three pitches left and doubt crept in about yesterday; this would have tested me severely even though I'd climbed the crux, according to the Guidebook. The way on from this haven is tremendously exposed. The wind yesterday was bowling people over on the railway track above. Today was still bad, the rock and I became cold much quicker but there was no need for retreat, Pete climbing very well.

A long pitch, most of it out of Pete's sight. Reluctance to quit a pinnacle and then a cave above. Good holds higher up on the arete and out left again to some grass and jammed blocks.

After twenty five minutes poised above 500ft of air I was glad to reach a ledge. Patience and warmth quickly escaped me as Pete seemed not to respond to some strong pulls on the rope. I didn't want to pull him off this long rising traverse nor did I want the rope round his feet. All the time working out how to extricate us from here but no need, he's on his way.

He had a well earned rest before I moved up over dubious ground to the base of a big slab overlooking Great Gully.

This gave a great pitch but it's above the continuously steep ground and the uncertainty was gone; just enjoyable movement. Specks on Crib Goch could be the others. Pete came up in fine style, outlined against the gulf below.

The wine and soggy salami were devoured in celebration and hunger and then the slog up to the railway line. Was there time for a route on Cloggy?

He almost took me seriously for a couple of seconds.

Mountain Artists

Members had a chance to look at a Youtube streaming of an Alpine Club talk which featured our member John Coltan.

Titled 'Artists of the Alpine Club', there were three presentations; one by William Mitchell, followed by John Colton and then Ben Tibbetts.

William's talk also showed paintings of mountains by Gabriel Loppé a French painter, photographer and mountaineer. He became the first foreigner to be made a member of the Alpine Club in the 1800s. His paintings are truly superb and often done in situ, including the summits of some of major mountains including Mont Blanc.

John spoke about his own paintings of rock climbs he had done, again showing examples, also really good. He talked of trying to live off his paintings and selling them to buy kit. He had a number of exhibitions and spent a lot of his time in France.

Ben has climbed all the major Alpine peaks and has published photographs he showed and his piece was rather technical.

Below is a screen shot showing one of John's paintings, John painting and John talking.

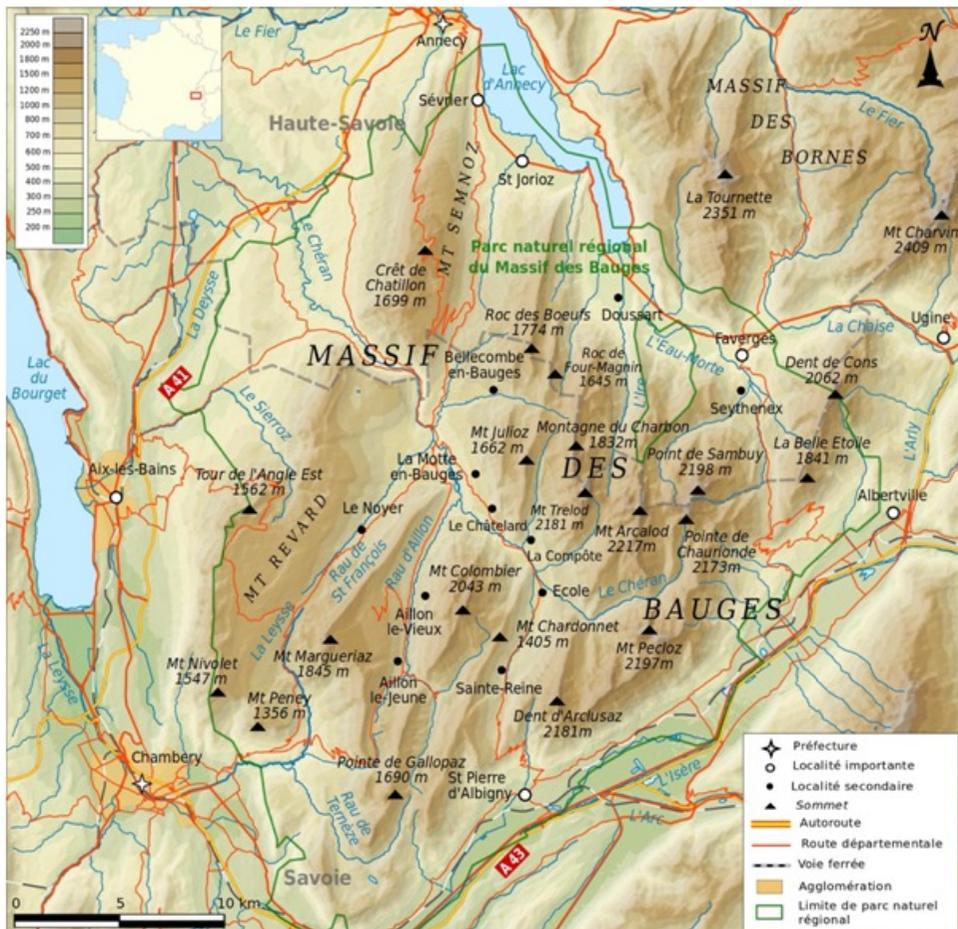


Brouillard face of Mt Blanc with part of the Noire in front. (acrylic on canvas)

Snowshoeing in the Massif des Bauges

Mick Borroff

For our tenth snowshoeing trip, Hilary and I headed to the Massif des Bauges in France, a mountainous limestone area of Savoie, where we had been hiking in the summer a couple of times from an excellent campsite in Le Châtelard. The Bauges is a compact, diamond-shaped area neatly sandwiched between Aix-les-Bains, Annecy, Albertville and Chambéry, with fourteen summits above 2,000 metres, with Pointe d'Arcalod (2,217m) being the highest point in the massif. As a regional natural park, development has been limited and many of the villages and hamlets look and feel very traditional. There are a few small alpine ski resorts and some associated waymarked cross-country ski and husky-sledge trails, but these are not particularly intrusive. There is also considerable speleological interest here, however, unmarked snow-covered glaciers and sinkholes are additional hazards for the unwary snowshoer!



In terms of snowshoeing, it has similarities with the nearby Chartreuse and Vercors limestone mountain ranges, but the Bauges has many more peaks over 2000m, which are generally sharper and does not really have the large alpine plateaux of the Vercors. Winter peak-bagging is not without avalanche danger due to steep summit slopes, so day snowshoeing routes departing from the valleys are the norm, especially early in the season. Like the Chartreuse, the lower slopes are generally forested with pine and beech.

We based ourselves near the small village of Aillon-le-Jeune which gave us ready access to a variety of starting points, with the valley road on the high-priority list for snow clearance as it serviced the local ski stations. We had two weeks of unseasonably warm, rainy weather with valley temperatures up to 10°C. When we arrived, the snow level was already up to 1,100m and higher on the south-facing slopes. We had periods of up to 36 hours of misty rain and sleet but fortunately, two modest snowfalls. It was so mild we only needed to scrape ice off our car twice in the mornings. We did however manage to do eight snowshoe routes under these conditions, generally from relatively high starting points.

Our first dry day saw us parking just off the Aillons-Margériaz 1400 ski station access road under an overcast sky. We donned our snowshoes at the car park and ascended a pisted trail through the pine and beech woods on good snow to reach a promontory at La Couleuvre (1,653m) where the open ridge arced gracefully round to the Margériaz summit, but we turned away from the ski development in preference for the peace of a descent to the Col de la Verne and its eponymous valley with good views towards snowy Mont Colombier.



Snowy Mont Colombier (2,043m) from La Couleuvre

A fall of snow that continued overnight, accompanied by strong winds, had pushed the Avalanche Risk up to Level 4, so in light drizzle, I got dropped off in the hamlet of Le Penon to do a straightforward and safe route up to the Col du Lindar.

I was grateful that a couple on snowshoes had earlier broken trail in front of me, but all too soon they turned off my route heading for the chalets at Morbier, leaving me to forge on through the calf-deep snow to the misty col.

I then returned the same way and walked back to our gîte in an old farmhouse.

Needing to start relatively high, we next drove north up to the village of Lescheraines pausing to photograph Mont Trélod, and back south down the parallel valley turning west up to La Féclaz ski station (1,298m) which had plenty of snow.

We followed a well-trodden route which crossed the snowy alpage around the Chalets de Glaise, then up a sunken track through a forest of old coppiced beeches leading to a wooded ridge with views across to Mont Margéraz. I headed over to the massive Croix des Nivolet (1,547m), with great views over Aix-les-Bains and Lac Bouget.

Returning, I caught up with Hilary and we traversed the crest of the Mont du Nivolet to the Chalets du Sire and then back down through the forest to the car.



Col du Lindar in the mist.



Temperature inversion below Mont Trélod



Mont Margéraz

Compared to solo hikers, solo snowshoers have to make an additional judgement when deciding on their route choice compared to going off with others in a group. In good hard snow conditions, soloing is not a problem with or without a piste, but deep new snow can take an awful lot of effort to make any progress, even wearing state-of-the-art snowshoes.

If you know there has been substantial recent snowfall, and the proposed route is relatively long and circular with plenty of ascent, you have to think about the likelihood of anyone else having done the same route since the new snow fell or be doing it the same day as you to produce a piste that you can follow to limit the effort you need to complete it - not an easy call.

On a clearing forecast and an Avalanche Risk at Level 3, a misty start with a little drizzle saw me replaying these considerations as I set off for the Chalets de la Fullie, nestling at the foot of Mont Colombier, hopeful for a piste in the new snow along the ridge. Hilary dropped me off at La Correrie, just outside Aillon-le-Jeune and I headed up the cleared road to the hamlet of Les Ginets with my snowshoes strapped to my rucksack. I ascended an old alpage track, running with water under the thin snow, up to the tiny renovated Chalet de la Mont Vierge following two-day old snowshoe traces. A bit higher up, I put my snowshoes on at about 1,250m as soon as I started to post-hole into the old snow layer. The path which went up directly through the beeches to the ridge at Pre Conduit (1,378m) and a welcome piste led me over Mont de la Vierge with good views east to the open shelter of the Chalet de la Cha, but I had to put my raquettes back on my sack to traverse the narrow path winding between trees and rocks with almost no snow cover, to reach the beautiful snow-covered alpage of the Col de la Fullie.

Snowshoes were put back on and the views to Mont Colombier and the Dent d'Arclusaz were even better from the chalets above, where I basked in the sunshine for the first time this trip to enjoy my lunch of Comte cheese and walnut bread while sitting on the wooden water trough. After drinking in the views, I descended the clear piste still in sun to the Ruisseau de la Fullie, where my snowshoes were removed for the stream crossing and the descent of the slushy forestry track to the old monastery of Chartreuse d'Aillon to meet Hilary. I didn't meet a soul on the hill all day ... but there was a piste where it mattered!



Mist over the Aillons valley

The author descending from Mont de la Vierge

Another mild rainy day was forecast, but at least we had a few dry hours in the morning, so we walked up to the Cascade du Pissieux, near Le Châtelard which was an impressive site after all the rain. The large stream emerging from a rising to plunge into the Nant d'Aillon river which drains the main valley.

The rain finally stopped the next morning and with a nice afternoon on the cards, we drove over to Jarsy and up to Précherel and walked up the snow-free lane above the Ruisseau de Cherel, then followed the steep but well-engineered alpage track up to a snowy junction with the new forestry track at 1358m, where Hilary turned back.



A snowshoe piste led along the alpage track contouring round to the chalets at the Col de Chérel (1,495m) nestling between Mont Trelod and Pointe d'Arcalod. The views were expansive and several large wet snow slides were in evidence, but well away from the route. I returned the same way taking in views of Mont de la Coche.



Chalets at the Col de Chérel (1,495m)

The next day was fine and we drove up to the Revard-Crolles ski de fond centre and did a pleasant snowshoe circuit to the Croix des Bergers (1,358m), pausing to admire the splendid view of the mountains to the east and returning via the Chalets Gralette raquettes route.

For our last route we drove to Bellecombe-en-Bauges and set off towards the Col de Frasse from the hamlet of Mont Devant. Hilary decided to go up the easier zig-zag track to the Chalets du Sollier without bothering with snowshoes. I carried mine hopefully as I continued on a circuit up to the Col du Frasse and then took a thin path from Précheret which zig-zagged steeply through the trees with little snow cover.

Fortunately, there was plenty of snow on the Cret du Cha (1,468m) and I briefly put my snowshoes to good use.

After lunch in the sunshine, admiring the views across to Mont Trelod, I dropped down increasingly bare slopes passing several chalets and a cross at Le Mollard to reach Col Bornette and on down the alpage track to the road and back to the car.



The author's tracks in new snow over the Chalets Reguéras alpage



Setting off from Revard-Crolles
with the Croix des Berger on the skyline to the right



Plenty of tracks at the Croix des Bergers



Bauges 2000m peaks - Trélod, Arcalod, Mont de la Coche and Pécloz



Thin snow at the Précheret Chalets (1315m)

Maps

IGN TOP25 sheets 3332OT and 3432OT.

Further Reading

Jean-Marc Lamory. Les Guides Raquettes, Savoie Volume 2: Bauges, Chartreuse, Maurienne, Cerces, Haut Aaurienne and Vanoise. Libris, 2004.

The Bauges section of this guidebook has 27 routes.

Aillon-le-Jeune Tourist Office. Nos sentiers raquettes aux Aillons-Margériaz, 2019.

This booklet has 12 waymarked snowshoe routes in the easier grades with topo maps.

Useful Route-sharing Websites

FRED38: <https://www.fred-38.fr/pages/topos/bauges/>

Randonnées montagne (pédestres, raquettes, glaciaires):
<http://randonneesmontagne.over-blog.com/search/raquettes%20bauges/>

Raquettes Massif de Bauges: <http://www.baugesraquette.fr/>

Visorando: <https://www.visorando.com/>

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LATEST

PRICE TWOPENCE

LEEDS UNIVERSITY B.Sc. IS INJURED IN POTHOLE FALL

Doctor goes down with morphine in 7-hr. rescue drama

CLIMBER RUNS MILE TO SUMMON HELP

LEEDS UNIVERSITY graduate David Holmes, B.Sc. (22), of Cedar Street, Springbank, Keighley, is seriously ill in Kendal County Hospital after an all-night operation to rescue him after a fall in a pothole near Kirkby Lonsdale.

More than 40 people took part in the seven-hour rescue drama, including a doctor who was lowered over 100ft. to administer morphine.

Holmes has a suspected fracture of the spine and other injuries. He fell 40ft. while exploring Lancaster Pot.

Holmes was one of six members of the Yorkshire Ramblers club who had intended spending the weekend exploring the caves. The party split up into two groups of three, one of which including Holmes descended by rope ladder into Lancaster Pot, a straight drop of 150 feet.

YORKSHIRE spin bowlers Appleyard and Wright dined at Warwickshire for 90 mins before lunch at Park Avenue, Bradford, today. Appleyard took 7 for 48, Wright 2 for 18. How are the Appleyard wickets. ABOVE.—Rescue team caught by Chase after scoring seven. LEFT.—Lambert is hoisted for 15 when trying to drive.



These old clippings show the fate of our member David Holmes on a meet in 1956.

David joined the Club that year and despite this opening to his YRC career he became a life member in 1991. He attended many annual dinners until 2012 and lived to the ripe old age of 81.

It's interesting that all the meet reports in YRCJ 1957;8(28) had to say was: "The year as a whole was marred only by an accident to D. Holmes in Lancaster Pot. Holmes is now making a slow but steady recovery".

~~~~~  
*We are indebted to Stephen Craven for the cuttings.*

### SLIPPED IN MUD, FELL 40ft.

As they were making their way out at about 11 p.m., Holmes, about 300 yards from the "chimney" leading to the exit, got on to his knees to look over into another pothole known as Fall Hole. He slipped in the mud and fell more than 40ft.

One of his companions, Frank Wilkinson, of Manchester Road, Linthwaite, Huddersfield, immediately set off to run a mile for help, while the other, R. A. Jackson, stayed to rig ladders into Fall Pot ready for the rescue.

When the rescue organisation went smoothly into action. The police at Kirkby Lonsdale called out the Ingleton Cave Rescue Organisation, the ambulance service, and Dr. Richard Mathews, of Kirkby Lonsdale.

When the police arrived at the pothole they found 27 Brighouse Rover Scouts ready to help in the rescue. They were camping nearby. Members of the rescue team descended first, and then Dr. Mathews was lowered by rope ladder to administer morphine to the injured man.

#### ACROSS THE FELS

Afterwards Holmes was roped to a stretcher and gently hauled nearly 200 feet to the surface. He was then carried a mile across the fells to a waiting ambulance.

A police spokesman said today "It was one of the finest pieces of rescue organisation I have ever seen."

Holmes is still studying inorganic chemistry after taking his B.Sc. degree at Leeds University.

He is an old boy of Keighley Boys' Grammar School, and is a member of several potholing and rambling clubs. A few weeks ago he did the Three Peaks walk, and last year spent his holidays walking in Germany.

He is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Holmes. He plays cricket in the West Bradford League.



Frank Wilkinson

#### Comer allegation: Dublin seek release

GHAN, in the High Court in Dublin, until Monday an application for a eas corpus on behalf of two men

been residing for three weeks in Dublin but were ordinarily resident in London. When the court sat today Mr.

## THE ARTICLE.

Leeds University graduate David Holmes, B.Sc. (22), of Keighley, is seriously ill in Kendal County Hospital after an all-night operation to rescue him after a fall in a pothole near Kirkby Lonsdale. More than 40 people took part in the seven hour rescue drama, including a doctor who was lowered over 100ft. to administer morphine.

Holmes had a suspected fracture of the spine and other injuries. He fell 40ft. while exploring Lancaster Pot. Holmes was one of six members of the Yorkshire Ramblers club who had intended spending the weekend exploring the caves.



David in later years

The party split up into two groups of three, one of which, including Holmes, descended by rope ladder into Lancaster Pot, a straight drop of 110 feet. As they were making their way out at about 11pm., Holmes, about 300 yards from the 'chimney' leading to the exit, got on to his knees to look over into another pothole known as Fall Hole. He slipped and fell over 40 feet.

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In early November 2006 I had a few days with friends staying at a cottage in Dunnerdale. We were usually out on the high autumn fells, but one day of heavy rain found us among the holes and precarious piles of slate in the Tilberthwaite / Little Langdale area. We called in at Low Hall Garth, getting out of the deluge for a few minutes. I glanced through the weighty tome that is the Visitor's book. My last four visits were recorded there and seeing them triggered emotions that were close to the surface.

I was accompanied by a close friend on each occasion; on one with John Barker, on two with Alan Kellet and one with Ray Crabtree. John, the eldest at 69 was nearly fit again following a knee operation and would be climbing again at a good standard and we both had unfinished business in the Alps and beyond. Alan came next, slightly younger. He died at the end of that October. Ray, a few months older than I at 58, died in June, a month after our visit.

*John penned this to record something of Ray and Alan, personal of course, but it may strike a chord in others and it helped him with his sense of loss.*

I came to know them both through Paul Jackson about 16 years earlier. Paul became a close friend through work and like the other two, had his roots in Halifax. They knew each other well enough, (the last time I was out with Alan, it was at Rays' funeral.) Ray was M.C. at Alan's Charity Dinner every December for a number of years. Both were sportsmen. Alan, with a formidable list of Rugby League achievements and Ray, a good footballer. I occasionally played Ray at tennis and went mountain walking a good few times with Alan.

I organised a yearly camp high in the Lake District for my school, which catered for pupils with behaviour difficulties and Alan loved to help with those. He was the only person, outside of my immediate staff, to be so involved and actually knew more about our work than any outsider, Education Officers included.

Both men devoted a lot of time to helping others who were disadvantaged in some way and many people have improved lives as a result. Both had achieved much in their lives and both had humble beginnings.

My Lakes trips could be quite 'hairy' and I would like to think that Alan's substantial contribution receives some acknowledgement here, more than just a memory blowing about in the winds round Dow Crag.

We camped by the stream outlet for Goatswater, at about the 2000ft level. This was because it was a favourite place of mine and out of sight of humanity.

My first multi-pitch climbing was done there and it felt wild and isolated, more like the Cairngorms than the Lakes.

There was no one else around to annoy, the pupils could shout, scream, kick off as they called it and who was affected? Most of them enjoyed the experience and we had no really big problems.

Enclosed on three sides by crags and steep rocky mountainsides, on the fourth we enjoyed the view south taking in Morecambe Bay, the Bowland fells and if clear, Blackpool Tower.

Twenty minutes hard uphill work could land you gasping on Coniston Old Man from where you could see the six kingdoms: England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man and Heaven. The other way took you up a huge steep scree slope to Dow Crag, at six hundred feet high the second highest cliff in England.

Over the six years of camp I had cajoled almost sixty of Calderdale's worst behaved teenagers and most of my staff up there, roped to me in twos via Ordinary Route, C Buttress. 300ft. Grade, Hard Difficult with another 300ft of steep exposed scrambling up a delightfully intricate route to the summit.

Camping up there had disadvantages too; it was a fair way to carry all the gear, about an hour with a heavy load, if you were fit, from where we could get the minibus to, on the Walna Scar road.

The weather could be ferocious, even in late June/early July and, the midges likewise.

One year, Alan and two staff missed the Dow path branching off the Walna Scar track (in cloud) and took their party almost over into the next valley before realisation dawned.



John's sketch of Dow

This faux pas often entered the conversation afterwards.

The wind destroyed a few Force 10 tents on a couple of occasions so we then moved to a more sheltered streamside site in the bracken below the Walna Scar track.

Not Arcadia, but close.

The pupils had lessons in camp craft etc back in Halifax but some did not catch on. One boy cooked his sausages by dousing them in meths in his pan and then ignited the meths. You can see the nature of the beast. Alan showed immense patience with these trials and enjoyed the humour such antics induced.

There was lots to smile at, life could also be hard but he liked that and had lots of affinity with the children he saw his own childhood in.

He had a well developed fear of heights, but would not be outdone by the pupils.

This was getting to him and eventually he tied onto my rope alongside an equally anxious Asian boy called Raza, for the climb. I recall them both being quite white with fear but mutually supportive.

Halfway up, the leader of a party in front fell off and almost hit the inclined slab we were hanging on following an 80ft plunge. Ten more feet and she would have been split asunder in our midst. This event impressed me but the other two became even more 'gripped'.

It is to the girl's credit that she got back up there and carried on. Alan and Raza also got going again after I made a comment about the dynamic strength of climbing ropes, as recently demonstrated.

Their relief at emerging on the summit ridge was considerable. We often talked about that trip, it made a big impression on Alan.

We enjoyed a surreptitious dram or two on these camps, calling it tea or gravy as we stored it in thermos flasks to reinforce the deceit. One year Paul and his son Tony ran a base camp down by Coniston lake, but they and Alan were up with me for the 'crack' one evening. The drams flowed and, when time came for departure, Alan was the worse for wear. Having to choose between falling into the stream or the fire, he chose the fire, but didn't seem to notice his clothes smouldering.

We put him out in the river.

Later, whilst he was crawling through the bracken, lost, I heard him calling for Paul to show him the way. A drawing I did of him asking a rabbit for directions was on the notice board of our local shortly afterwards.

Dow Crag had a role to play near the end of Rays' life. Apart from tennis and our age, we didn't have much in common, but hit it off very well somehow. He had no mountain aspirations at all and had never been to the Lakes, but as a prelude to his imminent retirement we took a midweek trip, LHG being the base.

Being M.D. of a large insurance business he was used to comforts and some luxury and was not particularly impressed by the Spartan nature of the Hut. He would have been happier at a five star hotel by Windermere. We ate and drank well though and had a wild day out on Dow. I was intending to use a rope to safeguard us up Easy Terrace to the point above the climb I did with all those pupils, then continue up to the summit by the intricate scramble, impressive country for a non-climber.

The rain started before we reached Goatswater. Toiling up the scree into the lowering cloud can't have been much fun, but Ray kept it up.

I don't think he got much exercise beyond some golf and occasional tennis. He did however, seem to have an innate fitness that belied his shape and he followed me, without putting a foot wrong, up the loose, steep and horrible gully that flanks A buttress. The weather was too bad for my original plan, so we kept going up into the murk, emerging onto the ridge in a howling gale

We were well soaked and weary by the time the valley was reached, having traversed the summit and descended back down to Goatswater. He had not complained once and had also shown a fair amount of agility and balance.

Unfortunately and sadly, that was to be the beginning and the end of his mountain experience.

When I think about Dow, and other places, I see them clearly in the context of the people I was there with. Concerning those who are no longer alive the memory is not only poignant but also richer and stronger in how it invades the senses and emotions, as though to compensate for the loss.



*The John he refers to, John Barker, lives near Brighouse and is still going strong at 83. He goes to the Huddersfield climbing wall most weeks when open.*

*Along with Tut Braithwaite and Richard McHardy, he was the first English climber to do two of the big routes on the North Face of the Jorasses. Walker in 1969, his first Alpine route; and the Croz in 1975 with Ian Blakeley, John Colton's other regular climbing partner.*

*After that they often climbed as a three and later still the two Johns had some good trips in the 80's and again in 1997 to celebrate his 60<sup>th</sup> year.*

*The year John Colton had a knee operation (about 1984), this John soloed the Sentinel Rouge and the Pear, apparently hallucinating near the top of that, meeting up with some 'Penguins'.*

# My Garden And I An Old Friend Rediscovered

Roy  
Denney

In a year when almost everybody was confined to barracks, I cannot start to conceive how flat dwellers coped. Blessed with a fairly large garden, I spent a great deal of time out there, as did many others.

In the eight months leading up to the viral problem, I had been nursing wounds from three minor amputations to my foot so the garden had been rather neglected. This was not helped by a winter when even self respecting ducks would have baulked at the conditions.

End result something of a wildlife heaven! To paint the picture I have two small naturalised ponds, neither has filtration but one has a pump circulating water to form a small stream tumbling through a rockery. That pond has a breeding colony of goldfish/koi crosses of a Heinz 57 variety but the other just homes frogs, newts and other mini beasts.

I have another rockery, two small wildflower mini-meadows, a nice sized lawn, a cottage garden and small veggie plot. I have apple, pear, cherry-plum, feijoa, kiwi and lemon growing and a rhubarb patch.

One half of the garden is in an amphitheatre backed by a shrubbery of numerous species including a rowan.

As an environmentalist and conservationist I have always encouraged wildlife and enjoyed what I have seen in the garden and have always thought they must be living somewhere in the patch.

Over the years I have seen many species, more than I would have expected given I live in a suburban area more than half a mile from any open countryside, park or farmland.

Given months of largely undisturbed existence, the wildlife has thrived with one exception. We have had a resident hedgehog, but he managed to drown himself despite the pond having climb out points. We have two hedgehog dens so hopefully another will claim the territory.

Six weeks of almost unbroken sunshine in spring saw me out there from dawn to dusk and the garden is now better than it has ever been; tidy where it should be, but enhanced in the wild corners. I do find that much as I try and help wildlife it usually does its own thing. The hedgehog did not reside in either luxury pad but a scrape under some undergrowth beside one of them. I have nesting boxes designed for small birds, robins, blackbirds and swifts all carefully sited but none are occupied. I do however have wood pigeons nesting in a cypress, blackbirds at two locations in hedging and a robin in a bush. I suspect I also have wren but have not spotted exactly where.

The one surprise really is that as I have been such a permanent feature in the garden they all largely ignore me.

I include the fox which visits regularly late evening. If I surprise him, he does a runner but if he sees me in advance, he strolls past disdainfully and even occasionally stops at recently turned earth to nose about for earthworms. Whilst I would rather see them in the wild, I can live with his visits except when he marks his territory with that far too aromatic poo.

In March, I heard a thrush singing and heard shells being broken on a stone anvil. I found the spot but never saw the bird which must be living somewhere fairly near. Our two pairs of blackbird, at each end of the garden, became more territorial and aggressive to each other as breeding time arrived. Each male has a favourite tree top and they seem to try to out shout each other.

In the past we have seen numbers of chaffinches, occasional goldfinches, blackcaps, redwings, bullfinches and lots of green finches but these are now rare visitors. We used to have bats over the ponds in the evenings but I saw none this year.

There were some unwelcome visitors, some quite attractive and interesting but! A heron visited my pond and rooks and magpies were regulars and something kept killing frogs and depositing them all over my lawn. During the procreating season frogs lose their heads quite literally.

As I worked my potato patch in April I was supervised by a robin who kept close attention and on one occasion when I took a breather, he actually sat on the blade of the spade I was leaning on.

We have green woodpeckers fairly close in a row of Lombardy poplars and they visit from time to time, normally early summer and they compete with our residents for the copious supply of ants.

We also hear owls from time to time and I did have a visit, although I only know this as it flew into a glass panel, leaving a dusty image of itself. It presumably survived but must have had a headache.

April/May saw an invasion of tits. First broods may have added to numbers, but it could just be that courting plumage made them more obvious.

This summer saw two unusual visitors. We had a great spotted woodpecker on a feeder and a sparrow hawk actually perched on a bird table, fifteen feet from our kitchen window.

Smaller visitors included a hornet one day, several species of dragonflies and something I had to look up, a snakefly.

Over the years we have lived in Glenfield, just outside Leicester, I have identified over thirty species of bird in our garden but we see far fewer species these days.

I would have rather been wandering the high hills and more remote corners of the country, but if you can take time to look, a garden has a lot to offer.

Arthur Tallon has been reminiscing to me and his ill equipped, early forays brought back many memories of my early, naïve exploits

I was introduced to the great outdoors by the Church Lads Brigade who twice took me, as a 13/14 year old, to a cow field in New Mills. The first time, a day trip to look at cows, but the second overnight in a tent with straw on the floor and two blankets, using our outer clothing as a pillow. They knew how to look after youngsters back then in the 50s!

I did however, see hills in the distance and was curious. I must have seen hills from the age of 18 months to four years old, but have no recollection of being taken into them. Dad had a shop open all hours in Shaw near Oldham before we moved into Manchester. The family never had a car and we never had a holiday as Dad only had Sunday afternoons off. In fact, as Mum helped in the shop we children only had holidays with grandparents in static caravans at the seaside or at Great Auntie Mary's guest house in Blackpool.

Back then, children were more independent and parents more trusting and, at 15 with my 14 year old sister, we caught a bus to Hyde and another to Laddow Rocks to walk over Chew. Buses were also a lot more available, reliable and cheaper back then.

I had the bug, and a year later with a 16 year old friend, we borrowed an old canvas tent and went by train to Edale for 4 days camping. What is left of that old railway line is now part of Manchester's tramways and the station a Sainsbury's.

When we got to Edale a chap had to help us put our rucksacks on and I hate to think how heavy they were but probably at least as heavy as we were.

We did not get far up Grindsbrook before we decided we would have to camp up. I don't know what the rules about rough camping were, but no self respecting warden would have been out in that bad weather.

We had found a lovely green flat area beside a side stream, but I have no idea exactly where. It seemed ideal. We unpacked some of our kit which left little room for us and got out our old stove. It burned a solid fuel block something like a fire-lighter and I now think if I had been still trying to warm that soup a month later we would have got nowhere.

You might well ask what we were carrying that made our packs so heavy?

Neither of us had ever cooked in our lives and we had tins of soup, tins of fruit and tins of

veg to go with tins of meat. That night we had cold soup and cold fruit. Thank goodness we had remembered a tin opener!

We woke up next morning and the drizzle had become steady but we went up onto Kinder anyway, with poor wet weather gear and got very wet. How to dry things in a tiny tent had never occurred to us.

We started that night very damp and miserable; stuck in the tent and planning to go home next day unless the sun came out and wondering how we would get a wet tent home.

We need not have worried – the rain got heavier and heavier and the wind was gusting ever more fiercely; the stream rose and flowed through our tent (no sewn in groundsheet) and the wind threatened to blow us away.

We spent four hours sat in a stream with handfuls of tent, keeping it with us. (I later heard that gusts of 40 mph had been prevalent).

As soon as dawn broke, we packed as best we could and dragged the tent along behind us down to the station with the first train two hours away. With plenty of time, we repacked and dried out a little before phoning the dad of the friend who had lent us the tent. He told us to bin it, so no concern about getting it home on the train.

We left all our unopened tins in the station waiting room and, by putting all of what we both had in one of the two cavernous backpacks we had borrowed, we actually managed to get the tent home.

I was allowed to keep it and used it a few times after that, but only as intended, as a one man tent and only in good weather. It then went into Dad's attic and never saw the light of day till we moved again when I was twenty four. At twenty eight, when I got married, I relieved them of it.

We moved to Wharfedale five years later, me taking up a job in Bradford and living in Burley. When my kids came along I thought I the old tent might be useful but there were a couple of moth holes in it. We were still visiting Manchester regularly then and I knew Bukta had a factory in Stockport, so I took it to them to see if they could patch it up and they were so delighted to see such an old model that they did it proud.

Holes were patched; a sewn in groundsheet provided; the front pole was swapped for an A-frame and both poles provided with extensions to hold a fly sheet. The front had been tied together with ribbons but they replaced these with a zip and I ended up with quite a cosy (but heavy) customised tent.

I used it several times camping from my car on early meets before I could afford something better and I still have it to this day.

Arthur's introduction to the hills followed a somewhat similar pattern if a lot more adventurous and his access was easier living in amongst such country.

Although he had been up Farleton Crag, his local hill, and messed about on the limestone outcrops often enough, his first real introduction to the hills was when he attended school at Kirkby Lonsdale along with Denis Barker and the recently deceased John Lovett, although he says John's attendance at school was more on his own terms than the school's.

They had a teacher called Mr Lofthouse who was a keen fisherman and hill walker. (Every tarn or stream he pointed out would be "full of fish"). He supposes it was about 1946 and petrol rationing was being relaxed after the war and at last Mr Lofthouse could organise a coach trip to the Lakes. It must have been Easter time and Arthur remembers they went up Helvellyn via Striding Edge with snow on the tops. (Long before the introduction of Health and Safety and Risk Assessment).

Although Arthur lived within 20 miles of Windermere, he had never actually been past Ambleside so these school trips were a real 'eye-opener'. He can't remember his family ever going on holiday to stay anywhere. If they went away for the day it was to Morecambe or Sandside. Even without the restrictions imposed by the war, he doesn't think they would have gone anywhere except to the seaside or to stay with relatives.

Arthur's first real holiday in the hills was with another school friend, when they went by bus to Keswick, then a local bus to Seathwaite and walked over Styhead Pass to Wasdale where they camped in the woods. Now it would be called 'backpacking', but none of us considered it such back then.

Arthur thinks his friend had a proper framed rucksack, but he had a combination of old army packs. They were very poorly equipped for walking long distances. In fact their tent poles both broke in a windy night in Wasdale and they spent the rest of the holiday carrying poles cut from bushes. They were also carrying far too much gear and, by the end of the holiday, were ready to get back home for a rest. However they did climb Scafell Pike.

The next summer Arthur went with Denis Barker for a two week camping/climbing holiday. They travelled by bus to Langdale, camped the first night by Blea Tarn and next day, climbed Middlefell Buttress (their first proper rock climb) and camped the second night at Stickle Tarn. And so it went on.



They had two weeks of glorious weather and did every climb they attempted.

The ones he remembers are Bowfell Buttress, Bracket and Slabs on Gimmer, Gwynnes Chimney on Pavey Ark and climbs in Borrowdale. Their climbs were restricted to those they

could find in “British Mountain Climbs” by George D Abraham. No post war FRCC guides until a few years later.

They had a rope that was not really fit for purpose, but fortunately, it was never tested and certainly no harness, just a rope round the waist and a sling with karabiner for a running belay. Although they had boots with nailed soles (yes, really!) they did not need them for climbing as the weather was so good and the rock so dry that they did the rock climbs in gym shoes.

Later in the holiday they discovered Wallend Barn and used that as a base. On one of their outings they met a climber wearing boots with Vibram rubber soles. They thought they would never catch on and take over from nails, and would they be safe on wet rock?

In Borrowdale, Arthur remembers meeting a quite famous climber (so famous he can't remember his name! It was probably George Rushworth) and they climbed Gillercombe Buttress together. Arthur was very proud that he allowed him to take turns in leading.

A few years later, Denis and Arthur went to Glencoe on Arthur's very old and not very reliable 250 cc Velocette motorbike and they sent the tent and sleeping bags ahead by post. They arrived after the post office had shut and had to spend the night in an empty shed without sleeping bags. This time they did have a SMC climbing guidebook, edited by W H Murray and published in 1949.

At first they camped in the valley, but later a farmer allowed the use of a barn. Arthur remembers being on top of the Buachaille talking to two boys who were proudly pointing out their tent in the valley below, just in time to see it wrecked by a large highland cow!

Looking at the guidebook now, Arthur sees he had 'ticked off' several climbs on the Buachaille; one of them even graded Severe!

On the way back, due to the combined weight of them and their gear and the age of the bike, the back wheel collapsed. They set up camp on the shores of Loch Lomond (not a bad spot to be marooned) and the next day Arthur thumbed a lift into Glasgow taking the wheel with him and managed to find a garage that could rebuild it and he repeated the journey the next day to pick it up.

During the return journey, Denis complained all the time about the poor quality of the pillion seat and for some reason seemed quite annoyed when, the next time Arthur saw him, he had fitted a new luxury seat. Denis seemed to think it ought to have fitted before the holiday, rather than after.

Arthur has found a very poor, and not-of-publishing-quality photo taken at Loch Lomond, of the motorbike with the wheel removed showing the enormous amount of gear mounted on the rear carrier. No wonder the wheel gave way under the strain.

Soon after the Scottish trip, Arthur was introduced to the YRC by John Lovett and joined in 1952 and he is still battling on, almost seventy years later. Happy days!

Lock down during the pandemic put paid to all organised meets but, as restrictions were slowly lifted, members living near to each other started small group activities.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, Sheffield members were invited to meet up at Outer Edge for Bearberry and Labrador Tea. There are seven members in Sheffield, but for the chosen day, their work commitments, filial duties and the wet forecast reduced the gathering to a ripe old pair.

They met in a cloud amidst the cloudberry strewn moor of Outer Edge. **John Middleton** had arrived from King's Tree in the Derwent Valley in the south to slog up Broadhead Clough and turn left to reach the Outer Edge 541m trig point.

Meanwhile, **Michael Smith** arrived from Upper Midhope to the northwest, via Cut Gate and turning right to the trig point.

A quick catch up of news and it was off on a compass bearing about 300m to the east as the mists cleared.

John soon spotted the low Labrador-Tea plant. Apparently, these are now reclassified as rhododendrons. (SK1801997046).

Though it was approaching time for lunch, the cold, damp wind made the moor top an unappealing place to stop.



John & Michael by the Labrador Tea plant

Heading back along Outer Edge and down Broadhead Clough the valley bottom gave some shelter.

Turning upstream, Stainery Clough's swollen stream was crossed with care and the infant River Derwent's bank followed a short way to find the Bearberry draped over a crag's lip (SK16089635). This is on the southern limit of the plants natural European range.

Though providing a well-sheltered riverside lunch site, the cloud of biting midges discouraged loitering. So, John soon set off back down the valley to explore the lower half of Cranberry Clough - quite tough with its many stream crossings – before crossing the Derwent at Slippery Stones to the King's Tree.

Michael went off up Oaken Bank to head for Pike Lowe.

On Oaken Bank, a young buzzard was disturbed, to fly ineptly off. Later, approaching Cut Gate cairn, Michael spotted an adult buzzard struggling to fly with a mountain hare dangling from its talons, presumably to feed the youngster.

On the moor top, a couple of living hares, meadow pipits, wheatears, snipe, grouse and curlew had also been seen earlier.

The buzzard with its kill  
a poor distant shot taken  
against  
the light in drizzle



A tired female  
Large Red  
Damselfly  
on a tired  
Michael's  
rucksack  
on  
re-ascending  
Cut Gate

On 5 July, members from the area were out again on, what they described as, a Bog Standard Round.

The second outing for the Sheffield group was a more standard round, being a 7 mile circumnavigation of two reservoirs but mostly keeping 30-50m above them.

From the popular starting point by the traditional village cricket field at Low Bradfield, a westward rising route ended on the dam of a third reservoir, Strines.

The return route roughly paralleled Mortimer Road, a 1770's turnpike most of the way. Initially this was above Dale Dyke reservoir whose dam collapsed on first filling resulting in the Great Sheffield Flood of 1864, which took over 240 lives and 600 houses, but that day stayed intact.

Then by Agden reservoir where a diversion was made to investigate the orchids and butterflies of Agden Bog. A fruitless search was made for sundews.

A final descent was made to Bradfield with its two pubs re-opened following an enforced 16-week closure.

Turning out this time were **Christine and Jim Harrison** and **Michael Smith**.



Knee-deep  
in Agden  
Bog's  
meadow

Somewhat further north, **Alan and Angie Linford** had a wander down to Wharfedale and spent a day above Muker before they took their van up to Teesdale for some walking.

We often come across surprising things in the hills, but Alan tells of a very strange encounter.

It relates to a memory triggered by the Muker trip.

From Muker, a stone causeway leads across the meadows through a heavily sprung gate down a few steps to a bridge over the mighty Swale.

A couple of year ago, with Angie, he was coming from the Swale up the steps and, being the gentleman he is, he held the gate open for a couple of ladies.

Passing the time of day, the younger one suddenly said “I know you two. At least I know that voice!”

It turned out that the younger lady and her sister had sat behind Angie and Alan in 2000, on a bus trip to the Polish Tatra. Apparently not wanting to change money at a comfort stop in Germany, they were thirsty and Alan provided some coins for a coffee.

All these years later the lady remembered this and Alan.

Members all over the country were itching to get out and Arthur Tallon, approaching his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday did a length of the South Downs Way.

Your Editor (***Roy Denney***) had not walked more than a few hundred yards for nearly a year following several surgical procedures on a foot and as lock down eased he managed a three mile walk in preparation for some gentle walking in the Alps, staying with his daughter. Then Leicester was locked down again and not only could he not go out into the hills to walk, but the Alps trip was cancelled. He had to settle for a month of forays amongst the rocky outcrops of Charnwood, once his village was excluded from the Leicester boundary after two weeks being within it as the M1 and A46 were convenient boundaries.

On Wednesday 15 July, Sheffield members were out again and **Michael Smith, Helen Smith, Tom Spencer (PM) and David Spencer (G)** enjoyed the walk from Cutthroat Bridge, above the Ladybower Inn, despite the early drizzle and mist.

They just missed a bearded vulture, which flew below them as they were sheltering behind rocks for a spot of lunch. Peregrines in evidence above the Snake Pass road. The military were also in evidence with Chinooks and an Apache helicopter flying down the Derwent Valley. The route they took was Derwent Edge to Back Tor, Lost Lad, Fairholmes, Lockerbrook, Crook Hill and behind the Ladybower Inn. 20 km in 6 hours.

I rearranged my trip to the Alps only for the airline to cancel that flight so more local walking but finally got out there on 28 August at the 5<sup>th</sup> attempt.

The climax of local activities was a combined effort on and around the weekend when the Club Long Walk had been scheduled. Badged as the Veggie (non-meet) event, collectively, 50 members walked and ran 1165 miles (1874km), cycled 413 miles (665km) and there were 122 visits to trig points.

As with the Covid 19 statistics, the figures are known to be far higher. Kayaking in Sweden and caving in Yorkshire were also on the agenda. Congratulations to all who made the effort.

### Dave and Fiona Booker-Smith

**Bike 49.7 miles (80km) Walking 20.3 miles (32.7km) Running 28.1 miles (45.2km)**  
**2 trigs**

July 18. A bike loop between Selby and Fairburn which was 80km. Very flat but nice and quiet roads.

July 19. Did a good walk up Pen-y ghent, Ingleborough and then down to Trow Gill, starting and finishing in Horton.



Once they got away from the crowds of 3 peakers it was lovely. Finished with an ice cream for all three of them (including Bailey, the dog).



A 'proper' cairn and dog tired?

July 21: Fiona ran around Morley, Leeds. 10km, 69m $\uparrow$ , 0.9hr.

July 25: Fiona ran the middle part of the Leeds Country Way. Headingley, Eccup, Bardsey, Thorner, Barwick-in-Elmet, Garforth, and Swillington. 35.1km, 443m $\uparrow$ , 4.24hr.

July 26: Dave and Fiona walked the Holmfirth Loop: Holmfirth, Brockholes, Top o't Hill, Biggin, and New Mill. 12.3km, 397m $\uparrow$ , 2.85hr.

### Kevin Brown

They spent a few fine days out in Gryts archipelago kayaking. The Swedes don't really do trig points but when they do build a cairn then it's big!



They visited the iconic lighthouse at Håradskär, the first in Sweden with a rotating light.



Next week off North to the High Coast, for some walking but of course, some good paddling too.

Dedication! Perhaps not the most comfortable campsite - they must have had good pegs



### **John Brown 18 miles (28.5km)**

17<sup>th</sup> July. walked from home at Finedon, Northamptonshire, setting off through their pocket park, which is old industrial land that was part of Northamptonshire's iron industry.

Although the suggestion was to incorporate a route that took in Trig Points, they are a bit thin on the ground there, so he decided to use the old Churches as fix points on the walk. The first church was Great Harrowden, All Saints church. This church has been around since C1300. It is built of ironstone as depicts the natural stone of the area.

He continued west along a bridleway, skirting the town of Wellingborough then north west through the fields around the manor of Hardwick. The rape seed harvest was attracting the red kites and there must have been at least 20 roving across the sky, great to see.

It was nice to find a bench and peace for lunch in the church yard of the 14<sup>th</sup> century St. Andrews Church at Broughton.

The next part of the walk was south east through some open countryside, with plenty of grassland and predominantly sheep grazing, to the next village of Pytchley.

The All Saints church here has its origins in the twelfth century.



His next stop was in the parish of Isham, St. Peters Church. This also has its origins in Norman times. Homewards then, passing along the flood plain of the river Ise, crossing where the old Finedon Mill used to stand.

The walk took about 7 hrs and was just short of 18 miles, and he hardly saw a soul during the day, but heard plenty of black caps and yellow hammers so had a very good day indeed, walking through the history of his part of Northamptonshire.

**Ged Campion      10.75 miles (17.3km)    1 Trig**



21<sup>st</sup> July. Place Fell, Ullswater 7.1km.

24<sup>th</sup> July. Blencathra via Hall's Fell Ridge 6.2km

26<sup>th</sup> July. Fountains Fell. Rough Close Farm to  
New Year Pot. 4km (plus some caving)



**Mick Borroff    62.5 miles    100.5km**

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> – a quick pre-meet hike from Buckden to visit the peat hags, enveloped in thick mist at the summit of Birks Fell - a Yorkshire 2000ft summit he had not been to for years. 10.5km, +461m, 3hr 45min.

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> – up to the head of Wharfedale for a walk from Fleet Moss over Drumaldrace and down to Gayle in improving weather, returning up the Pennine Way, via the trig point on Dodd Fell. Amazing number of voles/mice in the grass on the summits, but no predators in evidence. Just three butterflies seen all day as the vegetation began to dry out – all ringlets. 15.7km, +576m, 3hr 50 min.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> – a leisurely day out, for a pleasant change, with **John Sutcliffe** and a geologist friend Roger with his family, starting from Malham, taking in the Cove, the Watlowes, Water Sinks, Pikedaw Hill and its calamine mine, picking up odd bits of blue (azurite) and green (malachite) copper ores from the old dump and down via the neatly-walled adit portal dated 1872. 10.9km +424m, 3hr 40min.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> – a great walk, with **Richard Taylor** and **Peter Chadwick** from Cotterdale to three more 2000ft summits: Great Shunner Fell, Hugh Seat and Sails. Good weather and far-reaching 360 degree views extending to the Galloway Hills and Scafell, Howgills and a huge number of Dales tops. Also visited Ure Head to see the birth of the infant river. Saw a buzzard and a short-eared owl hunting voles. 17.6km, +629m, 4hr 45min.

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> – a longer walk with **Rory Newman** and guided by **David Hick**, starting from the Kilburn White Horse car park. Lovely day, great views especially from the John Bunting Memorial Chapel at Scotch Corner over the Vale of York to the Pennines. Plenty of butterflies

to be seen enjoying the sun, and we had ice creams to finish. An excellent day out on the western border of the North York Moors. 28.8km, +700m, 6hr 30min.

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> – a round of Harland Hill was chosen as a quiet outing from Carlton in Coverdale over to Waldendale and back via Horsehouse and the River Cover in rather mixed weather, but saw a short-eared owl at close range and three red kites – Hope they keep well away from the gamekeepers! Some lovely old hollow ways and ancient cart tracks on the route, but no trig points though. 17km, +6



**Peter Chadwick 10.94 miles (17.6km) 1 Trig**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> – a great walk, with **Richard Taylor and Mick Borroff** from Cotterdale to three 2000ft summits: Great Shunner Fell, Hugh Seat and Sails. Good weather and far-reaching 360 degree views extending to the Galloway Hills and Scafell, Howgills and a huge number of Dales tops. Also visited Ure Head to see the birth of the infant river. Saw a buzzard and a short-eared owl hunting voles. 17.6km, +629m, 4hr 45min.

**Esther Chadwick 12 miles (19.3km) 2 Trigs**

In Yorkshire at the weekend and managed to squeeze in 12 miles, clockwise in the loop from Kettlewell to Buckden Pike and Great Whernside on Saturday 18th. In the company of Lloyd de Beer and some friends, it took a relaxing seven and a half hours. Rain and mist gave way to views in the afternoon.



Coming off Great Whernside

**Barry Dover Bike 104 miles (167.5km)**



Completed over two days with an overnight stop in Toogoolawah, with Eric (eldest son) cycled the old Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT); Starting from the top (highest point) at Yarraman, it is a bit challenging in parts as noner of the bridges are useable thus having to drop down into creek beds and back-up again; fortunately for them (not the farmers), most were dry, a few had just a trickle in them. A couple of them beat Barry, who had to walk the bike up the exits.

Some of the latter stages were well maintained with rolled road base gravel, the last section concreted.

**Paul Dover - Bike 58 miles (93.3km)      Walking 29 miles (46.7km)**

Friday 17 July with wife Anne, did a 3 mile walk round Oakington and he did an 8 mile walk the following day on the Royston Downs, which included the highest point in the area, Therfield Water tower 168m. Not a trig point, they only have spot heights!

Tuesday 21 July: 12 mile walk with **Richard Dover** on the Ivinghoe Downs, part of the Chilterns, climbed Ivinghoe Beacon (233m). It was a walk of contrasts, open Downs, ancient and managed forests, valleys of arable fields, charming woodland cottages at Little Gaddesden and pristine golf courses.

Thursday 23 July: 8 miles of walks with **Richard Dover**, Anne and Ann at Stowe Park, Buckingham, round the lakes, forests, parkland with numerous historical architectural temples and monuments.

Friday 24 July 58 mile cycle ride from Oakington (8m) via Cambridge, to the chalk scarps, east and south, passing Balsham (116m) Linton, Hadstock Common (112m) Saffron Walden, Strethall (91m) Fowlmere, and Madingley (62m). An interesting, undulating ride with good views of the surrounding countryside.



Stowe



Richard on the Beacon

**Richard Dover 20 miles (32km)**

Tuesday 21 July, 12 mile walk with **Paul Dover** on the Ivinghoe Downs part of the Chilterns, climbed Ivinghoe Beacon. (233m).

It was a walk of contrasts, open Downs, ancient and managed forests, valleys of arable fields, charming woodland cottages at Little Gaddesden and pristine golf courses.

Thursday 23 July 8 miles of walks with **Paul Dover**, Anne and Ann at Stowe Park, Buckingham, round the lakes, forests, parkland with numerous historical architectural temples and monuments.

**Tony Dunford 3 miles      4.8km**

Circuit of Mont Benand near Bernex 74500 Haute Savoie, it's an easy route of 3 miles which gives views of the Eastern end of Lake Geneva, looking towards Lausanne & Vevey, as well as an appreciation of Les Memises & the Dent D'Oche (2221m), & the valley with the villages of Bernex & Les Faverges.



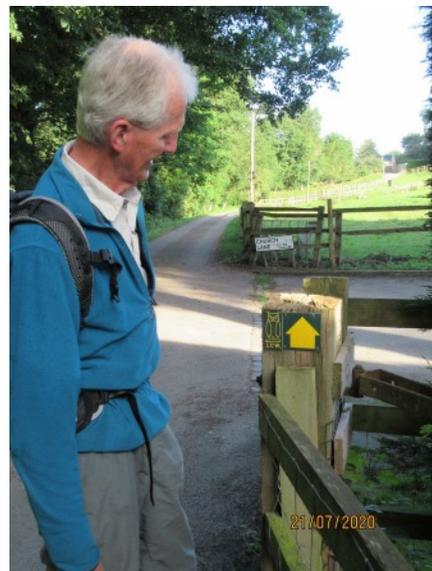
**Iain Gilmour 10.5 miles      17km**  
(the rest was done before the meet began)

Iain's contribution to the YRC Long Walk is unusual since it relates to a series of stages of a 124 mile walk, the last stage finished today, 21 July. As mentioned earlier, Sarah and Iain had been doing the Leeds Country Way in stages, by driving to a parking point, doing a stage of about 5 miles, and then returning to the car.

The Leeds Country Way is a 62 mile walk around Leeds and the route attempts to follow open country as much as possible, but never further than 7 miles from the centre of the city. Doing the walk by stages from a car has resulted in them doing the route twice, once clockwise and once in the reverse direction, hence the mileage walked was 124 miles. Every stage we walked had some pleasant scenery, but there were inevitable places where some housing intruded, and hideous sections where the route crossed motorways or slip roads, either by tunnels underneath or scary pedestrian bridges over the busy carriageways.

The walk was not difficult, except for route finding, which was very tricky at times as they followed the 25,000 OS maps, which marked the route with green dashes and green diamond shapes. The map often displayed several different routes such as Bronte Way, Kirklees Trail, Trans Pennine Trail, or Dales Way, so they had to be careful while following diamond markers.

Leeds have put up helpful signs such as LCW or an emblem of an owl on a black background, but they found, at times, that they walked for several miles without any signs - a good reason to follow the compass at all times. It seems that some local councils are very good at signage, but some are lamentable.



**Richard Gowing**      **2 miles**      **3.2km**

21 July. Richard made a small contribution to the Long Walk by walking into town and back, a total distance of about 2 miles and a height difference of about 60m.

He followed the Macclesfield Canal via a “snaily” (rowing) bridge, then along the Cockshoot, an ancient cobbled urban footpath (echoes of the clatter of clogs), eventually to the town centre.

He returned by a different route.



**Chris and Jim Harrison**      **46 miles**      **74km**

17 July. Completed a walk with **Mike Smith**. Bamford and Win Hill Loop, of 7 miles in excellent weather. Spectacular 360 degree views of Ladybower, Kinder Plateau and environs.

18<sup>th</sup> July. Circular walk in largely drab and damp weather. 6 miles taking in Eyam Moor, Bretton Clough and a walk past the Barrel hostelry at Bretton.

19<sup>th</sup> July. 8.5 mile one way walk via Dukes Road, Back Tor, Derwent Edge to the Strines road. 6 hours including many stops at various vantage points in a bid to see the Lammergeier. Plenty of sun but a cool breeze.



20 July. 11.5 miles of a Kinder Circuit from Edale, taking in Grindsbrook Clough (scramble finish to the top), Kinder horseshoe via Ringing Roger (with detour to trig point) to Jagers Clough where a descent was made to a low level path returning to Edale. Mix of sun, cloud and brief rainfall. Great views of Lose Hill, Win Hill and MamTor.

22 July. Dukes road to Abbey Clough and return – 7.5 miles. Main aim to see Lammergeier in flight and at roost. Three majestic fly-pasts.

Sadly not matched by photos. Mainly overcast;

23 July. A 5.5 mile loop in Penistone area. Mainly fields and Trans Pennine Trail. Mainly cloudy with wind and showers, but variety of butterflies seen including skippers and tortoise shell.

**Ian Hawkes 5.6miles (9km)**

Mick Borroff has got him into OS online.

19 July He walked near Jervaulx, with his twin sister, brother-in-law, their border Terrier and retriever. He was amazed how the OS app allowed him to navigate the 2km forest walk on his mobile phone.

He also went on 7km walk into Nidd Gorge on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>.

**David Hick 41.9 miles (67.4km)**

Monday 20 July Completed the North York Moors Challenge walk. 24 miles 2000ft ascent, 10 hours. Goathland - Blue Bank – Hawsker - Robin Hood's Bay - May Beck - Falling Foss - Goathland

The main problem was navigation, some paths were overgrown with nettles and razor sharp brambles; the route was devised in 1986 and signposts and stiles were missing. Felt a bit leg weary next day but can't complain about the company or the weather.

Friday 24 July From the Kilburn White Horse car park. Lovely day, great views especially from the John Bunting Memorial Chapel at Scotch Corner over the Vale of York to the Pennines. Plenty of butterflies to be seen enjoying the sun, and had ice creams to finish. An excellent day out on the western border of the North York Moors. 28.8km, +700m, 6hr 30min.



Goathland Station

**Dorothy Heaton 14.5 miles (23.3km) 2 Trigs**

Walked 2 trig points, Weets, Barnoldswick and Pinhaw, Earby. Both from home with dog, total mileage 14.5, both soggy moorland with long distance views in that part of Yorkshire, now administered by Lancashire County Council.

**Chris Hilton 4 miles (6.4km)**

Walk around Eccup Reservoir before setting off to work. 4 English miles. Advance Britannia.

**Alan Hinkes 5.86 miles (9.43km) 1 trig**

Sunday 26 July. Ingleborough Bimble with Becca Humphreys. Climb 532 m, Time 2h 24m.

**Jeff Hooper 12 miles (19.3km)**

Saturday July 18, Circuit from Kirkby Malzeard via Laverton, 2.5 miles 12 noon to 1315, with walking stick. 6 years since he went round this. He got more satisfaction from this than many members would from walking the 3 Peaks!

Sunday July 19, In the village. Half a mile.

Monday July 20, The length of the Main Street and return. 1.25 miles. 40 mins. With walking stick.

Tuesday July 21, Shopping plus 6 laps of his garden (16 laps to the mile). 1.0 mile. With walking stick.

Wednesday July 22, Shopping and in the village. 1.25 miles. With walking stick.

Thursday July 23, Tom Corner to Stopes Bridge and return, on the track over the moor that goes from Lower Wensleyale to Nidderdale 2.5 miles.

With two walking sticks this time. 1 hour 20 mins.



Friday July 24, Half a mile in the garden.

Saturday July 25, The length of the Main Street and return. 1.25 miles. 40 mins. With walking stick.

Sunday July 26, The length of the Main Street and return. 1.25 miles. 40 mins. With walking stick.

**Becca Humphreys 12.9 miles (20.72km) 2 Trig**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jul. Blencathra by Halls Ridge. Distance 11.29km, Time 3:45, Elevation gain 827m 1 trig.

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Jul. The Ingleborough Bimble. Distance 9.43 km, Climb 532 m, Time 2h 24m 1 trig.

**Richard Josephy 42.9 miles (69km) 8 trigs**

He decided to visit the highest points in Oxfordshire and its 6 contiguous counties, none of which he had been to before. He devised a series of walks over 4 days to include each one plus any other nearby points of interest, plus the highest point in Hampshire which is quite close to that of Berkshire. Not all the tops have trig pillars but some have one nearby.

The aggregate height is a staggering 2417 metres, with the highest being Cleeve Hill at 330m. Aggregate distance 69Km.



Milk Hill and Autumn Gentian found there



Friday 17 July Walbury Hill, Berkshire, 10km walk including Pilot Hill, Hampshire, and Inkpen Hill. Milk Hill, Wiltshire, 12km walk including the White Horse (the chalk monument, not the pub) and Tan Hill. Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Bald Hill, Oxfordshire, 11km walk including Aston Rowant Nature Reserve.



Marbled White on Pilot Hill

Aston Hill, Buckinghamshire, 15km walk, including Wendover Woods and Boddington Hill iron age fort. Wednesday 22 July Arbury Hill, Northamptonshire, 5km walk. Friday 24 July Ilmington Down, Warwickshire, 8km walk. Cleeve Hill, Gloucestershire, 8km walk including Postlip Tithe Barn, Prestbury Nature Reserve and several ancient earthworks.

### **Tim Josephy 86.8 miles (139.7km) 21 Trigs**

There are 21 trig pillars on Anglesey and Holy Island. Tim devised a series of walks to link them up; as many of the trigs are in agricultural areas and the old rights of way have long disappeared, he ended up doing a lot of road walking.

Friday 17 July Rhostrehewfa to Llanfaelog, via trigs Cefnwmwd, Hermon, Aberffraw, Llanfaelog. 24.5km 5hr 15.



Holyhead Mountain



## Ian Laing

1. Corbar Hill: Take Manchester Road out of the centre of town and up the hill to where Corbar Road comes in from the right. Along Corbar Road to an unmade road up on the left which leads into Corbar Wood. There are 3 options, all steep, which join up at the highest point of the wood, where there is a gate leading to rough pasture (uphill needless to say). Walk along the bit of gritstone edge, at the left-hand end of which is the summit of Corbar Hill, (437) complete with trig point and wooden cross. The grass slopes down to the other side, where there is opportunity to roam, but the best way to return to Buxton is to retrace steps to the wood and descend by one of the two routes not used for the ascent.

2. Light Wood: To Corbar Road as with Walk 1, at the far end of which it joins Light Wood Road). Carry on up hill, with Hogshaw Brook to the right, until you reach the wood where there is evidence of water works in past times. The path goes in a roughly northerly direction and finally crosses the stream with the path going up the right to the edge of Combs Moss (Black Edge). Follow the Black Edge path to the left, which crosses the stream in Flint Clough, then down the other bank to the top of the Light Wood. Take the stile (good viewpoint/picnic site) and then ignore other paths to follow the line of the wood boundary until reaching the west end of the wood, then follow the path left which goes down to where one entered the wood on the way up. From there are various ways back to town – all downhill. (the whole round ca 5 miles)

3. East side of Burbage Edge: The start is again up Manchester Road, passing the junction with Corbar Road and the nearby hospital on the right, up to where the houses on the left, more or less end – known as Nithen End. Take the path down to the left, which eventually leads to Cavendish Golf Club premises, just beyond which there is a prominent path going off to the right towards Watford Farm. Left in front of the farm and then round further up on the right side through Watford Wood, up to a property known as The Beet. The 410 contour crosses the path somewhere in the wood. At The Beet turn left down a narrow lane to Plex Lodge, then right up to Plex Farm, then left over fields and woodland to Shay Lodge and the Old Macclesfield Road. Turn left and follow down to Burbage Church, after which there is a wide choice of pathways, some through the parks, or even back across to Nithen End and down Manchester Road to the centre. (ca 5 Miles)

4/5 Both of these walks start on the top side of Buxton at the Market Place.

4. Follow almost the full length of Green Lane from the traffic lights on the A515 beyond the Market Place. Once beyond the entrance to Poole's Cavern on the left, take the next path off to the left which climbs up through woods (Buxton Country Park) up to the top of the hill above tree level, (cairn-Grinlow Tower, also known as Solomon's Temple) where there are extensive views (Axe Edge to the west). Contour across above the Grin Low Road, finally dropping down to a path going left, which leads down through further woodland to Fern House. Take a right down to more woods, Temple More and finally to the road from Harpur Hill to the A515. Go across both to a minor road going ENE, along path on r.h.s to farm & farm shop, then back down and across road to a field path leading to allotments/gardens and finally back to the A515, close to the traffic lights where the walk started. (Ca 4.5 m)

5. Same start as 4, i.e. Market Square down to traffic lights, but this time carry on the A515 – good footpath both sides, until coming to Fern Road going off to the right. Once beyond the

houses we are on the same track/lane as we came down on walk 4, but this time going in the opposite direction. Along this to Fern House Riding establishment and up the hill across to the Grin Low Road which is crossed to a farm track leading up the hill to the right, overlooking, on the left, a badly contaminated stream.

A well established track continues west and then north to Ladmanlow, crossing the Grin Low Road again and along the Dane Valley Way by the entrance to Grinlow Caravan Park. Bypass the entrance to this and continue across the car park, up and through the woodland and once again above tree level across and up to Solomon's Temple. The woods east of the summit give an alternative path down to Fern Road and so back to the A515 & Market Square. (4.5-5.0 m)

**Adam Linford 9.3 miles (15km) 1 Trig**  
Family camping trip last weekend at Topcliffe, so took in a 15km circular from Sutton Bank to Boltby and back. Out via Gormire Lake and through the valley, and back along the ridge on the Cleveland Way.

Managed to fit some bouldering en route, and got close to TP3584 before being informed he was trespassing on private property!



**Alan Linford 16 miles (25.75km) North York Moors.**  
From Low Moor (Birk Brow), over Stanhope Moor on Quakers Causeway to Commondale, toilets open. Up road towards Kildale then path to Thunderbush Moor, past Hob on the Hill to Hob Cross.

Hob Cross in a sad state, it is not marked on OS maps as it is considered a border stone. Back to the Quaker Causeway, 8 miles. Most unusually, only one grouse seen on this walk, none seen in 4 days in Wharfedale.

Walk done with Michael Smith and family celebrating his 60th Birthday.

From Percy Rigg. Various parking spots used by twitchers, hoping for a sight of the white tailed eagle. The farmer on Percy Rigg has had many sightings but they were not so lucky. Down to Lonsdale Forest to Lonsdale Farm and on to Bankside Farm where alpacas, all black, are farmed. (Socks made from alpaca wool very good but make your feet black!) Many years ago YRC and CMC took part in a search of Lonsdale Forest for a missing person. Up the road towards Kildale and then onto Cleveland Way to Captain Cooks Monument, Gribdale, Little Roseberry and Newton Moor. Back by Sleddale to Percy Rigg. About 8 miles.

### **Rory Newman 69 miles (111km)**

#### **20 Trigs**

17 July. With guest Sue Thomason 3 mile circuit to collect Sleights Moor trig point .

18th July. With Sue, 6.5 mile walk to collect Louven Howe trig point. Later alone 0 miles to Potato Hill trig point (it's 2 metres from the road !), 3 miles to Newton Mulgrave Moor trig point, and 2 miles to Skelder trig point .

19 July, With Sue 3.5 miles to collect Beacon Hill Trig Point, later alone 1 mile to collect Skerry Hall trig point.

20 July. 3 miles to collect Barton Howl (yes really) trig point.

21 July With Sue 5 miles to collect Pike Hill trig point.

22 July. With Sue 5 miles to collect Warsett Hill; later alone 2 miles to collect High Waupley, and 1 mile to collect High Boulby.

23 July 5 miles for Simon Howe trig point.

24 July. With Mick Borroff and David Hick.

18 miles. 3 trig points en route:

Whitestone Cliff, Sproxton Moor and Horcum.

25 July. With Sue, 3 miles – Cloughton trig point.

26 July. 3 miles, then with Sue 5 miles, Siss Cross, Danby Beacon and Danby Rigg trig points.



The President, taking in the view

**Bob Peckham**      **Bike 39.5 miles (63.6km)**

**Walking 28 miles (45.1km)      I Trig**

18 July. Cycled from Inverness to Farr, Loch Farr, Tomatin and back to Inverness via Moy. Lunch in Moy churchyard. Mostly good weather, but strong head winds when going west. Sighted 1 red squirrel with almost white, bushy tail, 1 sparrow hawk (maybe?), 1 buzzard.

Distance cycled: 63.6km, Total ascent: 865m, Total time: 6h 6m.



21 July. Walked a circular route, going anticlockwise, over Gael Charn near Laggan. Starting at Spey Dam, up Glen Markie, river crossing (no probs), up by Pipers Burn onto Gael Charn. Lunch, good views all round including to Ben Nevis/Aonach Mor. Descent down to Garva Bridge, and back along Corryairack road to starting point.

Distance walked: 22.4km. Total ascent: 716m Total time: 6h 46m.



24 July. Walked from Cairngorm Ski Car Park, over to Loch Avon and Shelterstone, then up Beinn Mheadhoin (1182m). Lunch. Great conditions so decided to stay high a bit longer and walked across to Ben Macdui and its trig point (1309m). 2<sup>nd</sup> Lunch. Back down to starting point, taking westernmost path.

Distance walked: 22.7km, Total ascent: 1407m, Total time: 9h 30m.



Loch Farr, Gael Charn  
and crags above Shelterstone

**Shaun Penny 17 miles (27km)**

22 July. From Audley back to my house in Nantwich along the Two Saints Way. (A walk from Chester to Lichfield)

No trig points but plenty of stiles, nettles and brambles. Big mistake wearing shorts, legs are really uncomfortable, (stings from the nettles). Did about 17 miles.

**Anca Pordea 7.5 miles (12km)**

Location: Moneasa (spa destination), Arad district, Romania. Apuseni Mountains (more specifically, the mountains are called Codru-Moma). Length: 12 km Time: 4 hr.

Walked with family (sister Dana and partner Sorin). Drove from Arad, Romania to the Pearl of the Apuseni mountains, Moneasa, where they did a circular walk. The initial objective was Izoiu peak (1098 m), going through Meghes valley and Tinoasa meadow, following the yellow dot markings. After going up in constant rain, they made it to the meadow where they were chased by some sheep dogs, but managed to find a lovely lunch spot under a wild apple tree. Given the rain, they abandoned the peak idea and a lovely descent through the woods completed the walk.



**Simon Raine Bike 15 miles (24km)**

25 July. Cycled on the High Peak Trail. Starting at Black Rocks, went through the Hopton Tunnel, around Carsington Reservoir and return.

26 July. High Peak Trail from Minninglow to Parsley Hay and on to Pomeroy, small road back to Parsley Hay, bought farm free-range eggs, then taking the Tissington Trail to Biggin and a byway back over to Minninglow. Fell off bike next to car and smashed free-range eggs. A total of 19 miles followed by a lovely omelette.

**Arthur Salmon 12.25 miles (19.73km) 1 Trig**

25 July With Conrad and Barbara Salmon and the Whalleys.

Barbara and Conrad were with him in Leeds for the weekend and, in view of the arrangements for the Long Walk, we thought we'd like to contribute something. Thought it would be nice to have more YRC involvement, if possible, and so asked Carol and John Whalley to join them, which they were very pleased to do. Saturday, met up at Middleton on the north side of the river at Ilkley and did a circular walk to near Nessfield, then up Beamsley Beacon and on to Round Hill, then returning to Myddleton Lodge to complete the circuit.



19.7km, 493m ascent, 6hrs 39

**Barbara Salmon 12.25 miles (19.73km) 1 Trig**

25 July. As for **Arthur Salmon**



### Jack Short 31 miles (50km)

Walking up to the end of June was entirely short walks with his 13 year old dog (Pippa).

However, Pippa died on the 1<sup>st</sup> July after a short illness, leaving Jack at a loss what to do for exercise with these days of lockdown. Then thought of efforts to produce Marathon walks. So has done 5 different long walks along the “North Downs Way “ which starts at Farnham about 8 kilometres from where he lives.

Each walk started by parking at a selected car park along the route, walking for 1 hour along the NDW and then turning round and walking back to the car . This usually meant a total of 8 km as measured on the map. 5 different walks solo, plus one repeated Monday 20 July with his son in law and 16 year old grandson. Calculates that adds up to 50 kilometres.

The walks were :-

Guildford to Saint Martha’s Hilltop Church and return.

Newlands Puttenham Common to Farnham Golf Club and return.

Puttenham Golf Club to Watts Gallery Compton and return.

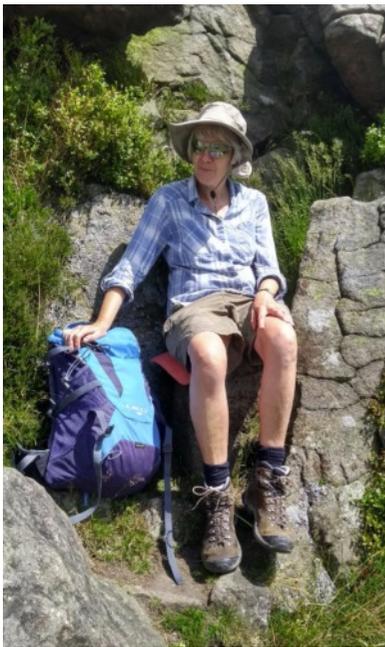
Watts Gallery to the footbridge over the River Wey at Artington Guildford and return.

Chantries Corner Car Park to Saint Martha’s and return.

Repeat of No 3 with family (They were sort of tired, but enjoyed it )

Then a short walk to fill in the gap between the Chantries Car Park and the River Wey Bridge about 2.0 km return. NOT BAD FOR AN 88 YEAR OLD !

### Helen Smith 24.6 miles (39.65km) 4 trigs



17 July. As part of a local walking group, Michael and Helen each guided small groups of local friends round Win Hill above Ladybower Bridge, Shatton and Bamford mill pond.

They went in opposite directions with social distancing and kept group sizes to no more than six to comply with the national restrictions. Sunny, windy. With Jim and Christine Harrison. 11.8km, 366m↑, 3.2hr.

22 July. Circuit of the Trigs of the Kinder Plateau: Walked with Michael and Richard from Edale to just beyond the Downfall (including Kinder Low Trig) to cheer them on at start of Pennine Way, (well the 8 nights they have initially – they’re hoping to get far enough to have an eye test!)



Then Helen knocked off the other Kinder trigs – Sandy Heyes and Kinder East (or Edale Moor as the OS call it) on her circuitous return to Edale. Really enjoyed it. 19.85km, 816m↑, 6.3hr.

25 July. Rivelin Valley, Sheffield, returning via the Coppice Road track. 8km, 183m↑, 2.5hr.

**Helen and Michael Smith 12.5 miles (20.1km) 2 trigs**

18 July. Morpeth Castle mound and Morpeth town centre. With **Richard**, & Felicity Roberts (G). 1km, 30m↑, 0.8hr.

19 July. Northumberland coast: Low Newton-by-the-sea to Dunstanburgh Castle and back. This repeated part of the long walk of several years ago along that coast. However, this time the Ship Inn had elaborate arrangements for outsiders 45-minute queue to place orders, then another wait to the food and drinks to emerge from a separate hatch. Sunny, breezy. With Richard & Felicity Roberts (G). 8.25km, 63m↑, 1.5hr.

20 July. Chasing the site manager round Southfield estate, Morpeth, following an overnight water leak in Richard's new house. With **Richard**. 1.82km, 3m↑, 0.4hr.

20 July. Beacon Hill Trig, Hebron, Morpeth. 3km, 42m↑, 0.7hr.

July 20: Shaftoe Crags Trig from the east, passing tumulus, ancient fort and Salters' Nick. 5.4km, 81m↑, 1hr

**Michael Smith 2.5 miles (4.1km) 5 trigs**

18 July. 06.30 start for a drive round to near four north Sheffield trig points in light drizzle. Skew Lane (crematorium), Greno Knoll in Greno Woods, Onesmoor in the Sheffield University environmental station, and Loxley Common (overlooking where Robin Hood was raised). 1.6km, 100m↑, 0.45hr.

21 July. Emlin Ridge trig on Bradfield Moor, Peak District. 2.5km, 98m↑, 0.45hr.

**Richard and Michael Smith 102.25 miles (164.55km) 9 trigs**

22 July. Pennine Way 1: Edale to Laddow Rocks.

Cloudy with light showers. Passing Kinder Downfall, Bleaklow and Crowden. There was a diversion round the reservoir approaching Crowden on account of work being done on the dam. Driving from Sheffield to Edale for the start, the juvenile bearded-vulture flew for some minutes about 100m overhead close to Ladybower bridge. 34.6km, 1107m↑, 8.17hr.



23 July. PW2: Laddow Rocks to near Stoodley Pike. Passing Black Hill (Soldier's Lump), Wessenden, Standedge, White Hill, Blackstone Edge and Warland Reservoir. Wetting vegetation, initially from overnight rain, then afternoon rain and a brisk wind. Camp in plantation by Withens Clough Reservoir. Richard & Michael Smith. 37.4km, 680m↑, 8hr.

24 July. PW3 Near Stoodley Pike to Cowling. Soon after crossing the Calder River and Rochdale Canal, toiling up the northern bank we meet Damian Hall running southwards downhill, looking as fresh as a daisy on his way to covering the Pennine Way's 431km in 2 days 13 hours 34 minutes on Friday evening and so beating the previous record by over three hours. Taking rather longer to fully appreciate the delights the route has to offer.

Today these included small reservoirs and Haworth's Tip Withens. Rain due overnight so stayed at the Squirrel Wood campsite. 32.8km, 950m↑, 9.5hr.

### Derek Smithson 8 miles (12.9km)

To the south of his home in Ormesby, there is a National Trust Estate consisting of some woodland where Derek used to walk his dogs, a farm and the manor house – Ormesby Hall. This is the scene for Derek's exercise, almost flat with the Cleveland Hills further south, too far for him to walk these days.

So, the walks start with the crossing of a busy main road, being lame in one leg adds to the sense of danger. The woods provide a shield from the traffic noise and a peaceful walk to the cornfield with its clumps of trees. Beside the cornfield is a hay field containing the abandoned cricket pitch where vandals overcame the efforts of the cricketers to maintain a pavilion. Beyond is the car park for visitors to the croquet lawn and gardens of the Hall. But he hasn't got that far – yet. Nor does he reach the magnificent stables and church adjacent to the Hall.

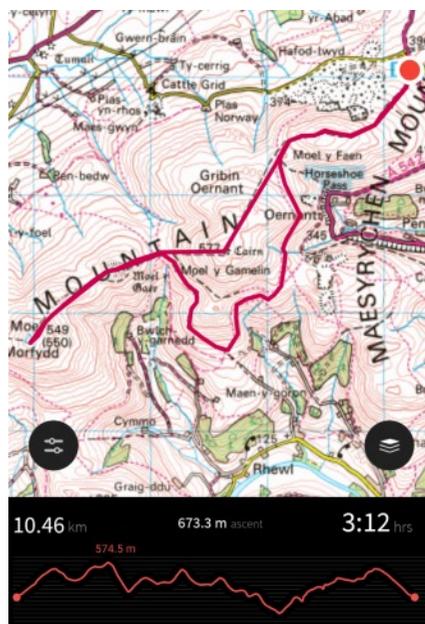
The walks are about one mile, taken slowly, and usually with Derek's daughter, which gives a grand total of eight miles between 17th and 26th July.

### Tom Spencer 6.5 miles (10.46km) 1 trig

26 July. Did a walk that week around the Llantysilio, nothing huge but here it is, up and down three humps to the trig point and then back around Moel y Hamelin. Spotted a fox moth caterpillar en route. (Below)



YRC Journal



**John Sutcliffe 6.8 miles (10.9km)**

Monday 20 July. A pleasant day out with **Mick Borroff** and a geologist friend Roger with his family, starting from Malham, taking in the Cove, the Watlowes, Water Sinks, Pikedaw Hill and its calamine mine, picking up odd bits of blue (azurite) and green (malachite) copper ores from the old dump and down via the neatly-walled adit portal dated 1872. 10.9km +424m, 3hr 40min.

**Arthur Tallon 5.9 miles (9.47km) 2 trigs**

22 July. Had a lift to Ditchling Beacon with his daughter and made a slight detour to pick up the trig point. Then on the ridge along the South Downs Way and after 2 miles another detour to take in the trig point at Blackash. After that it was down, in hot sunshine, towards the A27. It was not all downhill, in fact a very steep bit through a wood was quite a challenge to ageing knees. Reached the road and had a choice, carry on up the next hill to Brighton, get a bus back home or get daughter to pick him up. Chose the easy one and got a lift back in the car. This time his knee had had the last word. But it does leave something for another day.



**Richard Taylor 10.94 miles (17.6km) 1 Trig**

Tuesday 21 July a great walk with **Peter Chadwick** and **Mick Borroff** from Cotterdale to three 2000ft summits: Great Shunner Fell, Hugh Seat and Sails. Good weather and far-reaching 360 degree views extending to the Galloway Hills and Scafell, Howgills and a huge number of Dales tops. Also visited Ure Head to see the birth of the infant river. Saw a buzzard and a short-eared owl hunting voles. 17.6km, +629m, 4hr 45min.

**Mike Thompson 12.4 miles (20km) Portishead, Bristol**

Never one of the many YRC's tigers: now often have some difficulty putting one foot in front of t'other.

By popular demand, gave up biking to pick up the 'paper on April 14 . Since then just walk - better described as limp /stagger every day down to the village : just over 1 km - there and back 2km. At least the coffee shops are now open in both respects : haven't tried the pubs yet.

**Kjetil Tveranger Bike 24.85 miles (40km)**

**On foot 31 miles (50km)**

In the South of France

Sunday 19 July biking 40 km, 1.4 hours.

Monday 20 July jogging 5 km, 0.5 hours.

Wednesday 22 July mountain walk,

600m ascent, 13 km.

Friday 24 July jogging 5 km 0,5 hours.

Saturday 25 July walked up from Maison du Valier to Mont Valier. Climbed 1900m and walked 19 km. Stayed at Refuge des Estagnous.

Sunday 26 July walked down 1300m to the car.

About 8 km





**Nick Welch**    **Bike 41 miles (66km)**            **Walking 10.5 miles (16.9km)**

Not much walking but:

41 mile (65.98 km) cycle ride. 1,883 ft (573.94 m) elevation gain, average speed 13.1 mph (21.08 km/h) to North Aston.

Ridgeway and beech woods - a walk in the Chilterns. About 10.5 miles (16.9 km), can't be any more precise, didn't turn on Strava.

**Carol and John Whalley**            **44.6 miles (71.8km)**            **2 Trigs**

17 July. Holme- Black Hill circular.

22.59 Km. Elevation 607 m.

21 July. Last of the Summer Wine country. Holmfirth Circuit 24,5 Km, Elevation 688 m.

25 July. From Ilkley, Beamsley Beacon and Round Hill circuit. With the **Salmons** 19.73 Km. Elevation 491 m.

26 July. Meanwood Woods circular, 5km. Elevation 67 m.



Challenging times call for thinking outside the box solutions and by early evening 10 members, a PM and guest had arrived at the Usha Gap campsite in Muker. This must be the first YRC UK mainland camping meet for some considerable time. Covid-19 had played havoc with the meet calendar but at last members could meet again in person and do what we all enjoy - being in the hills and socialising, albeit in this case, keeping physically well distanced. Staff provided a warm welcome and the campsite was geared up for the new regulations with spotless (but a reduced number of) facilities, hand sanitiser galore and two huge additional camping fields - even shouting would have failed to attract the attention of the two members who chose to camp at the far end of the site.



Mick, Helen and John were the first arrivals and after pitching tents drove up to Keld and set off up the Pennine Way to Tan Hill on a lovely warm day. They found the peace and quiet of the walk a complete contrast to the groups of bikers, cyclists and tourists milling about at the Inn. After suitable refreshments, they returned to Keld via the quiet path leading down Stonesdale to Ravenseat and Whitsundale.

Other members did walks on the drive up Swaledale, including David and Christine who walked up Gunnerside Beck to Gunnerside Gill and had a look at the Sir Francis lead mine.

Then crossed the river and returned to the village. Alan Kay did a short 9km walk from Reeth, climbed Harkerside Moor to the shooting lodge and circled back to Reeth via Vicarage Bridge and Swale Hall.

In the evening several remained on the campsite and cooked their evening meal whilst others walked the short distance into Muker and found they could take advantage of the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme at the Farmers's Arms, which was a pleasant surprise for some - although all meals had to be eaten outside and midges made any socialising after about 8.00 pm uncomfortable - so early to bed.

Wednesday 12 August

In humid, hot conditions a large party, including Mick, Helen, John, Robert, Richard and prospective member Adam set out from the campsite for a classic Swaledale round. They walked up to Thwaite to pick up the Pennine Way and followed it high above the Swale to Kisdon Force where they detoured down to the river and saw lots of people paddling and swimming- some of us were very tempted to join them! Then to Crackpot Hall and a lunch stop at the head of Swinner Gill. On being told we were not yet half-way, your scribe decided she definitely was at more than her halfway stage and returned alone to Muker, down the thinly trod path beside Swinner Gill, where she bumped into Alan Linford (who had walked to Gunnerside) at the pub. After 'forcing' down a pint they walked back to the campsite and had a convivial afternoon chatting with members who had already returned.

The others followed the Coast-to-Coast route over Lownathwaite Moor and down to the Blakethwaite Smelt Mill complex beside Gunnerside Gill with its substantial ruins and flue, peat store and lime kiln dating from 1820.

(see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1015830> and <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1015857>).

John found a number of samples of galena as they crossed the site of Bunton Hush and on down the valley to Gunnerside. With the pub closed, happily, the tearoom was open for much needed rehydration. They returned to Usha Gap along the riverside path, with the odd spot of cooling rain, to complete an excellent day.

David and Alan Kay followed the river upstream from Muker to Swinner Gill, and inspected the cave entrance at Swinner Gill Kirk. Then across the moor to Gunnerside Gill where they had lunch. They crossed Melbecks Moor to Hard Level Gill, then down the track to Surrender Bridge, and over Feetham Pasture to Blades.

They returned via Low Row Pastures to Gunnerside where they stopped for a pot of tea. Then back to Usha Gap with another stop at the Farmer's Arms for soft drinks (!) An eight hour trip - around 16 plus miles.

Alan and Swinner Gill



Christine walked to Keld along the Pennine Way and walked back to Muker on the path west of the river.

Rory was the only member to tackle the South side of the Swale. He set off steeply on a disappearing footpath up Muker Side, then up beside Greenseat Beck onto Muker Common. The upper part of the beck looked as if it had been 'hushed' (mining technique using a dam to build a head of water, then destroying it to strip topsoil). He continued round Lover Gill Head to Lovely Seat. It was very hot and sticky, and slow going as this area is made of either deep peat hag or big tussocks with bog between them. He dropped down to the top of the Buttertubs pass, and worked up towards Great Shunner Fell, but increasing rumbles of thunder and spotty rain persuaded him to shorten his walk and he cut over the shoulder and down Green Side to Thwaite and back to the campsite. He had a good view of a buzzard on Muker Common and heard shooting in the distance (it was the Glorious 12th) which seemed to be coming from the Wensleydale side.

Tim and Harvey went off to indulge in some mine exploration. Parking at Surrender Bridge, near Reeth and armed with a vague description from one of Harvey's mates, they walked up Hard Level Gill past the Old Gang smelt mill to a likely looking adit. They followed this for a couple of hundred metres, through a beautifully walled passage to a collapse, where a natural aven was met. Despite determined efforts no way could be found so they returned to the surface to prospect further. Shortly, another adit near gill level was found which looked more promising. Thigh deep wading in icy water along a partly natural passage eventually reached a dug out collapse, shortly after which the water deepened rapidly until it approached neck deep on Harvey. With no sign of respite ahead, retreat was called for.

Later research confirmed that this was Hard Level Gill Mine, which we thought was where they wanted to be. It turned out that Harvey's mate had meant Moulds Mine which isn't even in the same valley. Never mind, they got underground!

Much as the evening before, some strolled into Muker for their evening meal, others remained on site. On Wednesday evening the meet reached its full complement with the arrival of Becca and also Alan Hinkes - a late but welcome addition to the meet.

Thursday 13 August

The hills were topped with mist and it was rather dull and damp as we packed away the tents - indeed there was some frustration from the two recently arrived guests, as they had just left Ingleton in brilliant warm sunshine. Nevertheless it made for much more comfortable walking conditions.

Many members left after breakfast and started to wind their way home. David and Christine drove through Wensleydale, had a look around Jervaulx Abbey and did a walk. Alan Kay walked from Keld to Ravenseat in Whitsun Dale. The murky weather didn't inspire him to go any further, so he spent some time admiring the fine waterfalls, gorges and river scenery in Whitsun Dale, and returned to Keld the way he'd come.

A party including Mick, Helen, Tim, Richard, Becca, Alan Hinkes and two of Becca's friends, Craig and Debby, set out to do a little-known varied walk, suggested by Mick, from Marske, on the other side of Reeth. They set off from the bridge over Marske Beck and up into the Clints Wood, to emerge in the lovely upper valley. They continued to follow Marske Beck to Helwith and on past massed, yellow, field pansies to the Prys Level mine.



Alan Hinkes had been into the lower valley before, to climb on Clints Scar and was pleased to discover this part of his home turf he'd not visited previously.

They stopped for lunch on misty Marrick Moor, in the lee of a wall, and returned through the blooming heather to the Fremington Edge track to pick up the Coast-to-Coast route back to Marske.



MB showing  
route to AH

and

lunch on  
Marrick Moor

A small diversion was made to visit the C17 Pillimire Bridge and its adjacent water wheel, which is said to have been built to generate electricity for nearby Skelton Hall, but the scheme was never implemented and construction of the Hall, which is still partly a mere shell, was never finished.



This was a very enjoyable and, under the circumstances, well attended meet.

Thanks to Tim Josephy, who has worked tirelessly searching for suitable venues in order that the Club can resume meets. HJS

#### Meet Attendees

Rory Newman - President  
Mick Borroff  
Robert Crowther  
David Hick  
Christine Marriott (G)  
Alan Hinkes (arr. Weds)  
Becca Humphreys (arr. Weds )  
Craig Perkins (G) - day visit  
Debby Kuhlmann (G) - day visit  
Alan Kay  
Adam Linford (PM)  
Alan Linford  
Harvey Lomas  
Tim Josephy  
Helen Smith  
John Sutcliffe  
Richard Taylor



#### Pennine Way above Thwaite

Blakethwaite Smelt Mill,  
Gunnerville Gill

Helen crossing  
Stonesdale Beck



# Addlebrough

## The Case of the Missing Trig Point and Unmapped Paths

**Mick  
Borroff**

Many members will have walked up the shapely hill of Addlebrough (481m/1578ft), with its stepped profile of the Yoredale Series and summit plateau, to enjoy superb views of Wensleydale. I first climbed it back in the eighties and recently came across a description of its ascent in an outdoor magazine which convinced me a revisit was in order.



The distinctive profile of Addlebrough rising above the glacial lake of Semer Water

The hill has several things of interest: the OS 1995 OL30 1-25k map indicates a triangulation pillar at 476m, two antiquities: a cairn and a settlement, and the intriguingly named Devil's Stone. A visit to the Historic England website [1] showed that the cairn was a prehistoric funerary monument dating to the Bronze Age. It contains several massive boulders. Two of these have well defined cup marks and a boulder on the north west side of the monument has a further 25 cups, three of them surrounded by rings. This was probably associated with the nearby settlement and its enclosures.

The Devil's Stone is a huge rounded boulder said to be thrown by the Devil in an attempt to dislodge a giant from his residence on Addlebrough, but more realistically is simply a glacial erratic.

The later 2009 edition of OL30 no longer shows the summit trig point. More research revealed that the pillar was demolished by the Yorkshire Dales National Park in June 2003 and its stones used to construct a new 'decoy' trig point cairn which was built by 20th July 2003.[2] Only the foundations are still visible today.



OS Triangulation pillar foundations



Cup and ring marked boulder

The YDNP outlined their rationale for this destruction as follows:

*"The trig point was removed by us as part of a project that we undertook with the National Trust (landowner). Prior to the new right of open access commencing May 2005, there has been no right of access onto Addlebrough. Both the National Trust and the National Park Authority had received numerous enquiries asking if access of some sort could be created.*

*One of the issues to the summit area, was the Scheduled Ancient Monument - namely the cup and ring marked stones adjacent to the trig point. One of these stones had been vandalised / damaged and both the National Park archaeologist and English Heritage were concerned that additional non-intentional damage could occur, particularly as the trig point may attract people to the highest part of that plateau.*

*The decision was made that by removing the trig point and locating a cairn (but not the actual trig point) in the vicinity, this may act as a discreet way of reducing walker numbers to the actual cup and ring stone area as those people would be attracted to the cairn. This has been relatively successful. A permissive path with stiles was also created to the summit from the Thornton Rust - Cubeck road and from the Thornton Rust - Carpley Green bridleway, as part of the project to allow access."*

### **The routes up Addlebrough**

Looking at OL30, I was intrigued by the absence of mapped paths leading to its summit, despite being owned by the National Trust and on CROW Open Access Land. A bit of Googling clearly demonstrated the presence of two Permissive paths on the ground, a SE route to the summit from the bridleway to Carpley Green from Thornton Rust and a NE path from the minor road to Cubeck from Thornton Rust, just E of Scar Top farm. These had been put in place prior to 2006.

I plotted a GPX track of a circular route of some 25km from Thornton Rust up to Addlebrough, then across Stake Allotments and down to Semer Water from the OS 25k

mapping, but had to use Google Earth and the OS aerial imaging layer to identify the line of the SE permissive path. I walked this in July 2019 and recorded the GPX track of my route. The well-trodden SE access path was easy to follow on the ground, being clearly signposted, way-marked and ladder-stiled by YDNP / NT. It led to the new 'decoy' cairn and onto the site of the burial cairn and former trig point.

I returned in November 2019 to walk an anti-clockwise round using both permissive paths from Thornton Rust, having plotted a GPX track of the NE access route from Scar Top farm. This was not quite as well trodden, but easy enough to follow on the ground following the signs and stiles.

### **Engagement with Ordnance Survey**

After I had walked the SE access path, I decided to ask OS a few questions:

**Q.** Why were these permissive paths not shown on OS mapping?

**A.** We have received no official notification of the existence of the Permissive Paths from the Local Authority, the National Park or the landowner and until we do, they cannot be added to the map. We will only add Rights of Way, Bridleways or Permissive Paths where the relevant authority above has advised us to.

**Q.** Why was the 'decoy' cairn missing from the map?

**A.** OS advised that cairn had been captured on their definitive OS MasterMap Topography (their most detailed mapping scale at 1:1250) and will be added to the OS Explorer the next time it is revised.

I then went on to ask:

**Q.** Given OS's declared aim and vision statement: "*Our aim is to provide mapping that informs, guides and inspires. Our vision is to reveal our ever-changing landscape in extraordinary detail, giving the most comprehensive view of Britain.*" and the fact that you now have evidence that the access to Addleborough has changed, does OS have a standard operating procedure in such cases, that you initiate contact with the 'relevant authority' i.e. in this case the National Trust and/or Yorkshire Dales National Park, with whom you presumably have regular contact?

**A.** As the Permissive Paths are in an area of Open Access Land, where you can walk freely without restriction, there is no requirement for us to show them, unless we are asked to by the relevant authority and we have written confirmation from the landowner. It is down to them to notify us, we do not contact them, as there are times when they do not want the permissive paths shown on our mapping.

**Q.** Given the physical paths are clearly present on the ground, please can you advise whether the paths could be added as a 1:25,000 standard 'black dashed' path, which does not confer any right of way or permissive access?

**A.** The current aerial photography is from June 2018 and there is no obvious route leading to Addleborough. Paths in undeveloped topography are typically captured from the aerial photography so if there is a visible path to survey next time we fly the area, it will be added then. Also please note that we do not show every unmade path in areas of undeveloped topography, just enough to show the main route network.

The next exchange was:

**Q.** I am unhappy with your response of “... *there is no obvious route leading to Addlebrough.*” Before I went for my walk up Addlebrough, I used the aerial imaging layer on the OS website to help plan my route, using the visible path to the summit! Please see attached aerial images annotated to clearly show the visible path. Given that I have now proved to you, beyond reasonable doubt, that there is a visible path to survey shown on existing OS (and 2011 NASA) aerial imaging, it would appear that there is no need for your cartography team to arrange to fly the area again and the path could therefore be surveyed now and added to your topo mapping as a standard ‘black dashed’ path. Furthermore, since there are no paths shown in this particular area of undeveloped topography around Addlebrough and as you have pointed out it is Open Access Land, so the Permissive Path status is irrelevant and the path should be added as part of the main route network, since *de facto* that is what it is.

**A.** This was referred to our Data Team, who produce our large-scale mapping. They have looked at our aerial photography and discussed this with the Specification Team. They have decided that we can add this unmade path. This will be visible in the November release of OS MasterMap Topography, 4 September 2019.



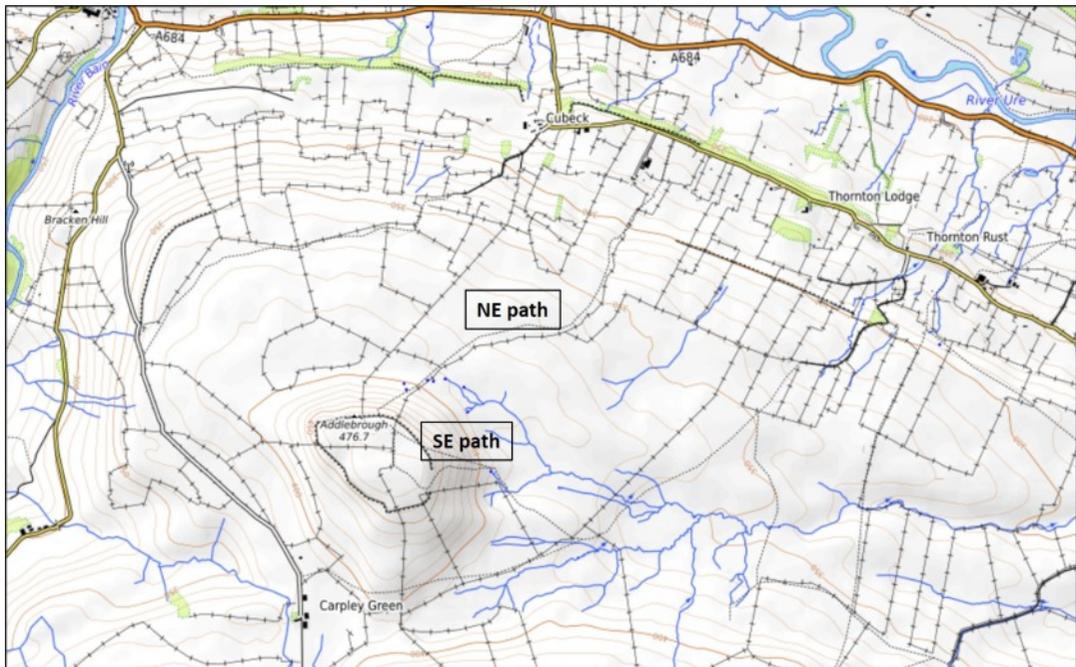
NE Permissive Path signpost on the Thornton Rust - Cubeck road

In November 2019, having walked the NE permissive path, I followed this up with an identical evidence-based argument to add the second path and this was immediately accepted

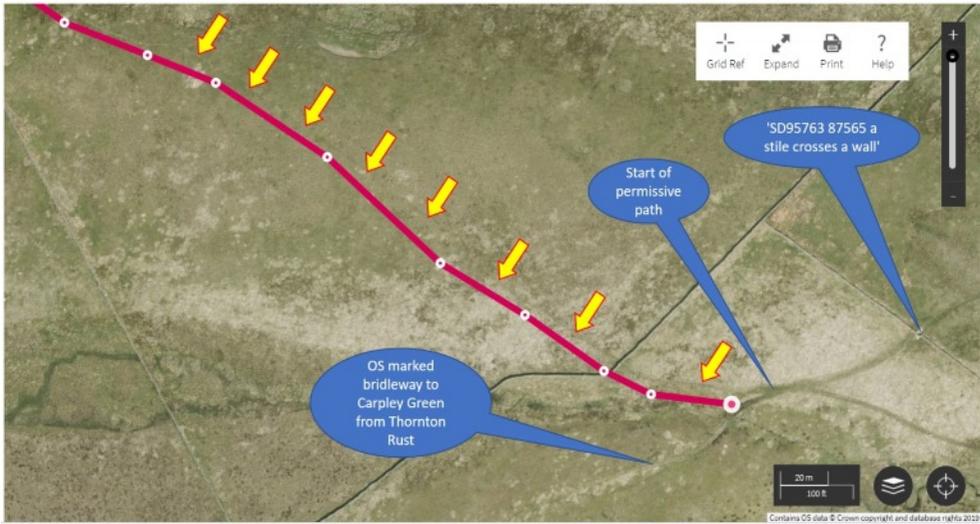
by OS. The outcome is that both access routes are now shown on the OS digital MasterMap, but as of August 2020, have not yet appeared on the online digital 1-25 or 1-50k maps. Interestingly both permissive paths are shown on Open Street Map / Open Topo Map.



OS 1-25k Map Aug 2020 not yet showing either of the two Permissive Paths



Open Topo Map (derived from Open Street Map) Aug 2020 showing both Permissive Paths

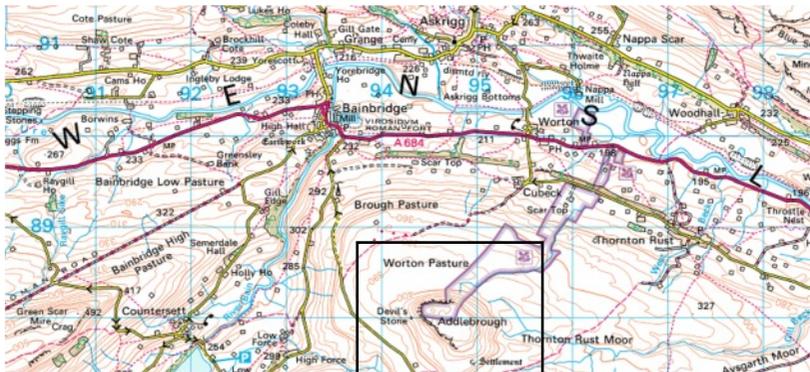


Aerial image showing start of SE Path as presented to OS (red GPX track offset to S so as not to obscure the path).

## Conclusion

Addleborough is an interesting Yorkshire summit and well worth visiting. OS will only put Permissive Paths onto their mapping at the request of the Local Authority, the National Park, or the landowner, so representations by members of the public are unlikely to succeed. In areas where it can be shown that an unmapped path is evident on the ground for its entire length, is clearly visible on aerial imaging and its inclusion on OS large scale mapping adds to the main route network, OS will accept an evidence-based case to include. It is questionable whether the YDNP / NT strategy of removing the OS triangulation pillar actually worked, since there is a clear path leading from the decoy cairn to the large historic cairn and the trig point's foundation which most people seem to visit.

## Location



## Links

- 1 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010552>
- 2 <https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/HBSMR/MonRecord.aspx?uid=MNA166524>

# Of Corsets And Such

In the Journal, Issue 16 Series 13, 2013, Jeff Hooper briefly reviewed the mountaineering exploits of a Mrs E P Jackson, of sufficient stature that in 1903 she was invited to lecture the YRC, which from its foundation had a membership made up of men. She was not the very first, but there were few lady mountaineers in the nineteenth century. Apparently, she was an accomplished Alpinist with many exploits to her name including a winter ascent of the Jungfrau in the middle of January. Benighted; with only candle lanterns passed from one to another for illumination; sitting out the night in a cave in a glacier!

Margaret A Sanderson was born in Birkenhead in 1843 and subsequently married Edward P Jackson. Between 1872 and 1888, she completed 140 major ascents, mostly with Edward including the traverse of the Matterhorn in 1877, ascending from Breuil. This was only the second traverse by a woman and the first by this route, starting in Italy. When she succeeded in reaching the Jungfrau summit, dropping down to the Wengern Alp, it would have been difficult at any time, but as a winter feat, spectacularly more so, with the necessity of passing a second night on the mountain. Her party spent it in a crevasse and suffered frost-bite; and the expedition must rank as one of the very best ever achieved in winter as acknowledged by the famous Alpinist W A B Coolidge. Margaret Jackson appears to have climbed for the sheer joy of doing it, not making out that there were scientific reasons for doing so or to write books about mountains. She left few records of her exploits, but she was undoubtedly one of the foremost among Victorian lady mountaineers.

Research by Kate Strasdin, a senior lecturer at Falmouth University, can throw a lot of light on the 'protective' clothing the 'weaker' sex wore climbing at the time. The Arts Society has circulated material from her which is more than a little interesting and we would commend their full article to you.

Whilst not heavily publicised at the time, it seems women played a fairly major part in the early days of Alpine climbing. Far from being the quiet home-makers history would suggest, they fully engaged in a lot of active endeavours, possibly in our eyes, the most striking being Alpinism. Some women who took to the mountains did write of their exploits and in considerable detail and showed they were as adventurous as their male contemporaries.

Despite their achievements, the Alpine Club would not publicise their exploits and it took the establishment of The Ladies' Alpine Club in 1907 to give women mountaineers the chance to share their experiences with others.

Margaret and the other pioneers wore skirts on their climbs for over fifty years but it did not stop them climbing very successfully. One, the archaeologist, linguist and mountaineer Gertrude Bell, wrote of using her skirt as a windbreak while trying to light a fire when stuck on a mountainside. Another, the explorer Mary Kingsley, wrote of 'the blessings of a good thick skirt' after falling onto the points of an animal trap.

The ladies of that era did not seem so clothes conscious and their accounts rarely talk of their clothes. How practical their outfits were did not seem to be considered and they wore their normal attire for the general locations they found themselves in. Sometimes though, they did make adaptations to their skirts, such as attaching draw-cords to them, to allow them to lift their skirt, from an attachment at their waist. As the years went by skirts started to be kilted creating an effect akin to trousers. Prior to this, apparently, Lizzie Le Blond used to set off in a skirt with breeches underneath and when unlikely to encounter any locals, took it off and hid it under a rock, to be put back on when going back down to the village.

Tweed might be heavy, but their jackets were cut in much more practical ways than women's fashionable jackets are today and the sleeves allowed a lot of room for movement.

Tweed was not only warm, but with its high lanolin content, was slightly water- proof too.



Long before the advent of modern materials and techniques, women could waterproof clothes by applying a concoction of soap and boiled linseed oil, ordinary clothes that they adapted themselves to suit their needs.

Contemporary periodicals are full of advice on how to manage clothing for different activities, including these waterproofing techniques, the hob-nailing of boots and similar adaptations were common before specialist fabrics were developed towards the end of that century. Burberry produced gabardine and slowly, other performance materials emerged.

You won't find many surviving garments that women mountaineers wore as they were really very ordinary everyday wear, not worth saving.



Kate Strasdin comments that the perils of corsets are one of the most misrepresented aspects of women's 19th-century fashion. All women wore corsets, but not all women wore them tight-laced.

The myths of women fainting and damaging their internal organs were false ones, spread by tabloid writers at the time. Corsets were worn for support and sports corsets were created for women taking part in activities like cycling and hiking. So, while women today would not even consider climbing a mountain in a corset, it was a completely normal garment for those women at the time.

Apparently, research in collections of dresses of the period proves that few women had the tiny waists that we associate with the times, and famous scenes, such as that with Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*, are far from the norm. Underpinnings were, quite simply, considered to be a vital part of a woman's wardrobe at this time and not to wear a corset would have been unthinkable.

Nowadays we are used to the movement that comes with stretch fabrics such as Lycra, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries mountaineers had to settle for what was available.

By the early 20th century, as the likes of Burberry recognised women as a market for sportswear, they began to producing garments designed specifically for different activities.

Their climbing outfits were made using gabardine and an experimental treatment, known as *slimber*, that was a bit like primitive Gore-Tex, were adopted earlier. In America, groups were showing their women members in trouser-style garments for the first time and the day of the Knickerbockers arrived. European women though, did not give up on their skirts until after the Great War.

After that war, women returned to the Alps wearing knee-length breeches that were to become the uniform of the alpinist for the best part of half a century.

*Jeff Hooper first reported on Margaret in the journal and this later material was discovered by Ray Harben*



### Further reading:

Strasdin K. 'An Easy Day for a Lady ...': The Dress of Early Women Mountaineers' *Costume* 2004; 38(1): 72-85

<https://theartssociety.org/arts-news-features/become-instant-expert-fashion-19th-century-lady-mountaineers>

Also, there is quite a lot now published about the Victorian female alpinists e.g.

Roche. C. Women Climbers 1850–1900: A Challenge to Male Hegemony? *Sport in History*, 33(3): 236-259 <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2013.826437>

The Alpine Club had a clubcast about Lizzie Le Blond  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ylfdFU2csw>

# The Silence Of The Wild

Roy Denney

One of the hardest things to find in the modern world is solitude. Those of us who like to wander alone in the high mountains, especially in the far north, can find those wonderful occasions where you think you are the only person on earth and you can quietly take in the majesty of the natural world. Unfortunately, closer to home, no matter where we wander, we are never far from the works of man and the noises our 'civilisation' creates.

If like me, you like really long walks and inevitably need early starts, you can sometimes find that in the hour after day breaks, if you don't make any noise, you will find magic moments when you come upon wildlife which will be long gone when the world of man awakens.

The world over, really wild places are shrinking as humanity spreads out and England is just the same. Many ecologists think we are in the biggest period of species mass extinction since the time of the dinosaurs.

I am a member of the planning committee where I live and am appalled at the rate of house building in green spaces. There is however, a massive shortfall in home provision; the demographic and political reasons for which we will not go into. It is down to government to use the fiscal system to reward and encourage more 'brown field' developments. We do not need to further relax the planning rules; builders already have enough permissions, they just don't build them out. One thing we can do as planners is ensure that all larger developments include a good amount of green space that it is not always over manicured and that green corridors are left to allow wildlife to migrate.

It has to be said that even in a fairly enlightened UK we are pushing some species to local extinction, but some creatures are 'bucking' the trend.

The swift is in trouble. There are many reasons, but our modern homes do not provide the nesting sites they used to. Swifts are the fastest bird in a self-powered, level flight, reaching speeds of almost 70 miles an hour. Just think of the midges and mosquitoes they can catch! Let's do ourselves a favour and help them. They are magic birds and rarely land, often only once every 9 or 10 months. Hard to believe, but they mate and even sleep on the wing, but they have been seen doing so as high as at 10,000 feet. When they are migrating they have been seen at nearly 19,000 feet. The astounding statistics don't end there, some fly as far as 17,000 miles to get here and, even in the nesting period, will still forage covering 4000 miles each week. Swifts nest in holes, often inside old buildings, and new buildings don't afford these opportunities.

Bats similarly are struggling for much the same reasons and they also eat millions of midges etc.

It is not all doom and gloom though. Some species are doing too well. When fit, I do wander out in the very early morning and one of the more interesting species I sometimes come

upon is the attractive little roe. One of our few native deer, the roe deer was largely extinct in many areas of England 50 years ago, but names associated with it were everywhere. How many pubs called the Roebuck or the Buck Inn have you come across? They are now making a comeback as woodland cover is increased and are greatly helped by the reduction in gaps between woodland blocks, which is being brought about by the creation of community woodlands near habitation. They are now widespread in many areas where they had been missing for years and there are thought to be between 350,000 and 500,000 of them now in Britain. You can see how common they once were not only in the names of pubs but also the names of villages like Bucknall, Buckfast, Buckfastleigh, Buckenham, Buckhorn, Buckhaven, Buckerell, Buckminster, Buckden and Buckland. It is odd how some animal names invade our language.

Another animal that intrudes on our everyday language is the wolf. The wolf hasn't existed in the wild in Britain since the 1700s, but has never really left us. We wolf down our food and keep the wolf from the door. We suffer from lone-wolf attacks but sometimes cry wolf. We have a wolf in sheep's clothing and have been thrown to the wolves and women are all too familiar with wolf whistles. We have the poisonous plant 'wolf's bane' so named as it is dangerous and there is a plant named as wolf-like because it survived in remote wild places. As such it was described by the Latin word pronounced 'loopin' (the Lupin, *genius lupinus*).

It is a strange juxtaposition that these two animals should feature so much in our language because, if we had not interfered, one would be the prey of the other. Much as I love to watch deer and indeed eat them, they are becoming a serious problem. They breed rapidly and with no predators they are getting too prolific. Desperation and near starvation in some areas is pushing them into suburban gardens, doing much damage and in the countryside they attack crops and stop the natural regeneration of our woodlands.

Even in the far north of Scotland, where we have not done much harm to the environment the deer problem is obvious. As we walk those remote places, one thing we will not see is the natural regeneration of the Caledonian Forest. Deer put paid to that.

The Deer Initiative has been set up between interested organisations including The Forestry Commission. Their Director is quoted as making the self-evident statement that not enough deer are being killed. I cannot see the shooting of Bambi and its parents going down well with a population largely against killing the fox, a known predator. Perhaps the increasing population of foxes that we are seeing will turn to killing fawns rather than household pets, as is increasingly being seen but fawns would be a bit of a mouthful for a fox.

We cull hundreds of thousands of deer each year but are not keeping up so perhaps we should bring back the wolf. Unfortunately, once we break the normal food chain, we always reap the consequences. Re-introductions are part of the answer, but restoration of habitats is more important. We are restoring natural moorland by blocking run offs and replanting native species including sphagnum moss. We have now realised this is one of our best defences against flooding lower down and that peat is our most effective carbon capture.

If you go down in the woods today you may well get a big surprise.

As we protect and expand our woodlands, a number of other creatures are making a comeback with some surprising outcomes. Woodlands help clean up our air; provide sustainable timber and provide leisure areas to the health and general wellbeing of the wider population. They are also recreating, at least in part, the sort of conditions for long vanished creatures.

The polecat is on the comeback trail. It was until fairly recently, thought to be only surviving in Scotland and part of mid Wales but recent sightings have shown that it has re-colonised woodlands in much of central and southern England. With suitable habitat these creatures quickly fill any environmental niche as they are prolific breeders. These wild 'ferrets' with their masked faces have large litters of kits, often of a dozen or even occasionally more, are voracious killers which should help keep the population of rabbits down and perhaps more importantly the rapidly expanding population of rats.

The elusive pine marten is also staging a recovery. Having been thought to be down to not more than 1000 a few years ago, there are probably about 5000 now. Members watched some feeding on the platform at Tulloch Station on a past winter meet. Shy and largely nocturnal creatures once only surviving in the highlands and a few scattered pockets of northern England, they are now found in all sorts of places, the latest being Shropshire. Creatures of woodland making homes in hollowed out trees, they feed on plump and slow grey squirrels. This gives quicker reds a chance and where pine martens are creeping in, reds are recovering.

Another 'exotic' worth a mention is the beaver, which had been extinct in Britain for four hundred years, but following releases in Argyll and Tayside Scotland and in Cropton Forest in North Yorkshire, has now declared it a native and it is doing very well, thank you. There are also breeding colonies in the south west of England. These vegetarian creatures usually make nests in river banks and thereby, slow water run-off and as a side product change the local habitat, providing refuges for many other creatures. They do feed largely on bark but, with Forest Enterprise moving away from commercial forestry and taking steps to restore natural woodland, this is not seen as an unacceptable threat. They rarely cut down trees for dams unless in very rocky terrain.

The wild boar is again now not uncommon. They became extinct in Britain in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but escapees have bred enthusiastically and they are now widespread. At the right density, wild boar are good for woodland because their rooting about for acorns, beech mast and other fruits and nuts disturbs the soil and encourages biodiversity but they are getting out of hand. Bring back the wolf?

Otters are repopulating more and more of our waterways and they out compete mink, which are in decline. Mink preyed on creatures that otters do not, so those creatures are making a come back including Moor Hens and our old friend 'Ratty'.

One thing we must accept is that predators are very much part of the natural balance and help keep the herbivores in check. If wolves are a step too far what about the Lynx? It was once native, but then so were bears not that long ago.

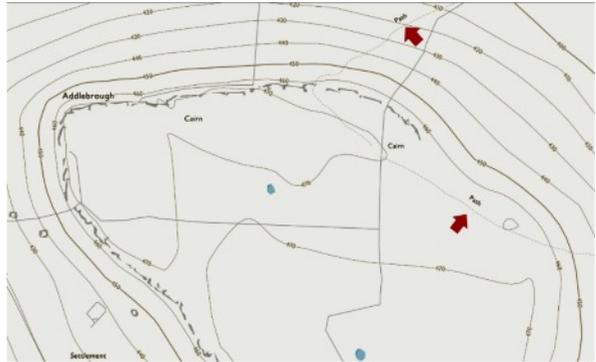
Next time you walk out, tread lightly, talk quietly and keep your eyes open.

# Chipping Away At The NT

Further to Mick Borroff's persistence and success as reported earlier in the publication (pages 119-124), this has opened up an issue that has been rumbling on in the background for many years.

First though, Mick's 'new' paths have now appeared on OS mapping but only on the electronic versions so far.

There is, in fact, a general problem with paths not registered on the definitive list of paths which go across National Trust land. It is a case where well meaning items of legislation apparently conflict with each other



Normally, except following representations such as were made in Mick's case, such paths are not on the OS by reason of them not being on the Definitive Statement and supporting map. They are not on these because the NT is reluctant to dedicate the paths as rights of way. This is puzzling and it can be a real frustration. For example two paths in the North Downs, both of which go across NT land, are not shown on any map because they are not on the definitive map; so to use them, people simply have to have local knowledge of their existence. Not much use to walkers visiting these areas from distant parts

The OS in each case, shows apparently impenetrable fences and nothing on the ground; but when you get there, there are signposts, kissing-gates and very well-trodden tracks. Yet both are very strategic: one is a short one which cuts out some very unpleasant road walking; the other is far longer and provides a beautiful walk to an excellent pub, which would otherwise involve narrow country lanes.

Representatives of the NT have variously said over the years that, under statute, their land is 'inalienable', since they are a charity and the charity Acts (so they say) prevent them dedicating a right of way, since it would lower the value of the land. Possibly this would be a problem for most charities, but when the charity owns land in perpetuity, for the express purpose of public access for recreation, it is hard to see how dedicating a right of way - so that people not familiar with the locality know they can use it - could remotely be in conflict with their aims.

So, one way or another, the problem needs addressing and given Mick has had some real success in this particular case, it may help provide arguments in other locations going forwards.

The problem about getting paths on to the definitive map consists in the fact that, to establish a right of way (aside from the NT's questionable point about the inalienability of their land) there has to be an order for a path to become a public footpath so that it can be added to the definitive map.

Twenty years' public use 'as of right', that is nec vi, nec clam and nec precario: without force, without stealth and without revocable permission opens one door to seek an order, if there is no historical evidence that it was and, therefore still is a right of way.

The NT argues that since there is a general (and technically revocable) permission to use NT land, supposedly made clear by their notices about byelaws etc., the criteria for claiming a right of way are not met. That is very debatable and a number of recent cases have stated that any such notice about paths being only permissive has to be suitably prominent.

Surrey Ramblers have a claim on the go at present, at the NT's Winkworth Arboretum near Godalming, and it will be interesting to see how this progresses.

However if the NT are wrong in this contention, and in fact there is no specific 'permission' unless it is made considerably clearer to users that their use of the land is indeed by permission, e.g. by notices expressly to that effect on the path itself, rather than a general notice about byelaws, we could still be stumped by the fact that the land is CRoW open access land, which imparts the same type of permission.

So it seems it's not possible to claim paths on this basis on access land (whether it is access land by reason of it being NT land or for some other reason under the Act), unless there is evidence of 20 years' use as of right before CRpW took effect.

This could, and probably eventually will, be tested in court. But regardless as to whether it is a right of way or whether its status is unclear, the OS could still take a judgement and show it on their maps. Their maps are supposed to show what is on the ground and they do show some with ambiguous or disputed status; shown as 'Other Routes with Public Access'. ORPA markings on Landranger and Explorer maps usually show that a route exists on a Highway Authorities' official 'List of Streets' that are maintained at public expense but not always. Some are not maintained or partially maintained.

They are usually Green Lanes, White Roads, Unclassified Roads, some called 'County' roads, and these can be assumed to be used by all types of user.

There are other anomalies in the showing of footpaths. For example, where a river changes course or its bank collapses and where roads are diverted or straightened. At present if a river bank collapses or a river finds a slightly different route a path can be lost whereas at the coast the path is a certain distance from the coast and if the coast moves the path follows it.

Similarly, and not well understood, if a path exits onto a road and the description on the definitive statement says 'to the xx road' then, if the road is straightened etc., the path still goes to it after it has moved although there are many cases where the definitive map has not been redrawn to reflect this.

# Honeymooning Coast to Coast

Esther  
Chadwick

In its variety, small-scale ruggedness and constant proximity to the luxury of a hot shower, the Coast to Coast walk cannot be beaten for a honeymoon. I and my husband of a mere three days, (Lloyd de Beer) began the journey at St. Bees on August 11th in sunshine so hot it could have been the Costa Brava. We ended on the 23rd at Robin Hood's Bay in driving rain, sipping a celebratory pint of Theakstons, under the dripping eaves of Wainwright's Bar. Let us hope that declining weather is not a metaphor for the course of married life.

In any case, the clarifying routine of a foot journey over 192 miles provided us newlyweds with a sense of purpose after a much-anticipated wedding, an escape from the earlier confines of lockdown, and many enduring lessons besides. It has been suggested that a brief account of this happy voyage may be of interest to members, if not for its revelation of a well-known and thoroughly trampled route, then as a more personal addendum to the guidebooks and perhaps, as an enticement to those who are contemplating this upland classic for reasons of their own.

The first day (a Tuesday) began around lunchtime, as noted, in blazing heat, with yellow gorse, bright flowering heather and a turquoise sea at our sides. Having passed through Moor Row, a sleepy collection of terraced workers' houses (God's Own Country, according to one sunbathing resident, who chided us only for hastening on), a first foretaste of the approaching Lake District was provided by the gentle ascent of Dent Fell, a rounded outlier described by our observant and often amusing guide, Martin Wainwright, in his *Coast to Coast* (Aurum Press, 2007; rev. ed. 2012), as the head of a tonsured monk. By early evening we were dining in the garden of the Fox and Hounds at Ennerdale Bridge, where we encountered a Dutch couple nearing the end of their journey from East to West. They had planned to start on the Irish Sea, but poor weather three weeks prior had induced them to brave British public transport cross-country and reverse their plans. We were undimmed by their conclusion that travelling towards Cumbria was the superior direction. Along the way we would meet one or two more of these unusual East-Westerners, but most fellow Coast-to-Coasters we met (fewer than in a normal summer, since the many Australians, New Zealanders and North Americans in large parties had been kept away by the pandemic) were to end each day like us with the setting sun at their backs.

A perfectly delightful walk around shimmering Ennerdale Water was the subject of the next morning, thence to the low-lying valley track eastwards along the River Liza towards Black Sail Youth Hostel in the shade of trees. Not far along the track, I made what turned out to be a crucial error, resulting in the first test of the marriage.

I insisted we take the high alternative to Red Pike and High Stile. This would have brought us over Chapel and Comb Craggs to Hay Stacks, past Alfred Wainwright's final resting place at Innominat Tarn.

A brief backtrack to catch the ascent path, well over an hour, and a great deal of hot work later, we reached the first summit, the imposing ridge of High Stile lying before us. I had promised my new husband that we would be rewarded by lunch here, but soon thunder was rolling in and ominous dark clouds gathered overhead. Two men made to leave the Pike into the weather by the Saddle or Lingcomb Edge (we did not wait to find out which), and as we hurriedly set off after a scant five minutes rest, another lone walker retreating from the top warned us to get off the mountain fast. No favourable exit path lay ahead, the only means of escape, in our direction striking off after the unclimbed Stile.

We were forced by prudence to retrace our hard-won steps back down the Red Pike path to the safety of the wood below. This set us back a good few hours, and we finally reached Black Sail only by late afternoon, with the steep passage up Loft Beck, the high pass over to Honister and the final trek to Rothswaite still to accomplish. Occasional thunder rumbled, and residual lightning flashes did not succeed in smoothing over completely the earlier misjudgement. But at the dismantled Fleetwith tramway, sunshine produced a magnificent double rainbow through the last heavy drops. Hearts began to lighten, spousal forgiveness seemed the correlate of the meteorological effects, and an important C2C lesson had been learned early on. In the Lakes, the high alternatives can count for at least double the standard valley routes in terms of energy and risk; they are not parallel ambles, as a map, in the complacency of fine valley weather and high spirits, can so misleadingly suggest.

Revived by an excellent meal and a good night's sleep at the charmingly old-fashioned Scafell Hotel, we set off on the third day towards Grasmere. Unspoiled Borrowdale was resplendent in rich August sun. The route followed a well-engineered stone path up towards Lining Crag, opening onto broad moorland and a new perspective at Greenup Edge.

With yesterday's travails all but forgotten, we undertook a considered discussion of the next high alternative. Not a cloud in sight, and strengthened in our collaborative resolve, we agreed to follow the ridge to Helm Crag rather than drop immediately down to the valley. This turned out to be a good decision, yielding dramatic scenery and richly rewarding views with little difficulty underfoot. Comfortably nestled with boots off at Calf Crag, we picnicked and read lines from Wordsworth's unpublished 'Home at Grasmere', while two birds of prey wheeled about below. We must have been somewhere above the poet's very spot:

*"The place from which I looked  
was soft and green,  
Not giddy yet aerial, with a depth  
Of Vale below, a height of Hills above.  
Long did I halt; I could have made it even  
My business and my errand so to halt.  
For rest of body 'twas a perfect place,  
All that luxurious nature could desire,  
But tempting to the Spirit; who could look  
And not feel motions there?  
[...]*

*I sate and stirred in Spirit as I looked,  
I seemed to feel such liberty was mine,  
Such power and joy; but only for this end,  
To flit from field to rock, from rock to field,  
From shore to island, and from isle to shore,  
From open place to covert, from a bed  
Of meadow-flowers into a tuft of wood,  
From high to low, from low to high, yet still  
Within the bounds of this huge Concave; here  
Should be my home, this Valley be my World."*

At one with these words, we descended steeply into the town and to the genteel gardens of Tweedies Hotel, our station for the third night.

The last of the full Lakes days leaves Grasmere in a north-easterly direction towards Grisedale Tarn. Martin Wainwright offers the choice between Little Tongue and Tongue Gill, with a preference for the latter, whose well-proportioned and refreshing waterfall was likewise an easy allurements for us. Lunch was eaten on a grassy knoll at the eastern end of the tarn overlooking Grisedale itself.

Here, the advice of a veteran Coast-to-Coaster, who had refilled our water bottles at Black Sail two days previously, resurfaced. He had recommended a third alternative as a way down into Patterdale. Not the obvious high route via Helvellyn and Striding Edge (on a day so fair, we could see streams of walkers heading in that direction), nor the standard valley path, but St. Sunday Crag, intercepted by an increasingly indistinct side-path on the northern flank. It would be hard to name a favourite moment of the whole walk, but I would be tempted to select this generous, broad-shouldered ridge, which carried us gradually and conveniently down to the colourful late-summer bracken and picturesque woodland above our next lodging, the White Lion, with the eastern end of Ullswater in our sights.

A portion of the St. Sunday path lay off our guidebook's selectively excerpted map. Fortunately, there was precious little chance of low cloud and the way was perfectly clear, although we took an opportunistic precaution by photographing the relevant section of a Landranger sheet belonging to a passing day walker. (The limitations of guidebooks at moments like this are clear; with only slivers of OS map there is less scope for deviation or contextual orientation, admittedly less of a problem on such a generally well waymarked route but occasionally disconcerting).

A cloud inversion greeted us next morning as we climbed above Patterdale. At Angle Tarn, the mist had completely burned away, revealing campers and swimmers in the azure blue. Already by 10.30am it was sweltering. We pressed on round the contours to the Knoll, heading straight up the wall line to its substantial cairn, then over to Kidsty Pike, where a large herd of deer could be seen grazing far below. A steep and much eroded descent led down to Haweswater reservoir (flooded in the 1930s to provide drinking water for Manchester).

We cooled our feet in a beautiful stream and ate lunch in the dappled shade of rowan and silver birch on its banks. Then began the plod around the reservoir itself and the growing sensation as we rounded on the dam of leaving the Lakes behind to enter a new realm. At Shap, after a long day of three halves, we lodged with the venerable Mrs Jackson at the Hermitage.

Here the summer portion of our walk ended, for we awoke the next day in a new season. Cool, low mists lent atmosphere all the way from Shap to Orton then on to Kirkby Stephen. But the going was gentle and full of prehistoric interest, with powdery oceans of purple heather to fill the eyes.

The kindly proprietor of the Jolly Farmer's guesthouse on the main street at Kirkby Stephen welcomed us in with peppermint tea and a scone and jam, and we were happy to pay her for a load of laundry.

The stage from Kirkby Stephen to Keld was enlivened early by the impressive yet enigmatic Nine Standard Rigg, surely inspiration to land artists everywhere, but soon settled in to a sustained bog hop across bleak moorland, which we undertook in full waterproofs against steady rain. At this point we picked up a lone Coast-to-Coaster shod only in trail shoes. He explained that his choice had been inspired by walkers of the Pacific Coast Trail, who ford rivers so frequently they opt for footwear that will carry them through water, but dry quickly in the stretches in between. Our temporary companion was ready to admit that such a logic had not translated well to this county, the evasions of the Yorkshire sun and the absence of dry ground rendering the American method unreliable. A pair of boots, telephoned for and posted by his wife, would be waiting for him in Reeth.

Meanwhile, delicately dancing from hummock to hummock, testing depth of pool and firmness of moss with our poles (perhaps the most vital piece of kit beyond good leather boots and a compass), our feet seemed to escape the worst of the mire and we arrived at Keld Lodge, with its capacious and highly effective drying room, by the mid-afternoon.

Setting out on a short seventh day from Keld at the head of Swaledale, we were confronted like all of Wainwright's disciples, with the choice to follow the river or head over the moors. We opted for the latter, leaving most to the low route and enjoying evocative mining ruins in soaking rain and mist with sun at last breaking through on the gentle gradient downwards towards Reeth. Scarred by hushings, long-abandoned mines, and heaps of displaced stone, the topography of Gunnerside and Melbecks Moor, eerie in the dampening cloud, seemed quite alien. Our sense of remove from the world did not last long, however, and after the final descent on an ancient and overgrown drover's road, we were soon sitting among holiday makers on the benches of Reeth green with ice creams, lodging most comfortably for the night at the prominently positioned Ivy Cottage.

Next day's stride to Richmond via Marske and the Applegarths continued this easy domestication and, arriving before 4pm at the fine market town busy with staycationers, we settled in for another good night at the handsome Cordilleras House B&B on Hurgill Road.

It was in fine fettle and an optimistic cast of mind, therefore, that we embarked on what had been described to us, in almost legendary terms, as the Slough of Despond. At 23 miles, this is the longest stage of the walk, covering the flat ground between the Dales and the North York Moors and traversing the country's major north-south arteries east of Richmond: the A1, the East Coast Mainline, and far more dangerous than any of the Lake District's trickiest passages, the bridgeless A19.

Whether as a result of strenuous mental preparation or the return of benign sunny weather, the day passed quite pleasantly through knee-high fields of barley, farms and low-lying villages until a final adrenalin-filled dash between articulated lorries and speeding cars.

Over yet another full English breakfast, our hostess at Ingleby House Farm in Ingleby Arncliffe, explained that petitions to the local MP (now presiding from Westminster as Chancellor of the Exchequer) and residents' campaigns for a footbridge have repeatedly fallen on deaf ears.

The addition of a new service station at the crossing point will only add to its treacherousness.

On the antepenultimate day, a new protagonist entered from the south west. Storm Ellen had begun to ravage the country, in unseasonable terms overnight, and did her best to make an already long stage, full of repeated ascent and descent from Ingleby Arncliffe to Blakey Ridge (here was our first major deviation from the guidebook's suggested stop-overs), more exhausting than it should have been. Squall and a vicious side-wind accompanied us all along the edge of the Moors on the Cleveland Way, although in brief clearings of cloud we were lucky to catch aerial views back across the plain and the first sighting of the North Sea beyond Middlesbrough. Somewhere, just above Clay Bank Top, we were overtaken by three women running the entire route in six days.

In awe, we trudged on, our heads bowed to the gale. By about the fourth bend in the disused railway from Bloworth Crossing to Blakey, high above Farndale, we began to wonder whether the Lion Inn would ever appear, but by 8.30pm our full stomachs and burning cheeks could confirm that it had.

Now deliberately out of step with Martin Wainwright's itinerary, we continued the next day past Glaisdale to Egton Bridge. Although we began in the vestiges of the storm, we were soon under a bright sky, with fair-weather clouds stretching away like dominos from our sturdy track's high vantage. Sea on the horizon hastened us on past the numerous characterful standing stones (we stopped briefly to doff our caps to Fat Betty, a stout marker supposedly associated with marriage) and well-disposed clumps of heather.

We had chosen for our last night a more luxurious hostelry than most, and we diverted off the main path at Carr End to reach Broom House B&B through a charming series of hidden meadows that would not have been unworthy of the brush of Gainsborough, had he ventured north of Suffolk. Supper was arranged at the commendable Postgate Inn near the railway line.

With mixed feelings, we came at last to the final day. We did not want this pedestrian idyll to end. The further we walked, the closer we approached the inevitable return to London and our overflowing inboxes.

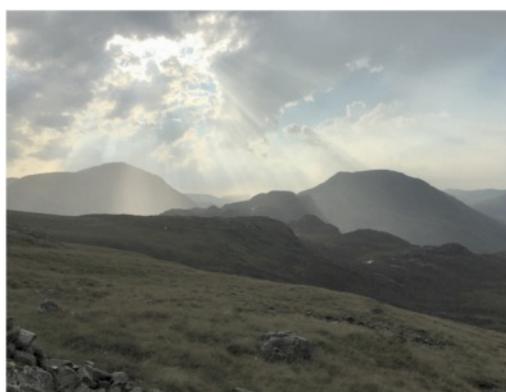
Summoning morning energies for the last time, we set off for Sleights Moor via Grosmont, where a steam train, obligingly and grandly, pulled past as if laid on especially for our amusement. At Littlebeck, we thought the end was near. But a perverse final test greeted us in the long stretch of deciduous woodland lying to the south.

We were disorientated by the many paths ravaged by day-trippers down the steep and rooty slopes to the waterfall. Like Dante in the middle of his life, we had lost the straight way. The map here could not provide detail enough, and was, unhelpfully, split over two pages. To make matters worse, a new marker-post, blazoned with the Wainwright monogram, offered false hope with its arrow pointing in completely the wrong direction. Muddily, and with a renewed understanding of the phrase, ‘out of the woods’, we finally clambered from the trees on to the moor towards the B1416. Having narrowly escaped a swarm of wasps on the Back Lane towards Hawsker, we sat down on a bench with the gourmet sandwiches provided by our good hosts at the upmarket Broom House. Just at that moment, the heavens opened for a final downpour. (Thankfully, waterproofs had already been donned as protection against the wasps.) Smoked salmon and roast beef were soggyly imbibed. We were soon striding out on the very last leg, however.

As the coast path finally came into view in intermittent showers, our feelings of elation spilled over like the rainwater running in rivulets underfoot. From here, it was an easy couple of miles round the headland to Robin Hood’s Bay, where we dutifully threw in our small pebble and entered our names in the logbook at the Bay Hotel.



The ascent of Red Pike,  
with Ennerdale Water in the distance



Looking back from the pass above Loft Beck  
towards the defiant Hay Stacks and High Stile



Towards the Fleetwith tramway



Resting at Calf Crag above Grasmere



The ascent of St. Sunday Crag, looking back towards Grisedale Tarn



On St. Sunday Crag, Helvellyn beyond



Descending into Patterdale



Angle Tarn



Nine Standards Rigg, between Kirkby Stephen and Keld



Old Gang Smelting Mill, Reeth High Moor



The Slough of Despond



In the fields between Danby Wiske and Ingleby



The Cleveland Way between Ingleby Cross and Clay Bank Top



Relief from high winds in the Wain Stones above Broughton Bank



Glaisdale Rigg on the penultimate day

The Coast to Coast is not a difficult walk, although high Lakeland alternatives and changeable weather conditions offer invited and uninvited challenges of their own.

Undertaken in the honeymoon fashion, neither is it a cheap one, costing around £100 per night on top of expenses for food.



Destination: Robin Hood's Bay

Our packs were correspondingly light; we carried one extra outer layer and waterproofs, a change of dry clothes and a pair of light shoes for the evenings, tooth- and hairbrushes, a book, and two large bottles of water each, together with lunch.

The addition of a tent, coupled with unlimited time, would lend flexibility and grit. But the journey's principal charms are available to all who embrace it: the leisurely pace at which the ever-changing northern landscape can be appreciated in its fullness; the distinct and varied character of each day's many-textured terrain; and the good cheer of fellow walkers with whom, by the steady accumulation of steps, one has joined a community.

Members began arriving from late morning on Tuesday. Those who arrived early enough walked in small parties or alone up Smardale past the 15<sup>th</sup> century packhorse bridge and into the nature reserve.

At least one, lacking spectacles and unable to read the closure notices, ambled across the nineteenth century viaduct, blissfully unaware of the risks posed by a 20 ft wide railway trackbed with substantial stone parapets.



Helen and Michael, disappointed on leaving Scotch Corner and heading west to lose the sunshine and find lowering clouds, nevertheless set off from The King's Head, walked up Smardale, over the bridge and then uphill. Soon into wetting cloud they continued to Nettle Hill trig and on west to return via the Potts Valley and a moorland road leading toward Brownber. At Brownber's Tower House, a local informed them that Elizabeth Gaunt, who once lived there, was the last woman to be burnt at the stake in 1685.

A couple of fields nearer to the campsite, they asked another local exactly where was St Helen's Well, but despite being stood in front of it, he had never heard of it. Not surprisingly really, as it is now overgrown and inaccessible, though standing nearby are some ruins of a chapel built by Lincolnshire monks who settled at Newbiggin-on-Lune. Near to Tower House is the farm track to Bents camping barn where the Club had a meet in 1985.

By six o'clock all but one had arrived and the rest made their way to the King's Head for the evening meal, Rory arriving not long after. Social distancing rules were not much in evidence, nor was service, which although delivered pleasantly, was sadly inefficient. One course stretched over nearly three hours so the decision was taken to cancel the following night's reservation and to book into the Black Swan instead.

After a wild and wet night, Wednesday dawned bright and sunny.



Social  
Distancing

Everyone opted for the Howgills. Richard J walked up Green Bell and Randygill Head from Ravenstonedale and returned by a slightly different route. Rory walked to the Calf via Swarth, Green Bell and Kensgriff, returning via Randygill Head and Dale Tongue, about 16 miles.

Tim J walked over Green Bell, Randygill Head, Kensgriff, Yarlside and Calf via Cautley Spout. On the descent to Bowderdale he met the last party of five, the Smiths, Mick, John and Richard T, who were basically doing the same route in reverse. They had managed to cross Bowderdale Beck at the Northern end of the valley and thus cut a substantial corner; on the way down Tim couldn't find a suitable crossing place and was forced to detour a mile or two.



Green Bell and Randygill Head

The main party's walk was also about 16 miles, Tim's a couple longer. All were back in time to enjoy the first class and clean shower facilities at the campsite before setting off for the Black Swan, Helen spotting a red squirrel on the way. The Black Swan, if rather more expensive, was much better organised and we all enjoyed an excellent meal in relaxed and comfortable surroundings.

Thursday was another sunny morning.

After making use of the quirky wheelbarrow system for ferrying gear around the campsite, some set off for home. Richard J had a short walk up Smardale.



Michael and Helen drove to Street near the Fat Lamb pub and used the Pennine Bridleway up to circuit the Wild Boar Fell plateau before descending to Sand Tarn, squelching along by Clouds Gill and traversing the Fell and Stenerskeugh Clouds to return.

They spotted three more red squirrels above Street.

Mick, Richard T and Tim drove a few miles to Sunbiggin Tarn and had a pleasant 9 mile walk around Great Asby Scar nature reserve, with its spectacular limestone clints and rare heathers, most unusual in such a lime rich situation.

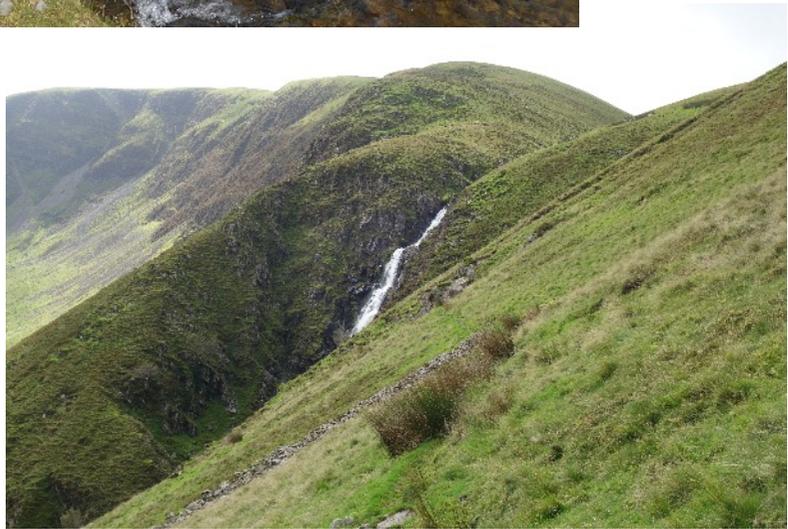




Crossing  
Bowderdale  
Beck

Cautley  
Spout

Another very enjoyable camping meet snatched towards the end of the strangest and most frustrating year any of us can remember.



Calf Summit

Attendees:

Rory Newman, Mick Borroff,  
Helen Smith, Michael Smith,  
Richard Josephy, Richard Taylor,  
John Sutcliffe, Tim Josephy

# Caves Of Madagascar

## A recent update

John &  
Valerie  
Middleton

During 1999, 2002, 2004 and 2006 we spent between four and five weeks each year exploring the various karst areas of that unique island known as Madagascar. Since our own discoveries, a number of other expeditions visited the island and made further impressive finds. The most notable of these discoveries were made by French speleologists. In the Spring of 2020, I received an extensive e-mail from Olivier Testa who, very kindly, sent me exploration updates on the caves that we had recorded. To put it gently, some of these finds literally 'blew our minds'. Look what we missed!

Namoroka (*Nomoroka*) tsingy. Eric Sibert and his team have been painstakingly investigating this extensive and spectacular tsingy for 15 years. The result is Reseau Marosakabe, a maze system some 113,019m in length (-12/+38m). This cave is now the longest in Africa.

Mahafaly. More than 100 caves have now been explored in this region with a number requiring underwater exploration. The most amazing discovery is Malazamanga, which contains the world's largest known submerged passageway by volume.

Vintana (*Aven Cave*). This cenote has been dived and, in its depths, numerous fossils have been found including various species of Giant Lemurs. Research is ongoing. This region is now covered by the Tsimanapetsosa National Park.

Toliari. Ankikikmaty (*correctly Gouffre Tolikisy*) continues down to -150m (Manambo 1998/99 expedition). This is thought to connect via a choked passage to Ankiky Velo (*correctly Aven Tolikisy*) which is situated 1.5km away.

Mikea. Anjanamba cave (*our Andranamba cave*) is the longest continuously flooded cave in Africa and the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest in the world. It has one entrance and extends for 13km!

Further information may be seen on Olivier's excellent website. This also includes various videos and information on his other worldwide explorations. [olivier-testa.com/-expeditions-html](http://olivier-testa.com/-expeditions-html)

A further valuable source of data is the 'Madagascar Cave Diving Association' website [madacaves.com](http://madacaves.com)

We comprehensively wrote up our experiences and explorations in the following publications:

*Cave and Karst Science*. Vol. 29, No.1, 2002. Pages 13-20.  
*Cave and Karst Science*. Vol. 30, No.3, 2003. Pages 125-128.  
*The Yorkshire Rambler*. No. 17, Summer 2002. Pages 49-56.  
*The Yorkshire Rambler*. No. 21, Summer 2004. Pages 5-10.  
*YRC Journal*. Issue 1. Summer 2006. Pages 13-25.

# Mind Over Matter - Matterhorn Revisited

Ged  
Campion

There are perhaps, not many mountains whose name and fame are as well known, as that of the Matterhorn. Towering above the Zermatt Valley at 4,775m, there will be few mountaineers who fail to be impressed by its spectacle and feel the urge to scale its lofty heights.



My fascination with the Matterhorn began a long time ago in the seventies when I first visited Zermatt as an inexperienced climber.

I was touring Switzerland with a girlfriend, but we weren't equipped to climb any serious peaks.

I remember, all those years ago, standing on the wooden bridge where the mountain comes fully into view, as you walk towards the tail end of the town, gazing at the iconic pyramid of a mountain. It stands in spectacular isolation from the neighbouring 4,000m, peaks, seemingly demanding its own stage.

My first attempt at the mountain was to be an ascent of the Hörnli (NE) Ridge in August 1981 with Richard Sealey. We had climbed a few Peaks in the Stubai region of Austria, believing they would serve as adequate preparation for higher peaks in Switzerland. After a few enjoyable days summer skiing on the glacier below the Breithorn Plateau, I decided we were ready for a crack at the Matterhorn. The weather forecast was a little sketchy, but this didn't daunt us, Richard being happy to go along with my plans.

In those days you could stay at the old Hörnli Hut or the Belvedere Hotel owned by the Zermatt commune, not entirely a hotel, but Richard insisted on it even so. Swiss weather forecasting wasn't so reliable in those days, but we were up and ready at 4.00am the following morning only to be greeted by an unseasonable cover of snow everywhere. The local guides who had left earlier returned giving a thumbs down and everyone went back to bed.

Conditions didn't get any better by the end of the week and it was time to return to UK.

1984 was the next time I went back to the Matterhorn with Shaun Penny and WMC member, Tony Maddison. A few days earlier we had completed a traverse of the Eiger by the Mittallegi Ridge, descending the West Flank, suitable training and acclimatisation for the Zmutt Ridge on the Matterhorn we thought. In those days, in the summer months, you could approach the Zmutt Ridge from the Hörnli Hut crossing below the North Face.

Nowadays it's very unwise because the ice has receded so much, exposing extremely steep and loose rock. The normal approach now is from the Schönbiel Hut via the Tiefmatten Glacier.

After the walk up the approach ridge by the endless zigzags, we stayed the night at the Hörnli Hut. The warden had very little information on conditions on that side of the mountain. We were the only team attempting the Zmutt Ridge and the warden asked us to look out for two Swiss lads who had attempted the North face a few days earlier, but hadn't returned.

We set off at midnight, descending to the Matterhorn Glacier, crossing the steep slope of the Bergschrund below the North Face. On reaching the Bergschrund we discovered a chaos of frozen ropes, the ends of which were buried in the snow. They were so frozen into the snow they wouldn't budge. To this day we will never know whether the Swiss lads were attached to the ropes.

We carried on climbing steeply up towards the rock teeth on the ridge, but the ice slope was increasingly layered with breakable crust, making progress slow and precarious. It started snowing and enthusiasm was waning. By 2am the consensus was to retreat. We delicately reversed the route and crashed out in a walled bivouac site on the 'hogs back', just below the first fixed ropes on the Hörnli Ridge. Throughout the morning we were disturbed by voices and the torch lights of teams heading past our bivouac spot. As I peered out of my bivouac bag, I noticed it had stopped snowing and dawn had arrived.

Unable to sleep, I woke the others and suggested we might cut our losses and head up the Hörnli Ridge. I was met with little enthusiasm and comments like "I'm too knackered" and "it's too late anyway". I fired up the stove and made a brew, but no response from the others.

That was it; I'd go anyway, on my own. I raced up the first fixed ropes and eventually caught up the trailing teams. On easier ground, I managed to get past several slow-moving parties as I got into my stride. I had to solo the two Moseley slabs below and above the Solvay hut' though pondering how I would reverse them on my return. I'd left my rope with the others to make my ascent as light weight as possible.

Speed of movement allowed me to reach the summit by about noon. I was greeted with a spectacular view in all directions.

Descending, I reached to the top of the upper Moseley slab and managed to persuade two Slovakian lads to let me abseil on their rope. I can't remember much more about the descent, but reached the hut and refuelled on a rösti before heading down. Arriving late at Schwarzsee, I missed the last cable car to Zermatt! The long walk back seemed to take forever.

Tony and Shaun were cooking their evening meal at the camp site and as I arrived, telling them enthusiastically of my achievement, I detected a degree of envy in their welcome and even had to make my own brew.

And so, we come to 2019, when my son Aaron announced that he fancied climbing the Matterhorn. He went on to boast that it was the fifth most dangerous mountain in the world. I was not sure how he arrived at this statistic and I didn't know whether this meant he wanted my expertise as security or whether it was an opportunity to finish me off. Well, why not I thought, the guiding bit I mean, he couldn't afford a guide and perhaps, this would be an opportunity to give Shaun Penny another chance at the mountain. I'd persuaded Shaun to climb the north Ridge of Piz Badile the previous year, so I knew he would be capable of a few more alpine peaks before completely retiring into obscurity.

The plan was to go for the Hörnli Ridge once again. Technically, the easiest route it would give us the best chance of success. I would lead and put Shaun at the back and Aaron in between. There was even a chance that I would remember some of the subtleties of the route, despite the passage of time.

We arrived in Zermatt and stayed in the luxury of the Ice Cube apartments, not too expensive by Zermatt standards. Much to Shaun's dismay, but to Aaron's delight, a MacDonalD's had been opened in the High Street, so burgers and chips would be our staple diet in the valley that week.

We decided that in order to acclimatise, we would make an ascent of the South West Ridge of the Rimpfischhorn. It was on my tick list and the Alpine Guide book I had commented 'It tends to be used by British parties as a training climb' it then goes on to say 'but many people will find the effort too great in this respect'.

Ignoring the latter and favouring the former, we set off to stay the night at Fluhalp Hotel. Starting the following morning at 4.00 am we found the approach was long and the ridge tedious.

Reaching the top of the glacier dome at around 4,000m, the effects of altitude and tiredness were kicking in. Shaun decided to call it a day and wait at the start of the final rock section, we carried on up the loose, boulder-strewn ridge without him, but we weren't moving efficiently.



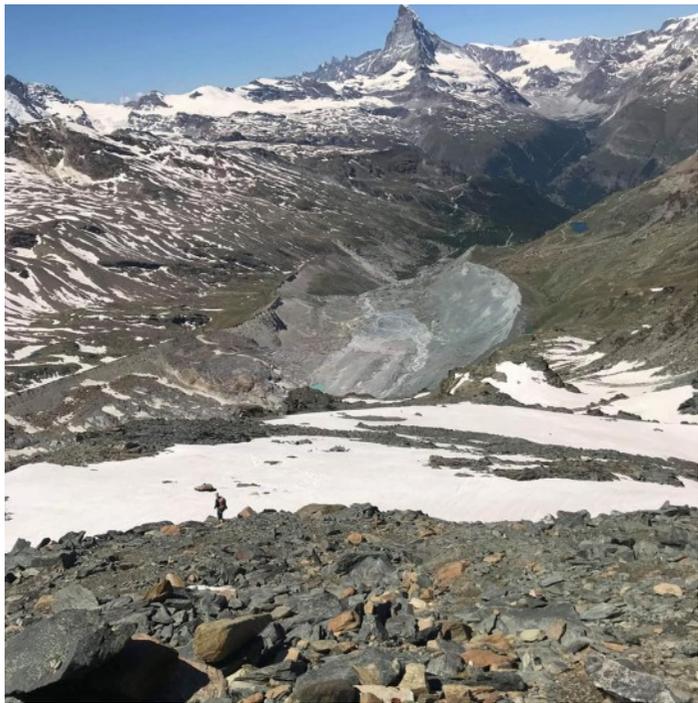
Dawn arrives on the Rimpfischhorn

Shaun by now was just a small dot on the vast glacier dome below, not sure how long he would have to wait, we agreed to turn back and reunite the team.

The guidebook was right, it was too great an effort but at least we had tried to do the British thing!

Over the next few days, the weather forecast was poor, but we managed to complete a traverse of the Breithorn that would see us ready for the Matterhorn.

Aaron's photos of the SW Ridge of Rimpfishhorn



and the traverse of the Breithorn (Valais)

With promise of a good forecast, we set off for the Hörnli Hut. The new state of the art hut is not only architecturally impressive, but also very expensive. Rates for bed, breakfast and evening meals were 150 Euros a night, and unlike the old days, any bivi near the hut was now strictly forbidden.

We met an English team in the hut and with them a couple of English guides. One was Tim...from Nant Peris who, like me, used to climb with Steve Boyden.

Tim familiarised us with the most up to date protocol for climbing the Hörnli Ridge. At 4.00am Zermatt guides and clients leave first, then other nationalities of guides, and finally, the guideless.

There was talk of a penalty for those who disregarded this system, besides the doors were kept locked until the crème de la crème of Zermatt guides were ready.

It was also announced that a young Zermatt guide was going to complete his 25<sup>th</sup> ascent of the mountain the following day and he would leave first and, of course, be allowed to reach the summit before anyone else.

With these rituals firmly in mind, the following morning, we dutifully queued behind the procession of head torches on the 'hogs back' below the first fixed ropes, just above the hut. With a French team in front of us, we realised we were probably the first of the 'guideless' climbers.

We reached the crossing of the first couloirs quickly. but in the darkness, climbed too high and lost touch with the Frenchmen's lights. We were forced to make an unnecessary abseil, losing time, but we could see lights climbing towards the ridge above the third couloir.

Reaching the crest, we met two guided parties, already turning back, their clients exhausted, as they stumbled on a loose rock section. Loose rock is a constant hazard on the route, usually caused by the carelessness of inexperienced climbers above you. At that point, Aaron dislodged a small boulder that brushed against Shaun's leg, despite exaggerated shrieks of pain, he confirmed the injury wasn't too critical, so we carried on.

Traversing left onto the East face for a while, we reached a distinct ledge line, named by some as the 'iron traverse', which sports old iron fixtures sometimes used as running belay points. Slanting left, we reached a sombre tower at 3818, the site of an old hut now replaced with a plaque. With approaching daylight, route finding became much easier. Keeping left, occasionally joining the steepening crest and a couple of pitches of (2) led to a fine arête. Before long, we were at the lower Moseley slab a pleasant 8m grade (2) pitch below the Solvay Hut.

We took a break at the hut, the scene of many rescues. Two Swedish lads we'd met on the Breithorn, were already there and were getting ready to retreat back down the ridge claiming they had been intimidated by the steep fixed rope sections above.

Not to be put off, a re-invigorated Shaun led the upper Moseley Slab pitch with in-situ bolts for protection. Not long afterwards, it became necessary to don crampons as ice rattled down the narrow arête from parties above.

There comes an inevitable point on the Hörnli, where ascending parties meet descending parties and it's usually on the battleground of the fixed ropes!

I told Aaron that if a guide pushed him, he should push him back harder but Aaron being typically courteous, as an Englishman on someone else's mountain, dutifully waited for what seemed to be an eternity, as an endless stream of crampon kickers descended, flailing on the icy ropes.

Shaun once again took the lead using a trusty lark's foot as a makeshift prusik.

With the majority of the fixed ropes behind us, we reached a succession of snowy crests and the final steep snow field. I'd told the others we wouldn't need ice axes on the Hörnli Ridge, but I'd forgotten the increasing sense of exposure above the North Face as you reach the summit. The others constantly reminded me of my negligence.

The view from the narrow summit ridge is spectacular; the isolation of the mountain from its neighbours makes the experience of summiting the Matterhorn quite unique.

The descent back down seemed to take a long time. I led the way and Aaron's fitness, youthful exuberance and increasing confidence placed him at the rear as the anchor man' much to Shaun's approval as his earlier leg injury was giving him jip, or so he told us.

That day we had 16 hours of sunshine, so we could take our time as the tiny spec of the Hörnli Hut below grew larger by each turn and twist of the ridge.

Hörnli Ridge



We decided to rest on our laurels and leave Zermatt for Chamonix where we could relax and get more value for money. But the story doesn't end there. Aaron argued that since we had acclimatised so well, we should tackle Mont Blanc, which myself and Shaun had climbed several times previously, but Aaron hadn't.

A few days later we completed a successful traverse of Mt Blanc before heading home, firmly believing I wouldn't have to climb either the Matterhorn or Mt. Blanc again.

I returned to the Alps this year with my daughter and we climbed a few 4,000m peaks in the Oberland and Valais.

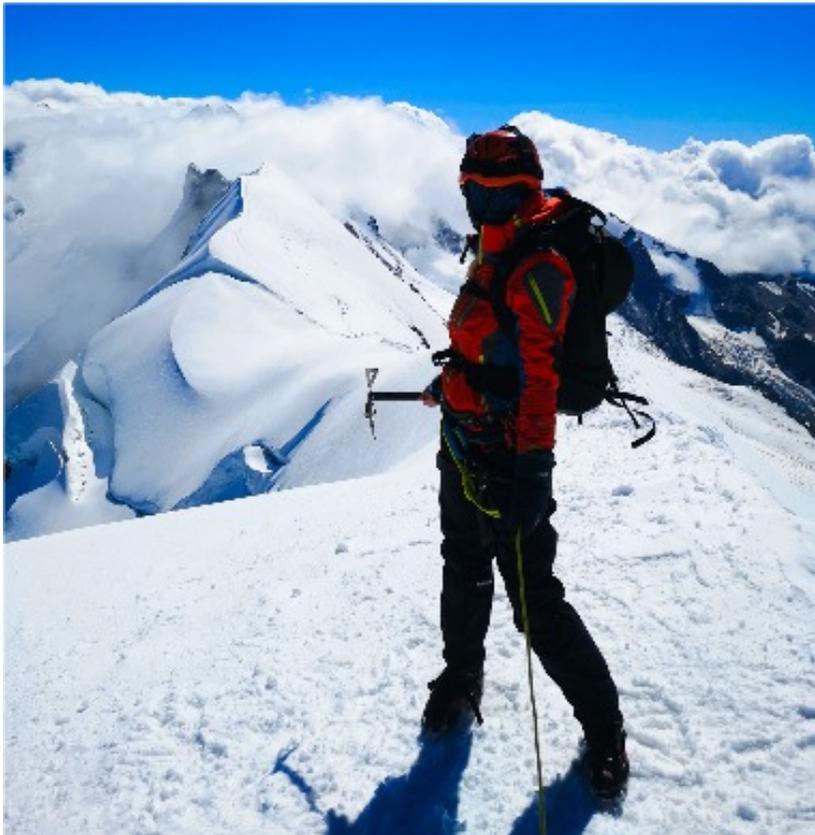
Standing on that same bridge in Zermatt where I stood in the seventies, looking up at the Matterhorn, while her gaze traced the line of the Hörnli Ridge, I heard her quietly muse "maybe, just maybe".

Ged's photographs of the summit snowfield of the Matterhorn with Ober Gablehorn across the glacier



The summit of the Matterhorn (4,775m)





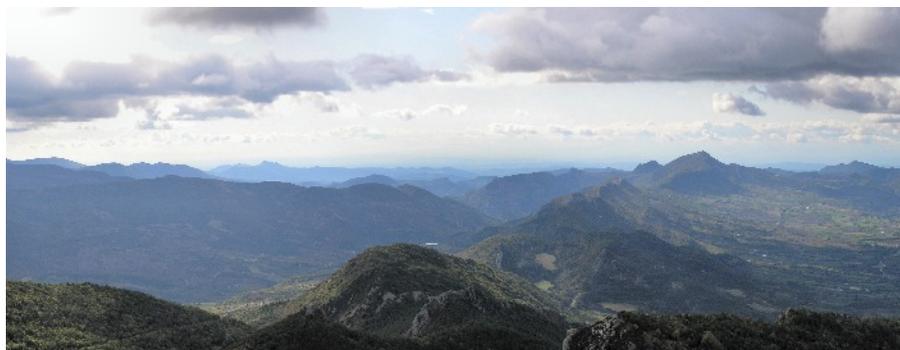
The approach  
to the  
Matterhorn  
and daughter  
Imogen  
on  
Breithorn  
2020

# Drôme Provençale and Haute Provence

Mick  
Borroff

## The pleasures of l'automne

Browsing through the Journal, the area of Drôme Provençale and Haute Provence seems to have received scant attention in print at least. Everyone has heard of Provence, but a mention of Drôme Provençale to most Brits usually gets a puzzled frown. Those members who took up Kevin Brown's offer a decade ago to stay at his delightful French cottage just outside Buis-les-Baronnies will know exactly where I am talking about and are in on the secret.

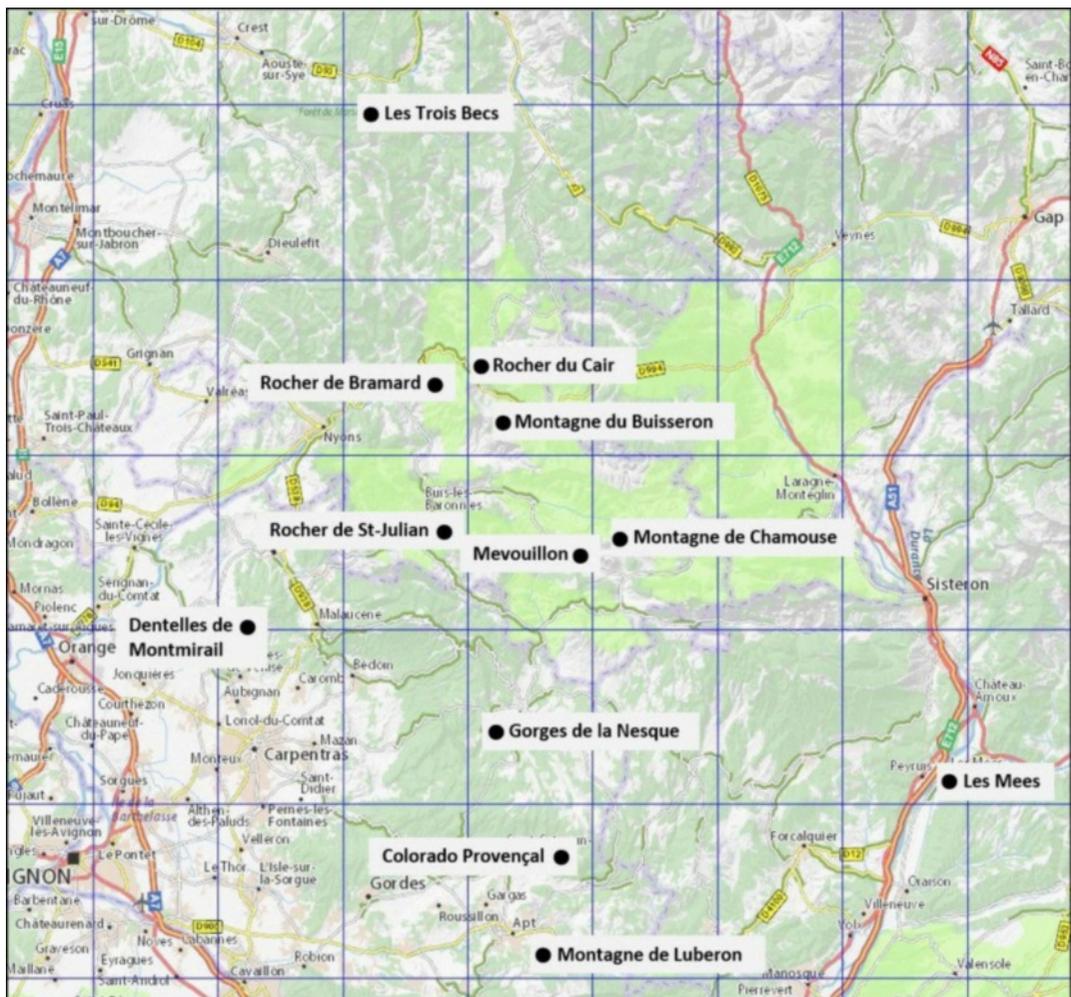


View over Drôme-Provençal from the summit of La Vanige (1390m)

Drôme Provençale is the area from the southern part of Drôme on a level with Crest in the north, and the Baronnies through to Mt Ventoux in the south. The inclusion of Haute Provence in my area of interest further extends this boundary southwards to take in the mountainous northern part of Provence. This region is neatly enclosed by the rivers Rhone to the west and Durance to the east and south, capturing the Vaucluse and the Luberon on the south side of Mont Ventoux. It contains the Baronnies Provençale Regional Natural Park which was created in 2014.

It is a very large and varied area of some 2500 square miles, roughly three-times as big as the Yorkshire Dales NP and a world away from the Riviera beaches and tourist traps to the south. Limestone mountains up to just shy of 2000m, long ridges, deep gorges cloaked in beech and oak woods and the *garrigue* (open, shrubby, spiny and aromatic vegetation) have a richly diverse flora and fauna. Added to this are a sprinkling of sleepy ancient mountain villages, excellent wines and local cuisine, and a rich cultural heritage in the unspoilt and sparsely inhabited pre-Alps.

Relatively little visited compared to many better-known parts of France, it offers a wealth of superb mountain walks, scrambles, sport climbs, via ferrata and canyoning par excellence.



Tempted by Kevin's offer and his enthusiastic description of its potential, Hilary and I first visited the small market town of Buis-les-Baronnies, tucked away in the Ouvèze valley, in the autumn of 2009 and, after a great week's walking, have returned numerous times to the wider region, mostly in the autumn after the summer heat has dissipated, including bailing out from a washed-out snowshoeing trip in Morzine one Christmas!

We were originally intending to visit the area in June 2020 for a change, on the way to the Pyrenees meet, but coronavirus put paid to that, so this article is a retrospective review *en automne*. Autumn comes much later to the south of France than the UK, so October and November is actually a great time to be in this area to enjoy the rich colours and peaceful walking in the limestone hills in what is often T-shirt and shorts weather – think of being in the Lakes on a nice sunny September day without the crowds.



The yellow-leaved willows lining the riverbanks glow (you might even see a beaver) and the still-retained foliage in the beech and oak woods contrast with the colours in the *garrigue*-covered rocky slopes and surprising grassy summer pastures, recently abandoned by sheep and cows.

Less atmospheric haze means better clarity of distant views to the snow-dusted alpine peaks to the east. It is off-season and the hills are amazingly quiet, even at weekends. Choosing a selection of walks for this article from the many we have done over the years has not been easy and those that follow are in no particular order of merit and simply showcase some typical examples of what is available.

### Autumn colours the garrigue

One must-do walk/scramble is the ascent of the Rocher du Cair from the village of Rémuzat, along the l'Eygues river gorges, east of Nyons. Home to a large colony of griffon vultures which roost on the cliffs overnight, this walk gets literally eyeball-to-eyeball with these flying ironing-boards with their 2.5 metre wingspan.

There are several routes of ascent, the most interesting being an easy scramble that starts from the riverbank, west of the village which has a couple of aided sections and leads directly to the summit.



### Rocher du Cair and the Griffon vulture colony



Aided section on the ascent of  
Rocher du Cair

If you time your arrival mid-morning to coincide with their departure from the roost, you can expect to see upwards of twenty-five vultures riding the thermals right in front of your eyes - absolutely unforgettable!

After you finish pretending you are David Attenborough, the descent is along the ridge to the north to a col and back down a traversing path through the *garrigue*.



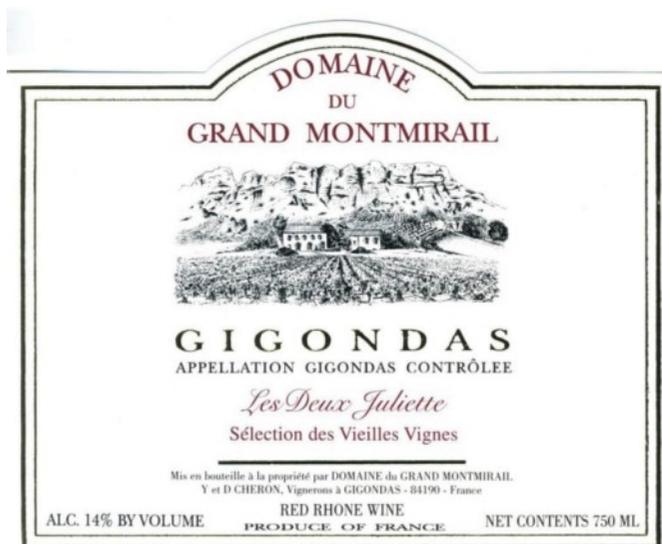
A second fine walk from the village explores the peak of Les Aiguilles (1312m) and the Montagne de Gravières ridge to the east, the village square with its pollarded sycamores is ideal for sitting outside the bar for a post-walk beer.

### Gorges de la Nesque

Over on the Vaucluse Plateau, near the unspoilt village of Moneieux near Sault, the Gorges de la Nesque provides another great walk descending to the base of the 400m high cliffs of the Rocher du Cire and the tiny twelfth century Romanesque Chapelle St-Michel, built into a grotto under an overhang.

### Dentelles de Montmirail

From the Latin *mons mirabilis*, wonder mountains, these jagged peaks look down over expansive vineyards and feature on the labels of some of the very drinkable red wines such as those from Gigondas, one of the famous Côte de Rhone Villages.



The ascent of the pinnacled Dentelle de Sarrasines from the Col de Cayron and then the traverse below the Grand Montmirail makes an excellent excursion.

The route on the former involves easy scrambling to reach the highpoint of the Rocher du Turc (627m) as part of a circuit with fine views to Mont Ventoux.

Dentelles de Sarrasine from Gigondas

## Colorado Provençal



The fascinating walk round the abandoned ochre quarries known as Colorado Provençal, at Rustrel near Apt in the Luberon, is a complete contrast to anything else here.

The size of the car park is testimony to its popularity in summer, but there are few visitors in the autumn months.



It is not actually a gorge but is named after the varied colours of the iron oxide deposits in the ochre sands.

These harmonise delightfully with the autumn colours of the surrounding foliage.

The walk leads into and around, strange desert-like scenery with every shade of cream to yellow, orange to deep red, in the old quarry faces with pinnacles and other eroded rock formations.

Worked manually by pick and shovel between 1871 and 1991 to produce a range of pigments, but the ochre industry declined after the 1930s. There is plenty of industrial archaeology still to be seen and a variety of routes are possible around the unusual site - another one for your tick list - just don't forget your camera!



### **Rocher de St-Julian**

Overlooking Buis-les-Baronnies, the dramatic shark's fin of limestone draws the eye. In addition to a host of sport climbs and a narrow VS ridge traverse (check out the YouTube videos), there are four recent via ferrata of different grades within easy walking distance of the town centre. A fine circular walk can be made around the Rocher across *garrigue*-covered terrain to the rocky and treed Serre Long ridge.

### **Mourre Nègre - Montagne du Luberon**

Just to the south of Apt, the ascent of the wooded north flank of Mourre Nègre (1125m) from the small village of Auribeau, takes you to the highest point of the Grand Luberon and gives a pleasant round with expansive views from the Alps to the Mediterranean. There are several valleys to choose from in planning the ascent and descent route.

### **Montagne du Buisseron**

This route begins in the lovely 12<sup>th</sup> century *village perché* of Poët-Sigillat, situated some 6 km south of Remuzat. This is one of the four "Poët"s of Drôme whose Latin toponymy means podium: promontory. The hilltop village was originally fortified and some of its ramparts are still intact. This hike climbs up through the *garrigue* and traverses the Montagne du Buisseron to arrive at the Col d'Ambonne (1269m) with great views over the Oule valley, then drops back down to the village.



Autumnal beech woods below Montagne de Buisseron



Descending from Col d'Ambonne to Le Poët-Sigillat

## Rocher de Bramard

This modest circuit, which is watched over by the old man of the mountain, begins in Sahune, some 12km northeast of Nyons and takes in a wide variety of habitats as you pass orchards, then climb up *garrigue*-covered slopes, passing black marnes on the way to the summit of the Rocher de Bramard (936m) with its fabulous views across to the Gorges de Saint-May and possible sight of vultures. The scenery changes again as you descend, passing *marne* or marl slopes, grey coloured lime-rich mud or mudstone which contains variable amounts of clays and silt. These unusual bare sedimentary deposits are found in many parts of Drome-Provençale.



Enigmatic profile of the Rocher de Bramard.jpg

## Rochers des Mées

The Pénitents are a kilometre-long row of eroded conical pinnacles and blades of well-cemented conglomerate up to 100 metres high - their alignment is said to resemble a procession of monks in their hooded robes - hence their name. They are located in the Durance valley in the east of our area, to the southeast of the Montagne de Lure. From Les Mées, a path climbs up through the *garrigue* to a long, wooded ridge which eventually leads down to the eastern end of the pinnacles. One can then explore the rocks from the top side before descending to the path at their feet which traverses back to the village.



Les Pénitents, Rocher des Mées.

## Montagne de Chamouse

Some 12 km north of Sédéron, this splendid ridge walk begins in the tiny village of Izon-la-Bruisse, climbing west up through beech woods to the chalet at Col d'Izon and up the grassy mountain pastures to the ridge which is followed to the Chamouse summit (1532m). Outstanding views of the entire South-East range from the Meige, Oisans, Vercors, Dévoluy, to Mont Ventoux and the Montagne de Lure and accompany you as you continue along the crest. The descent passes more areas of *marne* and *garrigue*.



Bare grey marne slopes near Izon-la-Bruisse



A view to the Alps from Montagne de Chamouse.

## Montagnes de Croc and de Bouvrège

Mévouillon (Gresse) is a small village 7km northwest of Sédéron and the start of another varied walk. This climbs to the site of the Fort de Mévouillon on the top of a flat-topped hill, but there is remarkably little left to see apart from the cistern, as it was razed literally to the ground on the orders of Richelieu in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Watched by the resident, red-billed chough colony, a descent to the Col de Rouisse then heralds a long entertaining scramble along the rocky Bouvrège-Croc ridge, followed by the customary descent through the autumn colours of the *garrigue*.

## Les Trois Becs traverse

In the north of Drôme Provençale near Bourdeaux, Les Trois Becs are a prominent trio of limestone summits visible from afar. They stand on the rim of the Saou massif and its deep syncline.

The peaks can be traversed starting at a car park at the Col de la Chaudière and the triple summits of Le Veyrou (1587m), Le Signal (1559m) and La Roche Courbe (1545m) give a fine high-level outing with superb views and full of interest. The traverse continues along a ridge to the Pas de la Motte, where a descent is made through fine beechwoods complete with kettle-shaped *charbonnier's* (charcoal burners) ovens in the deep forest, finally connecting with the GR9.



These dozen walks represent a small selection of what is available and would be thronged if they were in the UK. The author is happy to provide anyone with GPX tracks of these routes and many others to inform their future visits to this lovely region.

Charbonnier's oven in the beechwoods



La Roche Courbe

Le Veyrou



## Further Reading

Surprisingly, there is remarkably little published in English on mountain walking in this area.

- Michael Peyron. *Provence Mountains and Landscapes: Mountain Walking and Touring Guide*. West Col 1998. This describes a good number of interesting outings both in Drôme Provençale and south across Provence generally.
- Thomas Rettstatt. *Provence*. 2nd Ed. Rother, 2010. This guide keeps to the south of Mt Ventoux missing out Drôme Provençale all together, but does have 22 walks in the Vaucluse, the Luberon and Montagne de Lure.
- Janette Norton. *Walking in Provence - West*. guidebook Cicerone Press, 2014. This includes 33 walks in Drôme Provençale and the Vaucluse (and eight in the Var to the SE).

All three are worth having, supplemented by some of the French guidebooks below:

- Federation Francaise de la Randonnée Pedestre. Multi-volume TopoGuides series. A large set of walking guides to all of France: well-illustrated with snappy descriptions and actual IGN 25k or 50k mapping. At least five guides contain walks in this wider area and together present some 200 graded routes to choose from! Widely available locally.
- François Ribaud. *Randonnées en Drôme Provençale*. Glenat 2012. Twenty-seven well-chosen walks in the Baronnies to the Dentelle de Montmirail with good photos to tempt you.

The next three Édisud guides are a bit long in the tooth and are out of print, but used copies are obtainable on-line. Together they cover a series of varied walks across the area with sketch maps based on IGN 25k mapping, a few photos, and have a good number of longer day hikes included.

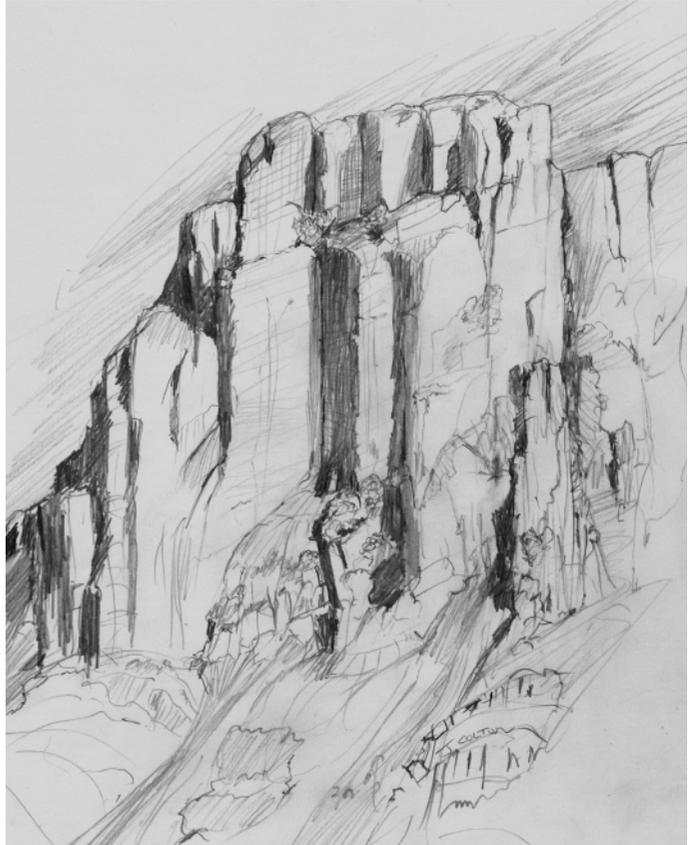
- Chantal Chivas and René Lombardi. *Randonnées Pédestres dans les Monts de Vaucluse*. Édisud, 1994. 40 walks.
- Christian Mingasson and François Isler. *Randonnées Pédestres dans la Drôme Provençale*. Édisud, 1997. 45 walks.
- Pierre Giffon. *Randonnées Pédestres dans le Luberon*. Édisud, 2006. 35 walks.

Maps - you need look no further than the excellent French IGN 1:25k mapping. One thing that you should know is that IGN have been updating the TOP25 series to make them clearer when digitised, but some of these changes appear not to be always for the better. You need to be aware that some paths have been removed from the maps (usually 'black-lined' paths, even though the paths exist on the ground and are signposted and even featured in local Tourist Office walks!) and some features have been removed (e.g. ruins) and various place names have been changed i.e. 'corrected'. This causes some differences between the latest maps and the historical guidebooks above which you may need to resolve on the ground.

# Climbing The Gates

John  
Colton

John remembers another wet climb in North Wales in his youth and sketched this image giving indications of the artist he was to become.



I just had to climb the Gates; you mountaineers will understand.

They weren't even locked, these gates. I wasn't trying to get in, or over, neither would I describe it so, but an astute person might challenge my denial, saying, "Yes, the Gates were definitely a portal and you were trying to get in; to join the chosen few." Enough of that.

I think the name came off a bus destination board like some of the Beatles song titles. This one was spotted in Chester by Joe Brown and Don Whillans, returning home to Manchester after their first ascent in 1951. Hence the name Cemetery Gates.

We started the climb about 8:30 am. Dennis Kemp was holding my rope. About our age in enthusiasm but almost twice in years, he was a sociable and affable free spirit who worked for Kodak, in what capacity we never found out. They didn't seem to keep much of an eye on him.

You can see from my drawing that the crag is steep and columnar; to keep the tone of the piece, like a lot of giant gravestones stacked together. The Gates goes up just left of the sunlit nose in the middle of the crag, right of the clean-cut 120ft Cenotaph Corner.

I'd just begun the crux, second pitch when a peal of thunder reverberated round the mountains. The haze was hiding a monster cumulo-nimbus.

From 40ft above Dennis, on his perch by a tree, I had a brief conversation maintaining that I thought I could get up the hard pitch before it got wet. Maybe the cloud was not yet overhead?

It was steep, almost overhanging but had good sharp holds, if a little small and brittle, but plenty of them. The rain started and the next crash was close to the flash, but I flew up there, resting only where the indeterminate crack widens enough to slot a knee in and shake both arms out at the same time. When I got to the little sloping belay ledge it was catching the now torrential, but still vertically falling, rain. I had put three points of protection in on the whole pitch; urgency and fear dictating style.

Above Llanberis, there are other climbs up there with names on the same theme; Cenotaph Corner, Epitaph and the Crucifix. The crag itself is called Dinas y Gromlech, roughly translated as Castle of the Burial Chamber.

Anyway, the Gates or Cemetery Gates to be correct, graded extremely severe and almost 200ft, was my goal. The name seemed apt that Sunday morning of a summer in the late sixties. No significance there either, it was just a Sunday. Saturday, I'd been practising on something a bit less intimidating and getting in a suitable frame of mind. The crags were dry and the weather was good, if a bit hazy and we were at the Cromlech (modern spelling) lay-by early. I didn't want an audience.

The lightning was so frequent that you couldn't work out which noise belonged to which flash, as if that mattered. By now the water was in my climbing shoes, the last dry item, but I had other things and 270 degrees of space in front to keep me occupied.

Dennis started up, unseen as my perch overhung the bottom of the pitch.

The tension in the rope guided my taking it in.

Then the carabiners started singing to me. Dennis shouted something up and a hot, violent draught lifted me up against my belay fastenings and the crag lit up in a blinding, incandescent purple and white flash.

However, the smell was not unpleasant, and I still had hold of the ropes, but couldn't see or hear for a while as the after image and blast burned through my head.



When he got to me, Dennis was quite excited, reckoning that the strike had gone up or down the Corner about 60ft away.

Again, I said that I thought I could get up the last, slightly easier pitch and it doesn't strike twice in the same place, does it?

Off I went, up 60ft to the sodden jungle above. The hardest bit was fortunately on the arête and out of the torrents rushing down on either side.

There was still no wind and this powerful, malevolent cloud just sat over the crag and hillside, trying to spear Dennis and I with thousands of volts as we made our haste to get away.

This involved passing close to the tip of our own giant 'conductor'. Lightning was hitting other pinnacles of rock quite close by. Haloes appeared round the summit of the Cromlech itself as we started running down the rocky slope. Cascades of water were loosening the boulders and they went bounding past us. The whole scree slope crashed down towards the road.

We got into Wendy's just as it opened. A yawning, laconic Harris made some comment about us coming into his cafe in such a state and,

"Had we been in the Padarn, er, Lake?"

A delta of water meandered slowly cross the floor from where Dennis and I sat with our large hot mugs of tea, not saying much at all, thunder still muttering distantly.



*Described variously as one of the finest 50m pitches in Wales, E1 and no pushover and a must for anyone bagging classic rock climbs, it is actually two pitches with a good ledge between them.*

*The first pitch is 35 metres, taking climbers up to Girdle Ledge with, at 18 metres, a small resting ledge.*

*This is followed by another 15 metres up a crack and then round an arête.*

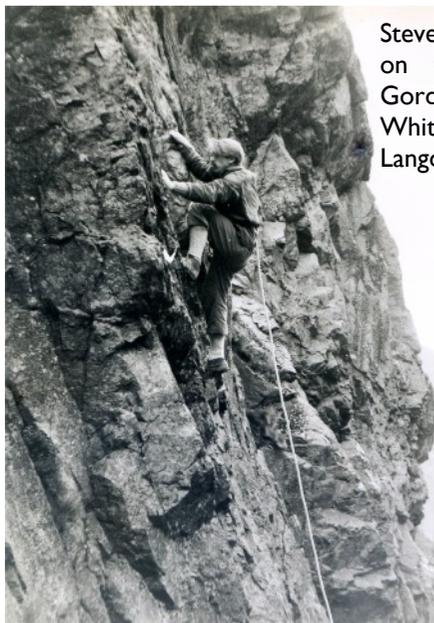
*Challenging enough without a lightning storm for company!*

Ed.

# All Our Yesterdays

Ray Harben

Ray has been delving into his personal archives and come up with some names from the past. Richard Gowing is of course still with us.



Steve Goulden  
on  
Gordian Knot,  
White Ghyll  
Langdale



Richard  
Gowing  
on  
Bidean  
Namh  
Bian



Simon Goodwin in NC Gully on  
Stob Coire nan Lochan Glencoe



Tony Reynolds and David Smith  
in the Lakes on a February meet

# Not Exactly Russian Pennine Way

Michael  
Smith

*The Pennine Way in 2020 backpacked in two halves, where Richard Smith drags his father along for the walk. First in late July, from Edale to Bowes in eight days with an extension on to Barnard Castle. Then from Bowes to Kirk Yetholm in another eight days. Thirteen full days and three half days. They were not exactly rushin'*

Our plans for a summer trip to Russia's Kamchatka as a Club party of ten, camping and walking up four volcanoes, was abandoned as Covid-19 increased health risks and closed down travel. Alternative opportunities for activities were few, given the then limitations on transport and shared accommodation. Then Richard, already having leave booked, suggested tackling the Pennine Way, camping where we could and taking basic food, but supplementing it with some meals when we passed through towns. It sounded like a good idea but we needed to work round a family commitment, hence splitting the route into two sections. That break reduced the loads a little.

The supplies carried were porridge and dehydrated meals packets into which we just poured boiled water, plus flapjack, chocolate and biscuit bars, and some fruit. These were supplemented by four café's meals. We each had a gas stove and small kettle to boil water, a large mug, a spork and an unused small bowl. An AquaPur water filter or Steritabs were used to treat water that was not boiled.

We took small one-person fly-sheeted tents with groundsheet protectors and lightweight (10°C) sleeping bags and inflatable mattresses. Three of the days were wet – very wet and windy for two of them. Of the 14 nights out: one was passed in a 'cave' (actually under a snug-fitting walled-in overhang on Laddow Rocks crag, above Crowden), one in a B&B to dry out, one in a simple bunkhouse, one in David Handley's garage, one in a filthy corrugated iron shed/barn, two on small campsites, one in a bothy and six camping wild up to an altitude of 725m (2,380ft). Youth Hostels were all closed to individual bookings, on account of the infection risk.

Apart from the midges, the only real problem with camping was that Michael's self-inflating mattress sprung a leak, resulting in three little-padded nights, before a shop was reached with just one foam mattress. Incompressible, the new mat took up half the space in his rucksack.

Camping had the big advantage of flexibility: suitable secluded sites with an adequate water supply can be found along much of the route within an hour or two and generally an earlier start can be made, compared to pre-booked accommodation.

One GPS and two smartphones were used for navigation, weather forecasts and booking ahead where required. One smartphone had a downloaded GPS track of the Way. Two compasses were carried as a backup, but not used.

Spare clothing was minimal: socks, thin trousers, baselayer top and a thin shirt. Our packs were 14-17kg (30-37lbs) and we covered an average of 30km (18½ miles) a day.

The first highlight of the venture occurred as we were driving towards Edale and the start of the Way. We noticed a large bird soaring above Ladybower. Pulling into the Ladybower Inn car park we saw it was the bearded vulture which had been hanging around the Derwent valley for a few weeks. It descended and circled around for a while, about 100m above us. A month on and it is still around, but now near Crowden on the Woodhead Pass.



After the obligatory snap by the pub in Edale, recording our start, Helen Smith walked with us to Sandy Hill by Kinder Downfall before breaking off to do a round of the three Kinder trig points for the YRC's (veggie) non-meet reported elsewhere in this issue. Being on familiar turf, we made good time over the Snake Pass and Bleaklow only to be faced with an 'essential works' diversion around the reservoir to reach Crowden on the Woodhead Pass and prepare our evening meal. Another couple of miles, then a clamber up to the walled-in overhang bivvy on Laddow Rocks and we had reached our bed for the night.

An early start ensured a dewy wetting to the knees over Black Hill before a second breakfast bacon butty and cuppa from the burger van on the A635. Refreshed and now on gentler slopes the pace was brisker over Marsden's Standedge, the M62, Blackstone Edge and by the reservoirs above Todmorden in steady rain.

Camp was made in the shelter of small wood, a kilometre short of Stoodley Pike monument.

That day's eleven hours contributed four trig points to the Club's non-meet's total.

Another was added late the next day with a small diversion to the Little Wolf Stones.



Camp near Stoodley Pike

But before that, above Hebden Bridge, we meet the three runners of Damian Hall's party, running the Way north to south in just 2 days 13½ hours, then the Haworth tourists at Top Withens. A storm front is forecast for the early morning, so we booked into the small Squirrel Wood bunkhouse, near Cowling, for a hot shower and a planned later start after three 20+ mile days. The site proved highly sociable, probably on account of the supply of homebrew.

After the welcome change of a fried breakfast, a late morning start took us across fields and lower moors to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal leading us to Gargrave. A first here was the requirement to wear infection-reducing face masks on entering a shop.

Another night of bad weather was due but David Handley and Liz came to our rescue, not only with accommodation in their garden studio, but showers and highly civilised wine and nibbles.

These standards are not the norm for Pennine Way backpackers.

Such luxury allowed a 7am start, east of the Aire up to Malham.



Chez David and Liz

This being a Sunday, Richard's fiancée, Fliss Roberts, was able to join us there and over the Cove to Tarn House before returning via Gordale and Janet's Foss.

We continued over Fountain's Fell, where we later discovered Ged Campion was cave digging on the hillside above us, and Pen-y-Ghent. Overnight rainstorms in prospect required careful scrutiny of the map contours to identify a suitable moorland wild camp site on Birkwith Moor rather than descending to Horton-in-Ribblesdale. At over 37km this was one of the longer days.

Searching the online map for potential sheltered campsites after Pen-y-Ghent ahead of a stormy night



An 8am break between showers saw us off on probably the most hazardous section – Cam Fell. The logging lorries hurtling along the narrow track to collect loads in Cam Woodlands gave no quarter, and at one point, ditches meant Michael could not step far from the track's ruts and his rucksack was brushed by the trailer. This peril fails to make it into any guide to the Way. Persistent rain reduced enjoyment levels below acceptable and, after four hours and 19km, a retreat was made to a Hawes café for a long lunch before a B&B was found.



Great Shunner Fell's windy ascent helped to work off the fried breakfast before winding through upper Swaledale and the long high moor to Tan Hill for the next night's camp.

It would have been churlish not to nip in for a socially distanced two metres away from the others and order a drink by summoning a waitress by a Bluetooth connected button.

Tan Hill



Deepdle's Nabb Bridge (above) with Helen, Fiona and Bailey the cockapoo and on fallen trunk

The last day of this first section of the Way was accompanied by hobbies on the boggy Sleightolme Moor and later by Helen and Fiona Smith, who had come out from Bowes with a picnic to meet us. Here Richard rescued a duck from being stuck under a cattle grid – another first.

Collecting their returnees not being enough exercise for Fiona and Helen, Richard drove to Barnard Castle while the others crossed the A66 in a cutting, fought a way up the overgrown path on the far side. Then crossed fields to Nabb Bridge and followed Deep Dale east into Barnard Castle.



High Force



Family duties completed, six days later, we resumed the Pennine Way from Bowes.

Seeing lapwings, buzzards and a black grouse from fields before crossing Cotherstone Moor, using the Way's Bowes Loop.

Helen returns on the main Pennine Way, path while we cross the ridges towards Middleton-in-Teesdale and turn up Teesdale passing Low and High Forces.

Below Cronkley Scar, still with the Tees, we passed Widdy Bank Farm in deteriorating weather and soon found shelter for the night in a filthy corrugated iron barn. Pallets made a sleeping platform. A rabbit in the barn pushed its head between two corner uprights and pretended not to be there. After an hour, it decided to make a break for it and sprinted along one side of the barn, knocked over a kettle and after two more sides found an exit hole. A noisy, stormy night but at least we kept dry.

The next day was packed with topographical highlights: Falcon Clints, Cauldron Snout and High Cup Nick, but rain of fluctuating intensity and walking in thick cloud make it a wet trudge. We are at Dufton by noon and call a halt there to camp in the caravan site.

#### Falcon Clints



Cross Fell was the next day's highpoint, indeed England's highest top outside the Lake District, gave a good day for its extensive views.

#### Cross Fell



An oddity on the way up was a tadpole wriggling in a puddle by Knock Old Man on Green Fell at 792m. That was followed by the Great Dun Fell radome. The descent included a break at Greg's Bothy then the dull track down to Garrigill where a female hen harrier and a black grouse were seen. The South Tyne was followed downstream, almost to Alston where a wooded bank provided a camping spot with nearby spring.

Beyond Alston, first an old railway trackbed by the river then a moorland track took us over the very boggy Blenkinsopp Common to Greenhead's small campsite by Thirwall Castle on Hadrian's Wall. An easier day and the end of the truly Pennine part of the Way.

The rest is almost entirely in Northumberland with a few bits of Scotland.

The campsite owner was self-isolating, so not in attendance. Bookings were made by phone and there was an honesty box on the loo cistern in the bijou facilities – or rather facility. It was a single lean-to room, two paces by one. Enter and take a small step and you were by the hand-basin. Another shuffle forwards and about turn and you were position to use the loo. Shuffle forwards, undress, open the door to put your clothes outside and you were ready to use the over-the-basin shower which also served to hose down the loo. Compact indeed.

Being Saturday, Fliss again joined us, bringing fresh sandwiches and fruit as a welcome change for lunch. We met her on Hadrian's wall above Haltwhistle and she walked with us to Hotbank Crag, before returning parallel to the wall. We turned north there, soon to pass through the southeastern end of Kielder Forest.

Emerging from the trees, we descended to Warks Burn and up a steep bank to Hrneystead farm. Here, notices directed us to an outhouse with comfortable chairs, the makings of hot drinks and biscuits with an opportunity to leave a donation. Such kindness to strangers is most welcome.



Hadrian's Wall

In such farmland camping is problematic and a bunkhouse marked on the map was closed. We pressed on beyond Shitlington Crag to the moorland looking down on Bellingham. After some casting around, we found acceptable tent placements by a trickle of clean water. After a cold night we went into Bellingham and joined the early cyclists having a second breakfast in a café.



A few luxuries were bought at the Coop before heading north over field, then moorland and finally Kielder Forest to reach the A68 at Byrness. Forestry works beyond here had chewed up the track towards Spithope bothy.

Camp above Birkwith

We shared this accommodation with the resident mouse, supplementing our rations from the surrounding raspberry canes. Evening sunshine allows us to dry our boots and tents while solar re-charging our phones.

Deer, goats, buzzards and a fox are seen the next and penultimate day. At the col at the head of the Spithope valley we joined the Scottish border. From here, we are accompanied by the sound of occasional firing from the artillery ranges to the east, as the route generally follows the ridge over increasingly high tops. Lamb Hill bothy provided a lunch spot before Windy Gyle and slopes of The Cheviot. We camp among peat hags by the headwaters of College Burn above Hen Hole at 725m (2379 ft).

The overnight rain gave only a poor chance to see the Perseids meteor shower and continued through breakfast time delaying our walk up The Cheviot and back.

The bothy



Paving made this easier and Michael recalled a wet 1980 meet when members gave up wading through the morass and formed a ring round the top, several metres from the trig point. Then with the rucksacks it was down the ridge to the College Valley refuge hut for an early lunch and a chance to dry the tents a little. The ridge continued over The Schil.

At Black Hag, Richard went on to clouded White Law while Michael, having been over that a couple of times, followed Halter Burn down into Kirk Yetholm.

Steady rain had set in so it was a soaked pair who paddled into The Border pub to claim our fee drink and a couple more.

A well worthwhile couple of weeks linking together several familiar areas, though we would rather have been in Russia.

# Fifteen Years of Social Meets

Paul Dover

In May 2005, the meet was at Hafod Hotel, Devil's Bridge Cwmystwyth. This was the first Ladies Meet, as they were then called, that Anne and I attended. Meets were Friday–Sunday and typically in an hotel along with a number of members who brought their tents or caravans to a nearby site. Most met together for the organised walks and all enjoyed a dinner on the Saturday evening. That meet was memorable for a number of personal reasons – the route of the Saturday walk took us around Pwllpeiran, an Experimental Husbandry Farm and part of the organisation I worked in for 35 years. From 1990 its objectives changed from increasing the amount and quality of production to re-establishing the natural environment. On this walk, this change was very evident. Noticeable, was the considerable tree planting and the introduction of cattle grazing the hill pastures similar to the introduction on Ingleborough and in Ennerdale.

In the evening, after an enjoyable dinner, many of us retired to the hotel lounge together with a piano. Unique among all the hotels used in this period. On the Sunday morning, several of us explored the ravine adjacent to the hotel then, on the way home we visited the then fairly recently opened and nearby Red Kite centre.

2006 was in Dumfries and Galloway and 2007 at the Rambler Inn, Edale. By the time Anne and I tried to book the Rambler Inn it was full, so we stayed in a nearby B&B. The caravan contingent was at a site in Hope. We had good numbers in those days.

Martyn, our organiser, planned Saturday's walk up the start of the Pennine Way up Grindsbrook Clough and over Kinder Scout to Kinder Downfall. Sub groups added variations to the routes.

The one we followed is featured in the attached photographs – it must have been a dry spring as the peat was comparatively 'load-bearing' and even dry enough for sitting on for a midmorning break. The photo gives an indication of the depth of the peat and the extent of the erosion which was clearly evident. The views from Kinder Downfall and all along the ridge to Noe Stool and Edale rocks were stunning.



The downhill return was via Jacob's ladder to Upper Booth where welcome beverages were enjoyed.

On Sunday four couples completed a contrasting walk from Mam Tor along the ridge to Lose Hill and back via Castleton, the Limestone Way and Windy Knoll.

The clothing being worn indicated this was a cooler day, but the limestone terrain provided an interesting contrast to the gritstone and peat.



In spring / early summer as was usual, the 2008 gathering was based at Peveril of the Peak Hotel, Dovedale. This meet which attracted 39 members, including partners and guests most of whom gathered at the hotel or at nearby caravan sites in time for dinner on Friday. The photo provides reminders of this very well supported meet.



The Saturday walk went down Lin Dale and up the ever interesting and impressive Dovedale. At Hall Dale we climbed up the west side towards Stanshope and descended to Milldale for lunch.

The return was down the valley to Hall Dale then a climb up the east side and along the ridge before descending to Lin Dale. Here the party split, most returning to the hotel, but those needing a further challenge of a climb, summited Thorpe Cloud before returning to the hotel.

2009 was at the White Waters Hotel, Llangollen, an area new to many of the 32 members, wives and guests. Unfortunately, Anne was feeling unwell when we arrived on Friday and so I went for a solo walk from Rhewl over Llantysilio Mountain via Moel y Gamelin and Moel Morfydd. On the way took a photo of the magnificent steamer at Berwyn, a preserved railway station on the former Ruabon to Barmouth Line.

On Saturday, most of the group walked to Worlds End and back via the Offa's Dyke path, Anne and I toured the historic transport links in the area. The main focus was the Telford's Pont Cysyllte Aqueduct which I had the pleasure of walking across and returning on a barge. This gave real perspective of the height above the valley floor and the almost paper-thin clearance with the side of the 'trough'! Dinner of course followed.



Sunday saw a small group meet at the NT's Chirk Castle where the caravanning members were pitched. Thankfully, Anne was feeling better and after a welcome coffee, we enjoyed a group walk round the gardens admiring the many colourful shrubs in full bloom.

May 2010 we were at Hackness Grange Scarborough and as we now had some lady members, the meets became known as social meets. This was an area we knew well during our ten years living near Malton. Anne and I did a 'trial run' based on the Wrea Head hotel Scalby, whose quote I had accepted for the meet and we tried out Alan Linford's suggested walks.

Shortly before the due date, the Wrea Head Hotel discovered they had double booked and offered us Hackness Grange as an alternative. As we booked in, it became apparent that we needed one more room than they had available and one couple had to stay at Wrea Head but with dinner at Hackness. Saturday's walk started from Cloughton on a glorious sunny morning with light winds, perfect for a cliff top walk. The return was along the disused Redcar to Scarborough railway track.

Sunday's walk was a real contrast, being through a forest and over hill grassland to Langdale Rigg end. (See photos page 199)

June 2011 staying at the Long Mynd Hotel Church Stretton, the group walked in glorious sunshine via Little Stretton and then up Ashes Hollow with a lunch stop during which Roger read from Shropshire Lad en route to Pole Bank. The summit provided magnificent views over the surrounding area. Dinner as usual was a hubbub of conversation allowing the walkers and other couples to exchange experiences.

Sunday's weather was cloudy and wet, but undaunted, we enjoyed a walk on Willstone Hill and took advantage of sheltering in a barn for lunch.



May 2012 it was Simonstone Hall Hotel, Hawes - Keen to find a venue with up to 20 rooms in the Yorkshire Dales, Alan Linford and I with Anne and Angie toured possible venues in Swaledale and Wensleydale.

Simonstone was one of the last possibilities, but we expected it to be too expensive as it is 'rather grand' but the manager happily agreed an acceptable deal for our exclusive use for a 3 night booking. We were again fortunate with fine, mostly sunny days on this meet.



In May 2013 we were in the Lakes at Merewood Country House Hotel, Ambleside and again received an acceptable quote for an exclusive three night DBB meet.

In 2014 we were back at Simonstone Hall Hotel, Hawes and attracted considerably fewer couples. The new management provided a much reduced level of service. Most joined our first walk from the hotel on a cloudy but reasonably dry day. The outbound walk was via Hawes and Burtersett to Burtersett High Pasture and to the Roman Road. The return route was down the Roman Road to Bainbridge then along paths on the north side of the river to the hotel.

Day two was spent visiting Middleham Castle and Bolton Castle.

2015 was another repeat, back to Merewood Country House Hotel.

The hotel had honoured our eighteen-room booking up to one month prior to the meet, although only seven had confirmed bookings and attended. One more couple booked later.

At this point, Alan Linford summarised the history of the Social Meets from long before my membership. We had been meeting midweek to take advantage of the deals available but, commenting on the reduced attendances, he suggested we consider a return to weekend events.

Despite this suggestion, 2016 saw us back, midweek, at the Izaak Walton Hotel in Dovedale, who were persuaded to offer an acceptable rate for a three night midweek stay. Seven couples duly arrived plus the Linfords in their caravan at Ilam Hall. First morning, we did a circuit of Manifold valley. The next day, four couples walked up Dovedale to Milldale. During the visit, several topped Thorpe Cloud for the view and more exercise.

In 2017 the Derwentwater Hotel, Portinscale was the venue and six couples booked in for a four-night midweek deal, an enjoyable meet as we again enjoyed good weather.

This was the last social meet that we had the pleasure of the company of Cliff and Cathie Large.

Alan Linford was the source of ideas for many of our venues and in 2018 he pointed us in the direction of the Grinkle Park Hotel which attracted ten couples. The steam railway was a real attraction for the group walking back from Goathland to Grosmont. On the second day, two couples went to Church End, Farndale to walk the Daffodil trail to Low Mill and back. Back at the cars, we returned to another old haunt, the Ryedale Museum at Hutton le Hole, which has grown considerably during the years since we left.

May 2019 we were back at the Derwentwater Hotel.

It is noteworthy that visits to country gardens featured heavily amongst our activities rather than climbing mountains; further evidence of the age group that has been to and now is attracted to these meets. This group does however, generate a great social atmosphere.

Preparing this was particularly memorable, seeing photos of members who have passed on during this period. It also spurred me to trawl through the Journals to avoid repetition. The inclusion of the journals on the website made this a much easier task.

Following careful consideration, the 2012 Simonstone and 2013 Merewood meets were the highlight of the series; hotels which gave us supreme service, enjoyable walks and convivial social atmosphere. The Merewood in particular, where the meal was a delicious five course dinner which impressed all the guests, such that it was agreed to invite the chief chef to come out of his kitchen to receive our thanks.

In the event, five appeared for our sincere applause.



Scarborough

2010

Saturday Walk,  
Dinner and  
Sunday Walk



Portinscale

2017



# A Year In The Hills Or Under Them 1963: a Vintage Year

Richard  
Gowing

Of the years of my active mountaineering in the 1950s and 60s, 1963 must surely rank as one of the best, a truly vintage year. Although much of the country was badly affected in the early weeks by heavy snowfalls, leading it to be described, as in a recent TV programme, as one of the worst winters in recent times; working and living on the western fringes of the Lake District, we suffered few problems and it was only through the media that I became aware of the situation in the rest of the country.

Having started climbing with the Oxford University Mountaineering Club (OUMC) in 1955 and joined the YRC in 1956 and living an unattached life at the UKAEA staff hostel at the foot of Wasdale with my parents living in Keswick, I was ideally placed to take advantage of the opportunities available. 1963 also marked my election to the Alpine Club, proposed by Harry Stenbridge and seconded by Louis Baume.

Staying at LHG with David Smith and, after a day when we walked across a frozen Stickle Tarn, ascending Pavey Ark by Jack's Rake and traversing Thunacar Knott, High Raise and Sergeant Man, we went to George Spenceley's party at the Sun Inn at Coniston. The next day I enjoyed a good walk with George over Swirl How and Coniston Old Man before starting the year attending the Fell & Rock's New Year gathering at ODG, where I could always find a host.



Looking out from Swirl How

After their New Year's Eve entertainment, we again walked across Stickle Tarn and traversed Pavey Ark via its southeast gully.

A fortnight later, I and two colleagues visited Piers Gill but found it not frozen enough for an ascent, so we slanted up towards the Pikes, landing on Great End. The snow was mostly soft and the tops were in cloud; we descended via Esk Hause and Sty Head, finishing in the dark. Next day I went with a friend to the Wastwater Screes hoping to climb one of the gullies, which were in perfect winter condition, but finding both occupied, we scrambled up Whin Rigg and walked over Ill Gill Head and up the shoulder to Scafell, descending by Deep Gill and the West Wall traverse and Brown Tongue.

The following Sunday was dry and very windy; with another friend I walked up Hall's Fell, Blencathra from the mine dump at Threlkeld, up Narrow Edge from the A66 to

Blencathra's summit. The wind was very fierce and cold towards the top; we descended over Scales Fell, with good glissades beside the ridge.

My first YRC meet of the year was the traditional Hill Inn meet, attended by 59 members and guests. After sleeping on the lounge floor, as was often allowed in those days, on a fine, but slightly cloudy morning I went with Harry Stembridge, Bob Chadwick and others up Whernside before breakfast. After breakfast we crossed Ingleborough, avoiding slab avalanche debris on the Chapel-le-Dale flank, to Horton for lunch at the Crown before climbing Pen y Ghent by the nose, with good sitting glissades on the descent. We were fortunate in securing a lift back to the Hill Inn for the committee meeting, dinner and abortive attempts at the beam in the bedroom and Barn Pot. Next day I joined a party skiing on a field near Horton, using the Gritstone Club's rope tow. Ham and eggs at the Hill Inn concluded a memorable weekend.

The following Sunday I skied in a field near Uldale, then had a good ski tour around Lonscale Fell and the following Sunday with one-time YRC member Trevor Hincks, and two others, had a good day skiing in a field near Thirlspot, on snow hard and fast – a good day's practice.

Twenty two members and guests (including prospective member Chris Renton) attended the mid-February meet at LHG. On the Saturday a large party set off up Rossett Gill with the intention of going to climb on Great End, but trudging in 2 to 3 feet of soft snow, made gully climbing most inadvisable so after a good sitting glissade down to Angle Tarn, we traversed Esk Pike and Bow Fell, descending by the Band. On a fine windless Sunday a party of us skied up to Swirl Hause, where we left our skis to walk up Swirl How before returning to our skis and skiing down almost all the way to the hut, conditions being somewhat trying with rapid changes from crisp icy crust to soft snow, causing a number of spills, but good fun and a satisfying end to the weekend.

The following long weekend gave me my most memorable day ever in the Scottish winter hills. On the Thursday evening I drove to Dundee where I spent the night with Roger Allen. Next day, after picking up two of his friends, we drove in brilliant sunshine in my Morris Minor via Coupar Angus, Dunkeld, Pitlochry, Dalwhinnie, past a frozen and snow-covered Loch Laggan to Fort William, where we bought our weekend's food and pitched camp near the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel and a well frozen river, quite fortuitously next to a party of my friends from Cumberland.



Sunset over Glen Nevis

After a good steak dinner we turned in at 8 pm with all available clothing and sleeping bags, ready for an early start next morning.

Away by 6:30, we walked over the Meall an t-Suidhe col where dawn broke to a fine morning, past the C.I.C. Hut to the foot of Tower Ridge. After an ascending traverse to the foot of the Douglas Boulder west gully, we put on crampons and climbed to the Douglas Gap. After soloing the Douglas Boulder from the gap, we roped up in pairs, with Roger and me on the first rope, and climbed Tower Ridge to the foot of the Great Tower, where we lunched in the sun. We turned the Tower by the Eastern Traverse, and then surmounted the capstone by an awkward step, the through route under it being blocked by snow. The following pitch involved a mantelshelf with the aid of an axe jammed in a crack at the back, and then it was easy up to the top of the Tower. We abseiled into Tower Gap, then climbed up to the left of the normal route, cutting steps in the thick frost and snow covering the smooth slabs, and onto the crest. A short groove pitch, then up easy snow-covered rock, a slight traverse right then up steep snow to the summit plateau, which we reached at 2:30 p.m. after a beautiful climb in superb conditions. We explored the plateau from the top of the N.E. Buttress to Carn Dearg, enjoying the extensive views, before descending a broad snow gully in the general direction of the ordinary route, with sitting and standing glissades, to below the Meall an t-Suidhe col where we joined the path as the sun set, and down to camp in the last light facing an even colder night than the previous one.



Approaching Great Tower and Roger Allen on it



View down Tower Ridge and the Through Route, Great Tower

The first Saturday in March; fine; a friend and I fought our way up Lingmell in a fierce wind which disappeared on top. On to Scafell Pike, over Great End and Esk Pike, down into Eskdale and up Cam Spout ridge of Scafell, down a broad gully lower down, then Lord's Rake. I then represented YRC at another Club's dinner at the Wastwater and slept in the barn. Next day, warm and sunny, with my hosts, I walked up to Kern Knotts and along to the Napes, where we watched an ascent of the Needle, climbed to Gable summit via Needle Ridge and descended Gavel Neese to the valley.

The following weekend I went to the YRC Alston meet at the Blue Bell Inn, the Hartside road having just reopened after being blocked by snow. (We don't seem to have pub/inn meets these days, maybe because sleeping on the floor or camping in the grounds is no longer acceptable.) The Saturday saw a massed assault on Cross Fell in rain, sleet and snow; we found a bothy for lunchtime shelter, stopped for drinks at the pub in Garrigill and got a lift back to the Blue Bell, by some late arrivals to the meet. The weather on the Sunday was a little better; most of us drove to Hadrian's Wall to see the Carrawburgh Mithraeum then walked along the wall to tour nearby Housesteads fort.

Late March I attended the OUMC meet at RLH, with a day on Dow, leading 360 ft. Severe Arête Chimney and Crack and on the Sunday ascending Gwynne's Chimney on Pavey Ark in the rain.

Next morning we drove up Glen Nevis to the car park, then walked through the gorge to upper Steall where we split into pairs; us ascending the S.W. ridge of Sgurr a'Bhuic and up Aonach Beag. It was misty with clearances; we saw a Brocken spectre on the lower top of Aonach Beag. Steep hard snow led down to the Aonach Beag-Mor col, then up a gentle slope to Aonach Mor. We cramponned down from the col into Coire Giubhsachan, crossed the Meall Cumhann col and down a steep grass slope into Glen Nevis and the car. After waiting 1½ hours for the others we drove down to the campsite and packed up, heading for high tea at the Imperial in Fort William, then back to Dundee in the early hours. The following weekend was the YRC Pothole Training meet at Lowstern; after spending the Friday evening with John Lovett at Harden, and then on a cold, wet and windy Saturday went to Newby Moss where we laddered Cross Pot. Sunday turned out fine; after a lecture by Stanley Marsden at the hut on rope tying we returned to Newby Moss where we laddered and descended Pillar Pots I and II.

For the Easter meet, I drove with Frank Wilkinson to Tyndrum to join the camp at Auchtertyre Farm. Good Friday began with snow showers, becoming more frequent as the day progressed. Nevertheless, we set off, six of us in three ropes (including four of us Alpine Club members who should have known better!):

Harry Stembridge and Jack Hilton,  
David Smith and Howard Humphreys  
and Louis Baume and myself.



Ben Lui

We started up the Central Gully of Ben Lui but, after climbing a few hundred feet up the gully, we experienced a small avalanche, so decided to retreat. We were soon overwhelmed by a big powder snow avalanche which plucked us from our well-driven axe belays and carried us down 600-700 feet into the corrie, where we landed in a heap, miraculously, relatively unscathed apart from Jack Hilton who suffered a strained back.

We assisted Jack to Coninish Farm, where we were made at home with whisky and tea. We set off in the farmer's Landrover but soon met Bob Chadwick with his estate car and so returned to camp. After my tent collapsed in the night under the weight of snow, I migrated into Bob's 'Palace Hotel', to be served a hearty breakfast in bed next morning by Bob. The avalanche was vividly described by Louis in YRCJ 1964; 9(32): 252-4 (I returned to Ben Lui the following winter with Richard Gilbert, finding the gully in good, safe condition to give us a quite easy climb direct to the summit.)

Saturday was showery and after visiting Jack, in the Royal Hotel, we returned to camp for lunch then went for a drive around by Glen Orchy with its fine river scenery, below Ben Cruachan to Bonawe Ferry and back to camp.

After a good dinner and an early night, on the still showery Sunday, I went with a party to Balquhiddy where we left a car and continued to Ledcharrie, to follow the Ledcharrie Burn up to Lochan an Eireannaich, a pleasant little 1900 ft. pass, down through the forests of Kirkton Glen to Balquhiddy and the car.

Easter Monday dawned to a perfect day, with blue skies, distant views and good snow. Five of us drove to Ben Lui and, after fording the River Lochy, scrambled up the N.W. side of 3,008 ft. Ben a' Chleibh, then on up Ben Lui (Beinn Laoigh, 3,708 ft.) by its S.W. ridge, crossing to the N.W. ridge for the final 200 ft. or so, a superb mountain! We descended the S.E. ridge then up Ben Oss (3,374 ft.) with grand views back to Ben Lui. We followed a nice snow ridge down to the next col from where the way down looked doubtful, so we ascended the N.W. end of Ben Dubhchraig with a view to descending its north ridge. On reaching that point, we agreed it would be a shame not to include Ben Dubhchraig, so we continued to its 3,204 ft. summit, to be greeted by fine views of Loch Lomond. We then descended its north ridge and cut across the foot of Meall Odhar to Tyndrum, where we got a lift back to camp, arriving at 8 p.m., after another of my best days on the Scottish Hills, to find Frank Wilkinson with dinner ready, then left for Keswick through the night.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May I joined David Haslam at Honister for the annual camping meet, on Haystacks. We walked into Gillercombe where I led David up Grey Knotts Face, 500 ft. diff., a good climb with two interesting pitches, fairly dry. We continued over the tops to Birkness Combe, where we found YRC parties climbing. With David Smith and George Spenceley, I went over Red Pike and down over Dodd to Buttermere for a drink at the Bridge Inn. We then carried our camp up Honister to the Haystacks ridge where we pitched camp near the Blackbeck Tarn. After cooking dinner, I tried to sleep in the bivouac tent which I'd made from waterproof material supplied by Jack Holmes, but the wind and rain got up to give me a very wet night, though the bivvy did keep the cold out. At 5 a.m. I gave up and joined Albert Chapman and Tim Smith in their nearby tent, rising at 7:30 and clearing off to my parents' home in Keswick for bath and breakfast.

On 26<sup>th</sup> May, after attending the OUMC Dinner in Oxford, I joined John Lovett at Lowstern to prepare tackle and camping gear and load it to his trailer, ready for the Whit meet in Fermanagh. The following Thursday I drove to LHG to pick up the pressure cooker, then to Jack Woodman's near Coniston where I spent the night. Next day Jack and I convoyed to Lowstern, where I left my car and helped to take the trailer from Harden to Preston Dock, where we arrived in good time to embark with the YRC party on the Transport Ferry M.V. *Bardic Ferry* for a good dinner and evening's drinking, and a smooth crossing to Larne, where we woke up next morning for breakfast aboard before going ashore.

After waiting for the hired minibus to be collected from Belfast, with Cliff Downham driving, we enjoyed a pleasant run to Enniskillen, then to Cladagh Bridge, where we pitched camp with a large marquee for meals and socialising and our own tents for sleeping.

I won't describe our cave explorations in detail as these are well covered in John Middleton's meet report and the Journal (J.R. Middleton, YRCJ 1964; 9(31): 321-8), previous explorations being covered by Trevor Salmon's earlier article, YRCJ 1962; 9(31): 205-10).

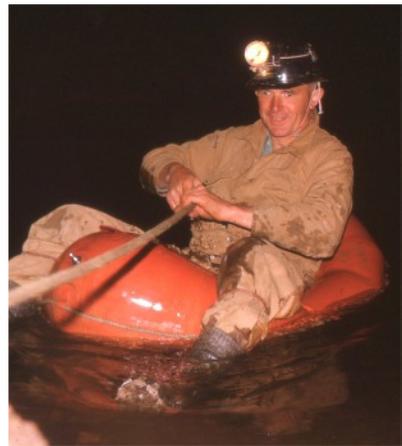
My part in the exploration of Reyfad comprised, on the Monday, accompanying Trevor Salmon, John Middleton and Denny Moorhouse along the Stream Passage, finding the high aven and the beautiful group of grottoes described in the Journal and surveying out; in preparation for this I had attended an evening class in Surveying at Workington Tech.

Next day I went with Brian Nicholson, David R Smith and Mike Selby to survey Monday's discoveries in the N.W. Passage, very impressive. On the Wednesday, while the keen potholers went to Noon's Hole, Don Mackay and I walked up the Cladagh glen and up the Sruh Croppa to 1,949 ft. Tiltinbane, on the western end of the 2¼ mile long ridge of Cuilcagh. This ridge follows the Border and is of gritstone, dipping slightly down NNE, with extensive crags on the NNE side and landslip fissures and fallen blocks, surely a gritstone climber's paradise. The views were disappointing due to haze; from the 2,188 ft. summit of Cuilcagh we descended the steep NNE side and followed the Owenbrean River then across to Pollasumera River, whose bed we followed to Pollasumera, an impressive opening in a limestone cliff. Difficulty going past Gortmaconnell Rock led us onto the Scenic Loop road, down via Sallysgrove to the main road, arriving in camp just in time for dinner, after which we went to Green's pub behind the butcher's in Blacklion, just across the Border.

On the Thursday I went with a large party to Pollnagollum (of the Boats).

To traverse this splendid cave involves crossing a long deep pool in the Club's rubber dinghy *Cymru*, which the first party across rigged with a line to facilitate its use by the whole party. On our return we helped Brian Nicholson with his photography, setting off numerous flashes to paint the cave with light.

Jack Dossor aboard *Cymru*



After dinner in camp we went to Green's for another convivial evening. For our final day's caving I joined Brian Nicholson, Trevor Salmon, Jack Dossor, Simon Stembridge and David Woodman to walk up the Cladagh Glen to Marble Arch, set in a beautiful woodland full of bluebells and primroses; as one approached open pots along this shallow cave, we could smell the bluebells in the wood above. I went into the east entrance and, with Trevor and Simon, repeated my father's pre-war swim through to the bottom of Cradle Hole; coming back we found that it was just wadeable. With the rest of the party, we went to the far end (apart from the terminal lake) of Skreen Hill Passage, a fine cave with fine formations which my father and others had explored before the war – see 'The Underground Course of the Monastir River' by G.S. Gowing, YRCJ 1936; 6(22): 320-8, "Ireland Revisited: Caves in North and South" by G.S. Gowing, YRCJ 1938; 7(23): 43-51 and "The Enniskillen Gondoliers" by The Editor (E. E. Roberts) (YRCJ 1947; 7(4): 144-52).

On the way out, I helped Brian Nicholson with his photography, then after the last of a series of very fine dinners, thanks to Jack Woodman's shopping excursions and culinary skills, we went to Blacklion for our final evening's drinking.

I should mention one feature of the meet: David Woodman, a member of Edinburgh Officers' Training Corps, brought his pipes and kilt and serenaded the local cows, who lined up to listen – they must have realised he was a military piper!

Next morning we set off for a pleasant scenic drive to reach Larne in good time for embarkation on *Ionic Ferry*. After dinner aboard, we went ashore for a bit of a pub crawl before returning to the ship for its midnight departure.

Sunday morning's cruise down the Irish Sea in perfect weather, with views of the Lakes and the Isle of Man, brought to an end a most memorable week.



Relaxing on the ferry; Jeff Hooper, Brian Nicholson, Denny Moorhouse, John Middleton and Trevor Salmon.

1963's Long Walk was a 28 mile traverse of the Lake District from Scafell in the west to Harter Fell in the east, with 14,350 feet of ascent, based at LHG. After a 02:30 start we walkers were ferried to Wha House at the foot of Hardknott Pass, to set off at 04:20. After some initial light rain and thick mist, making the descent of Broad Stand somewhat tricky, the weather turned fine for a delightful day with extensive views, as far as Ingleborough.

Aided by feeding points at Dunmail Raise and Kirkstone Pass, six of us reached the end at Kentmere around 9 p.m., where Dennis Driscoll and his wife provided shandy and cheese before we were ferried back to LHG for supper and bed. The following day I went with David Smith, Arthur Craven and Denny Moorhouse to Dow Crag where we did Murray's Route, a fine 240 ft. severe, and then C Ordinary to the summit. Due to mist and lack of time we then descended and returned to LHG for supper before departing for home.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July saw me setting off for the year's Alpine trip, of which more later.

Upon my return it was back to my routine of weekend climbing trips and meets, on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August I went with colleague Jim Bremner up to Scafell to follow him up Moss Ledge Direct, an interesting mild VS route, the key pitch of which involved traversing a slab above the Gangway and up an overlapping slab to Moss Ledge, where a permanent peg provided a good belay. I then led up Herford's Slab to Hopkinson's Cairn, whence we led through up the diff route to Low Man. It was now turning misty and excessively midgy; we continued to High Man and, after visiting Scafell summit, we descended by Deep Gill and the West Wall Traverse to our 'sacks, whence I ran down to the valley in half an hour to avoid the midges and the worst of the impending heavy rain.

The following weekend I drove to LHG for a weekend with David, joined by Tony Reynolds with a party of scouts. Next day being showery, we just went shopping then had a short walk up Greenburn to get up an appetite for a special dinner by David of *coq au vin*, followed by

drinks at the Three Shires with Tony and his party. Sunday was fine, with rain holding off till the evening; David and I went to Gimmer, where we led through on Juniper Buttress, 190 ft. mild severe, a pleasant though not remarkable route. Down the S.E. gully, up Main Wall and Loft Crag, back to LHG and home.

The following weekend, 16-18 August, was the YRC Derbyshire meet. I drove to David Smith's in Burnley and went on with him and Albert Chapman to join the meet at Wood Cottage, Barnsley MC's hut by the Snake Road, between Kinder and Bleaklow. Saturday dawned fine; I joined a group walking over the shoulder of Kinder Scout to Edale for lunch at the Nag's Head, then a lift to Gardoms Edge, where we messed about on a few climbs before returning to the hut for dinner, and drinks at the nearby Snake Inn. On the Sunday I went with John Middleton, Albert, David and another to Giant's Hole, down and along to the top of the pitch. This involved much arduous, wet crawling, including a sump which had to be bailed out up 3 successive dams, most unpleasant with little visual reward. After dinner with Albert, David and Stanley Marsden at The Anglers Rest, Bamford, I returned to Burnley with David, dropping Albert off on the way, arriving at my staff hostel at 4 am.

On a fine last Saturday in August, I walked from Gosforth up Seatallan, over Haycock and Stords, Ponsonby Fell and down into the forests of Blengdale. The latter two hills were heavy going with long grass, the former very pleasant with good views of Ennerdale. Next day continued fine; I picked up a friend and went up to Pike's Crag, where we climbed Grooved Arête, a fine 370 ft. v.diff, continuing to Scafell Pike summit and down to Wasdale.

The first weekend in September marked the YRC Galloway meet. I drove to Clatteringshaws Loch where I found to my surprise that a new forestry road led to the meet venue at Back Hill o' the Bush, where we slept in this substantial bothy. It was surrounded by newly planted conifer seedlings; on another meet some years later, the bothy was set in a clearing. On a wet and misty Saturday, George Spenceley, David Smith, Brian Nicholson, Howard Humphreys and I walked via Loch Enoch to Merrick by its east ridge, at 2,765 ft. the highest hill in southern Scotland. We then descended the north ridge and returned over the shoulder of Dungeon Hill to the bothy for a good dinner and bed.

Sunday was fine with a strong wind. With President Bob Chadwick, George Spenceley and Brian Nicholson I walked over the principal Rhinns of Kells from south to north: Meikle Millyea 2,447 ft., Milldown 2,410 ft, Millfire 2,350 ft and the Corbett Corserine 2,668 ft, and a Corbett Top Carlin's Cairn 2,650 ft, then over the main col back to Backhill.



Rhinns of Kells

With a stop in Carlisle for a Chinese, I arrived back at the hostel 9:40 pm after a most enjoyable and rewarding weekend.

On a fine Saturday, two weeks later, I took a friend to Patterdale where we parked behind the hotel and walked over Arnison Crag, Birks, St. Sunday Crag, Fairfield, Hart Crag, Hartsop Above How, down to the road at Bridgend and along the road back to the car. On a misty Sunday, I went with David Bridge by the High Level Route to Pillar Rock, where we led through on the 420 ft. v. diff North East Climb to Low Man, down the Old West and up West Wall Climb, 210 ft. v. diff, a good typical Pillar route. Up High Man, rappelled into Jordan and followed the Shamrock Traverse to join the High Level Route for our return to base.

The following weekend I drove to LHG for the annual joint Langdale meet, staying at LHG where I helped David paint the kitchen and living room, joining the rest of the meet in the evening for drinks at ODG, then on a wet Sunday, I drove with two others to Seathwaite, from where I climbed Rabbit's Trod, 770 ft. mod., while they climbed Grey Knotts Buttress.

On Friday October eleventh I drove to the LMC hut at Nantperis for the CC Welsh Dinner as an Oxford friend's guest. Next day, sunny and windy, a number of us drove up to Pen y pass and walked up to Bwlch y Ddwy Glyder, over Glyder Fach and Y Garn and down to Nant Peris, then went to the Royal Hotel, Trefriw for a most enjoyable CC Dinner, with lots of familiar faces. Thanks to a bad combination of drinks, I became rather drunk and was ferried back to the hut, while the party continued at PyG.

Next day I awoke with an awful hangover and couldn't face breakfast. I took one other via Nantgwynant, Beddgelert and Aberglaslyn to the hamlet of Croesor, from where we followed the well-defined, rocky south west ridge to the 2,265 ft. top of Cnicht. After stopping for 10 minutes on the summit I found my hangover had gone (I failed to find it there when I climbed Cnicht a few years ago with John Whalley!) Back to the hut to cook a meal then set off for a five hour drive to my staff hostel.

The next Friday I drove to Lowstern for a YRC potholing meet. In the morning I drove up Crummackdale and, after prolonged searching, found the party with John Lovett's Landrover. We went through Long Kin East to the top of the pitch, a pleasant little cave running only a few yards from the surface, with several openings.

After attending as YRC rep. at the Council of Northern Caving clubs at the Flying Horseshoe, I returned to Lowstern for dinner then went for drinks to the Hill Inn. Next day I went part-way into Juniper Gulf, to near the top of the big pitch, a rather dicey fissure passage and tight ladder pitch, with a fine open entry pot.

The last Sunday in October, with fine, coldish weather, I drove from Keswick over Honister to join Darrell Farrant at Buttermere. We drove back up Honister and walked over Grey Knotts, Brandreth and Green Gable to Gable Crag, where I led him up Barney Buttress (one of Bentley Beetham's routes) a fine 500 ft. v. diff mountaineering route, a bit damp in places, with the crux a rather slimy slab fifth pitch. The Bottle-Shaped Pinnacle was a nice feature.

We continued to Gable summit, then back to Windy Gap, over Green Gable and along the track to Honister, to finish the day with a fondue supper at my parents with a nice bottle, which I'd brought back from the trip down the Rhine.

The day of the After-Dinner meet started fine but deteriorated; we wandered over the Norber-Crummackdale area, just beating the rain to arrive at Harden for high tea, followed by a fine 'Mountains and Music' tape and slide show by our principal guest John Jackson. Afterwards I drove to digs in Blackpool for a course at UKAEA Springfields Works; on the Wednesday evening I drove to David Smith's at Burnley for supper, then with him, John Duerden and John Gott, went to Lothersdale for a dark walk up Pinhaw. After drinks and fish & chips at Lothersdale I returned to Blackpool.

On the Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, I left my digs at Blackpool and drove to Clapham for dinner at the New Inn then went to John and Betty Lovett's for an evening at their fireside, to learn the momentous news of US President John F Kennedy's assassination. After staying at Lowstern I went to the Devonshire Arms, Skipton to represent the YRC with a speech on behalf of the Guests and Kindred Clubs.

On a showery Sunday, I drove to Malham with the YRC contingent and walked up Gordale Scar, over to Malham Tarn and down to Malham Cove, joining the main party at the Victoria, Kirby Malham for tea and slides by Arnold Waterfall.

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December was cloudy, with some light rain and sleet. With Darell Farrant, I drove to Thirlspot and walked up the White Stones route to Helvellyn, cold and sleety on top, then over Nethermost and Dollywagon Pikes, down to Grisedale Tarn and down Raise Beck to Dunmail Raise. After walking down the road to Wythburn, we caught a convenient bus back to Thirlspot.

On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> I picked up a friend from Cocker mouth and drove via Scotch Corner to the Milburn Arms in Rosedale for the Christmas Meet.

On a showery Saturday. I went with a large party, guided by the National Park Warden, to Thorgill, over Blakey Ridge via Crag Pond and down into Farndale at Duck Howe, then followed field tracks through Birch Hagg Plantation to Lowna and via Hutton-le-Hole to Lastingham, where we looked at the church and crypt before taking tea with our guest. We returned over Spaunton Moor to the Rosedale Chimney and down the steep hill to Rosedale for a good dinner and a comfortable bed.

Sunday was mostly dry; we walked across the moor to the impressive Wheeldale Roman road, then back over Wheeldale Moor to Rosedale for tea, then I convoyed with Ian Carr and Maurice Wilson to the latter's home in Stokesley for supper, before driving home via Yarm and Darlington.

The weekend before Christmas, David Smith came to Keswick for his customary pre-Christmas visit to me and my parents.

On our first day we drove to Martindale Church and walked over Sleet Fell, High Dod, Place Fell and Angletarn Pikes to Rest Dod, with snow on the ground, quite exhilarating on upper Rest Dod, the day improving as we went on. We descended over The Nab to Dalehead Farm, and down the Martindale valley to the church and the car.

Next day, fine and crisp, we parked on the Hopebeck road near Whinlatter Pass to walk up over Swinside and Ladyside Pike to Hopegill Head, the last bit being quite interesting on snow, with good views of the Lakes and Pennines.

We continued over Grisedale Pike and down over Hobcarton End, down the firebreak to the forestry cottage to finish down Blaze Beck to the car and so, home to Keswick, for David to depart to his home and I to mine.



**Grisedale Pike from Hopegill Head**

On Christmas Eve, Ian and Felicity Carr came to Keswick to spend the holiday with me and my parents; our short Christmas Day walk took us over nearby Castle Head and a little way along the lake side, then back past Castle Head, then on Boxing Day afternoon we walked from Stonethwaite to Charles Tilly's barn to help install Ian and Felicity.

On New Year's Eve, I drove over Hardknott to Rawhead to join my College friend and Fell & Rock host Tony Gladstone for dinner and accommodation before going to ODG for a slide show by Alf Gregory about his and Harry Stemberidge's trip to Peru.

Then followed entertainment, dancing and seeing the New Year in, to conclude a truly vintage year back where it started.

# Notes from Underground

Ged  
Campion

In 'Notes from Underground' Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, 'In every man's remembrances there are things he will not reveal to everybody, but only to his friends', and this was exactly what it was like with Gordon Batty and his secrets on Fountains Fell.

'Batty', as he was affectionately known, had a special talent for discovering new caves and his tight-lipped digging team, stretching back to the fifties, were truly obsessed with the intimacies of this dark fell and perhaps, rightly so, given its impressive statistics. Its reputed as having the highest exposure of Great Scar Limestone in the Yorkshire Dales and even more important, most of the water sinking high on its slopes, emerges many miles away to the north at Brants Ghyll Head, giving it the potential of a super system 4 miles long. However, this fell doesn't reveal its secrets easily and to make matters worse, for many years, was off limits because the landowners were not always caving friendly. Despite this however, the Logan family would normally allow access to the fell from Rough Close .

Throughout the decades and sworn to secrecy, they were a committed team, digging every Thursday night after work and all-day Sunday, weather permitting or sometimes not permitting. Batty, was a member of the YRC accompanied by other YRC stalwarts, including Glyn Edwards and Harvey Lomas. Various others were in the team, mostly from the Northern Pennine Club (NPC), including Harry Hesketh, (aka Eski), Mike Warren and Frank Walker who eventually became a YRC member.

Legend has it that Batty left the YRC because the elders were unhappy with him using high explosive to enlarge cave passages, but digging politics was probably the real reason...so he jumped ship and joined the NPC.

There followed many years of discovery on Fountains Fell with spectacular finds including Dale Head Pot, Gingling Wet Sinks, Strangle Pot and many others.

Sadly, Batty died in 2008, but I had spoken to him a few times over the years. Notably after he, Frank and Eski, with a little help from Harvey, had pushed Strangle Pot to a depth of 518 ft in 1996.

Gordon Batty and a youthful Harvey Lomas in Gingling Wet Sinks. Photos Glyn Edwards



I'd heard a lot about the reputation of Strangle Pot from Harvey and it was top of my to do list, so I phoned Batty hoping to get his permission to descend this new test piece while it still had fixed ropes in place.

After consulting the others, he got back to me saying, he wouldn't mind but the others wouldn't be happy about us going. We went anyway, marvelling all the way to the bottom at such an important discovery on the fell.

When I moved to the Dales in 2003, I lost no time in asking Frank Walker if the dwindling digging team needed any extra muscle. I was very quickly recruited as an apprentice and made no mention of my illicit trip down Strangle a few years earlier. I made little light of my caving credentials and from decorated officer, returned to ranks of an infantry man.

At that time, the team were involved in pushing the downstream end of Great Douk Cave, but any chance of a breakthrough became increasingly remote as water welled up at the coal face making it impossible to get any deeper. We therefore turned our attentions to Fountains Fell, but this coincided with Frank and Eski taking retirement. It had taken them quite some time to realise that they didn't need to go on a Thursday night now they had the whole day available, but their realisation put an end to my Thursday night activities as I was still working full time.

A number of years elapsed and the possibility of part time working availed itself and I became available on Thursdays. By now Dick Close on Fountains had become the focus of attention, re-examining a many of Batty's projects that had been left with a question mark back in the sixties and seventies. Technology had moved on and advancements in drills and drill batteries and chemical persuasion meant old projects could be looked at anew. Leaving no stone unturned, exploration of Rosie's Pot and Wall Pot followed and a 6-year long stint in Split Pot revealed 200 metres of new passage, but none of these produced the sort of depth consistent with Fountains Fell's reputation or potential.

In 2018, frustrated by the lack of depth reached on Dick Close, Eski had the inspired idea of re-visiting shakeholes in the Strangle Pot area. All on the same bench at an altitude of just over 500 m. Just to the north of Shatter Pot lay a fairly nondescript shakehole that Batty and Frank had descended 40 years previously. A short entrance pitch of five metres was quickly followed by a tight vertical rift with dubious-looking, rusting scaffold bars still in place from the sixties, supporting loose rocks just a few metres down. It was impossible to avoid the stream that cascaded down this pitch, so in order to remain dry, a black plastic membrane was draped down the length of the pitch which affectionately wrapped it's self-around the caver as the pitch was descended. The find was appropriately named Curtain Pot.

At the bottom, the rift widened and enlarged and at its lowest point lay a very low bedding with a good draft.

Three months of work raising the bedding roof eventually paid off, just around a corner in the crawl, descended slightly and after another explosion, rock rattled down a circular hole. We were at the top of an aven.



Ged in main stream way, Curtain Pot  
Photo Clive Westlake

After clearing loose debris with a wrecking bar and chisel, we took turns to peer down the new shaft, all recording different plumbing estimates of depth, but one thing did not escape any of us, though constricted at the top, the shaft belled out massively in comparison to the dimensions we were familiar with in the cave.

After another session with the drill and bang, things became clearer, the bang fumes dispersing quickly because of the howling draft. Despite having a couple of ladders and a dubious digging rope to hand, Frank and Eski suggested we should bolt the pitch head next time. My heart sank, they knew I was travelling to Australia the following weekend and would be absent for 3 weeks!

They toyed with my feelings, but eventually conceded and we rigged ladders at the top of the shaft. Because the pitch head was so constricted, Eski had to lifeline me from the entrance to the crawl using up valuable lengths of rope. Feeding my feet on to the ladder, once upright, I could get a better idea of the size of the drop. I climbed down accompanied by a spout of water as spectacular as any water feature in these regions.

The shaft belled out spectacularly, free hanging to a boulder ledge, I could faintly see below. I reached the slab like ledge, just, the ladder two feet too short and the rope as taught as a piano wire. Using every bit of stretch in the rope, I managed to drop to the ledge suspended like a puppet on a string. The chamber was huge, possibilities running off in a number of directions.

I knew that even if I could untie the rope, it would spring back up the pitch and be irretrievable. Eski's muffled shouts were incomprehensible. This wasn't the place or time to take risks. I had to be content with climbing back up to the others reeling me in like a fish. When I got to the top, after a solid debriefing, I asked them whether that really was all the rope available and they both chuckled and said "you didn't really think we were going to let you run riot down there, did you!"

By the time I returned from Australia, the two had made considerable progress with bang along a constricted crawl, the draught was unrelenting, we knew we were into something big. We soon reached a shale band and this is where the real breakthrough occurred.

The constricted crawl and rift gave way to a larger semi-phreatic downstream inlet passage with attractive speleothems. After 30 metres, progress was halted by a blockage, easily removed by re-arranging a few small boulders. Down a sandy slope the other side we were into a much larger passage which appeared to have all the hallmarks of a master cave.

Weeks and weeks of exploration continued, the cave was wide open, and nobody knew except for us. The horizontal passage through Paradise Regained and Retribution Rift gave way to a much more vertical cave from Ledge Pitch onwards. Pitch after pitch followed and Eski jokingly complained that this was more like sport caving than traditional Dales digging.

After weeks of carrying rope, bolting kit and drill batteries into the cave we were 12 pitches down and we hadn't used bang since Retribution Rift.

This meant that Eski wasn't doing his regular social care-style visits to Barry Andrew in Settle, a retired caver who had been our bang supplier for many years. Eski had to tell Barry the real reason why his social circle had shrunk so much on Thursdays and Sundays. Barry was sworn to secrecy.

The day that Eski fell, started just like any other summer's day when we would descend the cave. Leaving behind a chorus of skylarks and the scent of the fell, we rigged the entrance pitch. We were all in such good spirits and hungry for more exploration. We had reached the top of the 13<sup>th</sup> pitch the Thursday before, but the tall twisting rift had become much more constricted and though we could see an enlargement a few metres below we needed fresh drill batteries and bang to get through. However we never got there that fateful day.

Losing Eski ripped the heart out of our digging team and all the questions, you never seem to think you must ask yourself about your activities become an inescapable reality. No amount of exploration justifies the loss of such a close friend, especially in the way it happened. The bond you develop, with fellow explorers who share the same passion as yourself, is something that is deeply personal and difficult to explain.

After many weeks of soul searching, the very idea of returning to the project seemed remote and by now every caver in the Yorkshire Dales and beyond knew about Curtain Pot and its inconclusive ending. By sad coincidence, Barry Andrew had died of an illness in May while we were still exploring the cave, another sadly lost friend who was party to our secret.

Despite all this going on, we were persuaded to return in Eski's memory and, for good or ill, that's what we did. Frank, myself, my son Aaron, Bruce Bensley, along with the Latimer brothers Simon, Andrew, and John descended the cave on a sultry September day. At minus 130 metres, we removed the constriction and placed a bolt and fixed a short ladder. The bang fumes were very much in evidence below, but the draught we had followed so faithfully in that cave for 12 months had finally left us. Eager though apprehensive to look, I had a sense that it was somehow appropriate that this chapter should come to an end. I climbed down carefully and as I searched around the small chamber in the fog of fumes, squeezing through a short rift, I almost stumbled into a murky enclosed sump pool. It was small and deep but there was no way on. When we got back to the entrance, the mood of the fell had changed again and almost symbolically, thunder rang loud and rain poured down unforgettingly. It felt like truly the end of a chapter.

And what of Gordon Batty...? He would probably have given anything to be with us during those fever-pitched days.

But let Dostoyevsky, a writer Eski often quoted, have not only the first but last words. He continues in *Notes from Underground* to say 'There are other things he (a man) will not reveal to even his friends, but only to himself, and then only under a pledge of secrecy'.

Heaven only knows how many secrets Batty didn't tell us that still lurk beneath that dark fell.



A youthful Ged Campion in the oil drum entrance to Magnetometer Pot in the 1970s  
Photo Glyn Edwards



Harry Hesketh died 1st June 2019.



‘Eski’ making preparations with Frank by Curtain Pot entrance, and taking time out at Rough Close Farm rescuing a lamb

Photos Ged Campion

*Editors note: Frank Walker gives us his personal account of the exploration of Curtain Pot*



Ledge  
Pitch

Photos John Dale

Third  
Pitch





Paradise Regained

One snowy Thursday night in the late 1970s, I once again followed Gordon Batty up onto Fountains Fell. In the murk and darkness, he unerringly found his way to an unremarkable shake-hole and started excavating, rather strangely, halfway down under a boulder. Soon, we had found empty space and squeezed into it to find ourselves looking down a pitch. This turned out to be the top half of a shaft, shaped rather like an egg-timer with a very narrow neck, squeezing past perched boulders to a chamber below. Water cascaded through the boulders and to make it passable, Gordon hung a plastic sheet to keep us dry, hence the name Curtain Pot. Mike Warren, a Northern Pennine Club member of the team, arranged lengths of scaffolding to stabilise the loose boulders. Unfortunately, despite all the work, the two passages leading off from the chamber bottom turned out to be too low or narrow, so the dig was abandoned and not even recorded.

Forty years later, after a six-year siege on Split Pot, with Eski (Harry Hesketh), and apprentice Ged Campion, Eski suggested another look at Curtain Pot, as techniques had advanced over the intervening years. It took three trips to relocate the entrance. We thought we had found it on one trip, but realised we had descended the close-by Batter Pot.

The tectonic forces that had made finding the entrance difficult, had also over the years, made the entrance and squeeze a lot tighter, so it had to be enlarged to accommodate our more corpulent frames! Rusty scaffolding was still in place, but the curtain was long gone. Keeping true to our traditions, a new shiny black plastic sheet was draped down the pitch to keep us dry and we started work on the left passage. Again, our memories were failing, and it turned out to be an inch-high crack, so almost as a last-ditch attempt, we started to excavate the right-hand side of the chamber.

After about three trips using chemical persuasion, Eski managed to get his head around a corner and could see a slight enlargement and felt a strong draught. By now Ged Campion had re-joined us, liberated from his climbing activities and ready to hibernate underground. We worked our way along this newly excavated crawl and quite unexpectedly, reached the top of a circular shaft that looked about 40ft deep. It had to be enlarged and entered feet first. Ged volunteered to descend on what ladders we had, but as the lifeline was just too short, we couldn't let him explore the chamber below! He came back up, mumbling about caverns measureless to man. Mention of Batty just being 'two bangs' (blasts) away from this discovery rang like a chorus around the passage walls. Unfortunately, Ged was off to Australia for 3 weeks the next day, but we reassured him we would wait for his return, then as soon as he left for the airport, we threw ourselves at the dig.

The large chamber forming the bottom of the pitch was a massive boulder pile, one slab so big we christened it the Cromlech.

The floor had a few possibilities, but a short muddy climb up the chamber wall and pitch the other side led back to the strong draught once again.

On Ged's return, we had made substantial progress along a low passage past a small aven and soon afterwards, dropped down a short awkward rift, along a shale band and into a more convincing downstream inlet. This gradually enlarged with inlets and some fine formations, especially helectites. Just as things were getting really exciting, a calcite barrier and boulder collapse blocked the way on, but Ged managed to move some boulders above a sandy slope to the right and we crawled through into a much bigger void.

As we climbed down the other side, unstable boulders rattled down a steep muddy slope to what appeared to be a master cave. We gingerly climbed down and despite perched boulders tipping and balancing below our feet, it felt like open season and feelings of a major discovery were at fever pitch. Soon we met a large inlet at Redemption Hall. (The inlet was subsequently dye tested from Batter Pot).

The way on was along a large, magnificently decorated passage, we named Paradise Regained in recognition of Batty's discovery of Fool's Paradise in Gingling Hole in 1956, a pot first explored by the YRC in 1941, also on Fountains.



Paradise Regained  
Photo - Clive Westlake.

Paradise Regained really has the feeling of a master cave, complete with a bad step across an open void and marching style streamway, but eventually, like all good cave passages it degenerated in size to a stooping passage which marked the start of Retribution Rift. But just one blast did it. A squeeze through led immediately to a steep staircase of precariously poised boulders requiring a handline.

At the foot, the nature of the cave changed and a foot traverse with a beautifully sculptured arching roof ended in a descent through a calcite slot to a further narrow rift. Almost hidden, high on a corner was a cluster of long straws hanging shrine like from the roof.

Just below here, the stream re-appeared cascading down to the top of Ledge Pitch where the narrow take-off was enlarged, and rope deviations were placed to avoid a soaking.

With the feeling of a classic Yorkshire pot unfolding, an acute corner led along to a foot traverse above a large drop, the seventh pitch, christened Chert Pitch because of the black fungus-like chert adorning the walls of the drop.



After a traverse right over the drop, we re-rigged the pitch at a particularly airy stance which helped avoid the water.

Photo  
Clive Westlake.

This landed in a chamber with the way on seemingly too tight, but a curious slot down on the right wall like a letter box, led to an awkward, greasy, slanting rift, Gully Pitch, that landed suddenly in a large passage, which heralded the start of spectacular Pulpit Rift.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> pitches forming Pulpit Pitch, via re-belays, opens out into the impressive soaring Rift 150 ft high and straight as a die. As we looked down, the floor appeared littered with creamy moondust devoid of any footsteps.

This continued as a rifting passage, traversing over a narrow slanting slot where the stream rushed below until a corner was reached with a choice of stoop down into the stream or a thrutch up a jammed boulder.

Again, the nature of the passage changed with rotten rock and loose crusty edges replacing solid sculptured rift. Dusty boulders having been untouched for millennia jostled, lifted and fell as we climbed over them.

After tackling an obstacle course of short climbs, traverses and boulders, quite unexpectedly, the passage opened out into a large chamber with a soaring roof: Hesketh Hall.

The forward passage here ended abruptly, blocked by a massive impenetrable, rising boulder choke, but behind a large, jammed boulder at the start of Hesketh Hall, a surreptitiously positioned, elliptical hole marked the head of the 12th pitch down a fine-looking rift.

At the bottom was a windy place, where water cascading down the shaft walls disappeared, down a tight narrow rift. After enlargement with a lump hammer the corner was breached and further narrow twists and turns led to the top of the final pitch, the 13<sup>th</sup>, which led down to a miserable brown sump pool.

## Update

Curtain Pot was explored and surveyed between October 2018 & October 2019.

There were 77 survey stations.

Total depth 138.3 metres (453.5 ft). Length 538.9 metres (1768 ft).

This makes it the 4<sup>th</sup> deepest pot on Fountains Fell after Gingling Hole, Dale Head Pot and Strangle Pot.

Although the sump stopped further 'dry' exploration, cave diver, Jason Mallinson, is currently tackling the sump which is very constricted but proving to be rising 'the other side' after two body lengths. The air bubbles are not returning to this side of the sump!

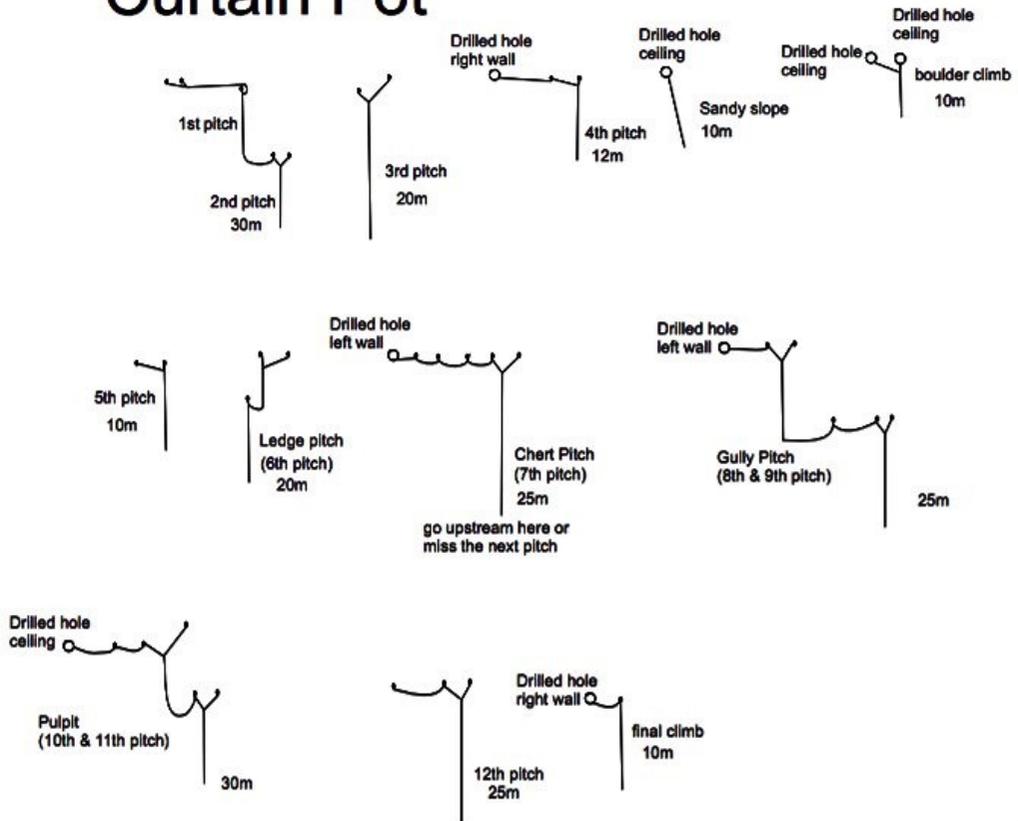
Large amounts of sediment are making diving difficult, so a small team (John & Andrew Latimer) are pumping sediment out of the sump. Work was stopped in March 2020 because of the pandemic.

The Latimer brothers, Simon, John and Andrew are also bolting the large aven in Hesketh Hall and so far, reached a height of 20 metres. Curtain Pot will no doubt become a classic Dales trip. In October 2020 eco anchors were kindly installed by Sam Allshorn, Jason Mallinson and Andy Wilson (see rigging topo) replacing the exploration bolts. There are 13 pitches.

Although initially quite constricted in places for the original explorers, following the rescue in June 2019, many constrictions have been removed. Geologically and hydrologically, Curtain Pot is a vitally important piece in the jigsaw of the Fountains Fell underground.

The search for the Upper, Fountains Fell Master caves continues.

# Curtain Pot

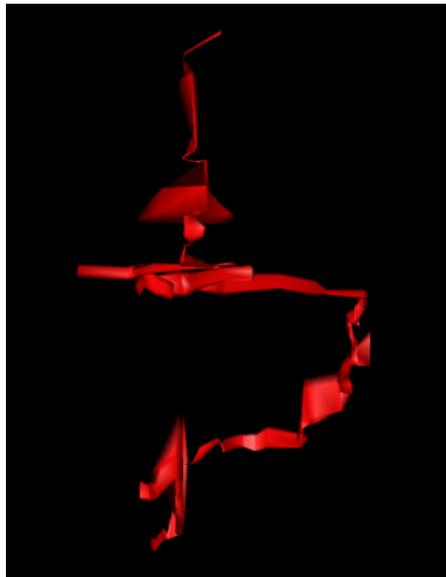
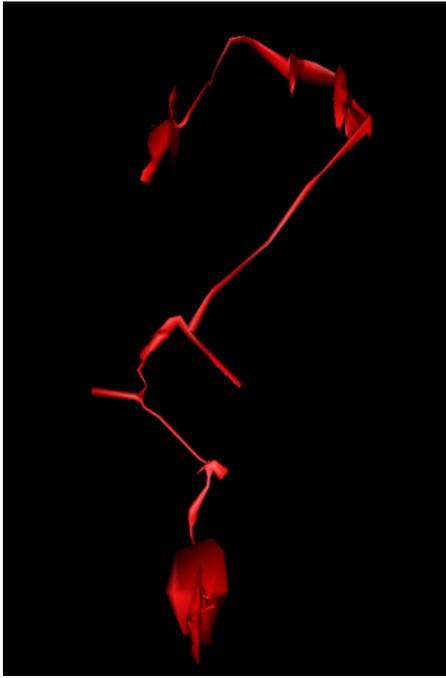


Location marked in yellow

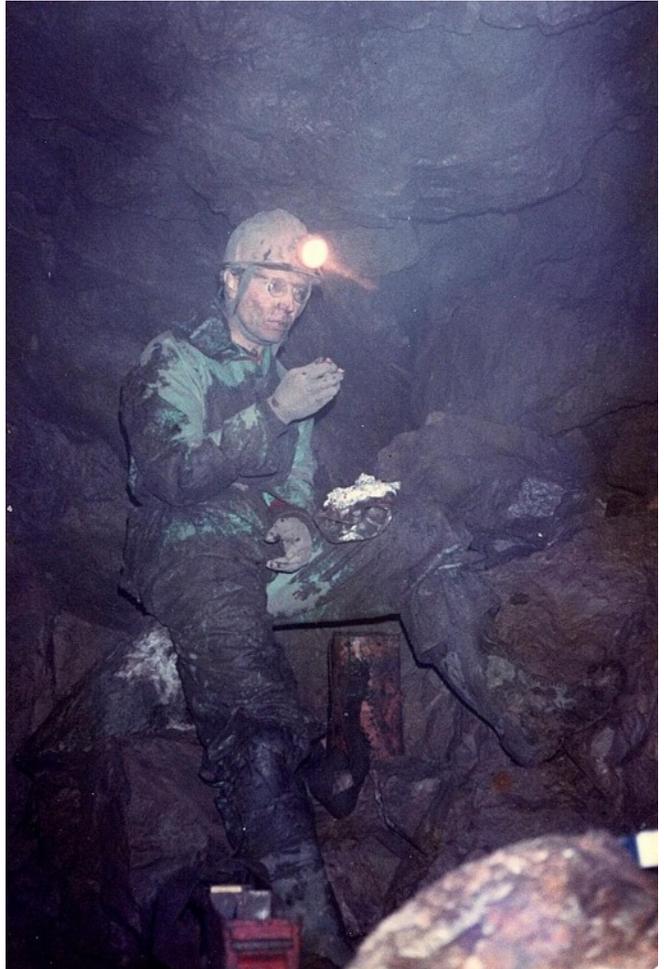


Speleothems in Paradise Regained.

Photo  
Clive Westlake.



Above:  
Representations  
of cave system



Frank enjoying his lunch in  
Gingling Wet Sinks

Photo  
Glyn Edwards

This was the ,Would if we Could, Christmas Meet for 2020; a challenge under Covid restrictions. To miss-quote a Christmas saying, 'No zoom at the inn', there was Zoom to come to our rescue.

Challenges bring out innovation and opportunity and Becca Humphreys stepped up to the plate for us. This meet took an entirely new approach as Becca reports:

'He picked up the lemons that Fate had sent him and started a lemonade-stand'. Elbert Green Hubbard 1915.

Is there anything you can't do by Zoom? So far this year, the club has held committee meetings, the AGM/EGM and series of quizzes by this ubiquitous programme. The time had come to see if it could replicate a meet; no small task!

Although the Peak District participants were still on the hill as the sun went down, they still made it back in time to join over 50 members plus partners, guests, cats and dogs logged onto Zoom for the alternative Christmas Meet. With representatives from Inverness through to southern Germany and a day packed with activities from hillwalking and exploration through to long distance mountain biking, there was a distinctly 'meet' feel to the evening.

Mick Borroff delivered the first presentation and described the Morocco meet from March this year. This saw the club maintaining and enhancing our connections with this intriguing and beguiling country. Although international events cut the meet short, much was achieved and there was strong interest in the prospect of a return visit to complete the intended trek. Sales of Alan Palmer's excellent guidebook improved by at least one during the presentation.

Hon Member Alan Hinkes is of course, best known for being the only Briton to summit all fourteen 8000m peaks. This evening though,, he gave us a bit more insight into life beyond the 8000's, including developing outdoor skills in both his grandchildren and assisting the Swaledale Search and Rescue Dogs teams.

In the spirit of proving you can't keep a good club down, Michael Smith also presented a short video of the club camping meet in Ravenstonedale from September this year. There is always a solution to any situation and if we can't meet in person, except under canvas, then so be it! Along with the earlier Swaledale meet the club at least maintained some activities, despite all the year has thrown at us.

Traditionally, the Christmas meet involves a deal of good food. This year, 25 participating households enjoyed some very fine British cheeses in a tasting session, led by Andy Swinscoe of The Courtyard Dairy in Austwick.

Each household had received their cheese boxes during the week and were ready to tuck in to cheeses from artisan producers across the country along with crackers and quince jelly.

Given the pungency of the box contents, there was relief that Zoom afforded some distance from Andy's position, sitting atop 50 sq meters of maturing cheese. John Varney related his experience of making farmhouse cheese at High Trenhouse and how valuable an advocate like Mr Swinscoe would have been in those times.

Matters came to a close around 9.30 with little cheese left to consume. There were a number of empty wine bottles starting to appear behind some members present on screen, which may or may not indicate a good evening had been enjoyed.

Current circumstances regarding freedom of movement and meeting in groups will not last forever, but in the meantime there are plenty of options that can be utilised to deliver some semblance of a meet. Here's hoping we don't need to deploy too many more of them before more traditional gatherings can be held again.

Outdoor activities over the weekend were varied, although only a few people have recorded their adventures. Fiona and Dave Booker Smith take the prize with a 102 km cycle ride from south Leeds to Bolton Bridge and back, including 940m of ascent.

Richard Smith and Felicity Roberts walked 16 km from Rothbury over Tosson Hill in cold, wind chilled sunshine.

Alan Hinkes made a weekend of it with a snowy ascent of Helvellyn, up Striding and down Swirral Edges on Friday, Place Fell on Saturday and Ingleborough on Monday.

**Striding Edge**



Richard Josephy was out walking in the Shotover hills near Oxford.

Michael and Helen Smith, with Christine and Jim Harrison and Helen Brewitt walked in the Ladybower area of the Peak District in search of Bronze age carvings.

**Ladybower  
stone walk**





Tim Josephy had an exciting trip with his daughter down the Cwmorthin slate mines near Blaenau Ffestiniog, involving lots of climbs, traverses and zip wires.



This was organised by a company called 'Go Below'; a voucher from an indulgent parent /grandparent would make an excellent gift to an (older) child.

Mick Borroff walked on Pockstones Moor near Greenhow, the light providing great opportunities for photography.



Blow Tarn

Simon's Seat



Attendees (with apologies for those missed - too many screens to monitor!)  
There were also many spouses, partners and family members too numerous to mention.

Becca Humphreys  
(Meet Leader)

Alan Hinkes  
Mick Borroff  
Richard Josephy  
Roy Denney  
Tim Josephy  
Adam Lindford  
Iain Gilmour  
Robert Peckham  
Judy Humphreys (G)  
Catriona Deakin (G)  
Christine Harrison  
Jim Harrison  
John Varney  
Andy Syme  
Helen Smith  
Michael Smith  
David Hick  
Andy Eavis  
Richard Smith  
Jennifer Tennant  
Paul Tennant  
Arthur Salmon  
Bill Gibbs  
Fiona Booker-Smith  
Dave Booker Smith  
Richard Dover  
Paul Dover  
John Middleton  
Alan Palmer  
Barbara Salmon  
Raymond Harben  
Phil Dover  
Rory Newman  
Martyn Trasler  
Alan Kay  
Robert Crowther  
Paul Glendenning  
Trevor Salmon  
Richard Sealey  
Alan Linford



Wherside



Place Fell

Some of  
those  
'attending'



# My First Alpine Trip With YRC Members

Richard  
Gowing

This was my first exclusively YRC alpine excursion, after climbing in the Alps since 1957 with the Oxford U.M.C. It was also my first as a member of the Alpine Club and was in 1964, previously described as a vintage year for me.

I drove to Roger Allen's parents' home near Leeds, where he and I loaded our gear into David Smith's Cortina in which we set off at 10 p.m. to drive to Dover. After spending the morning in Dover, we boarded the ferry Compiègne for a 14:30 departure and smooth crossing to Calais, then drove over the next few days, with camps at Péronne and Les Abrets, to Grenoble, where we shopped and lunched before enjoying a pleasant drive up to the village of La Bérarde, in the heart of the Dauphiné Alps, where we pitched camp on the municipal campsite.

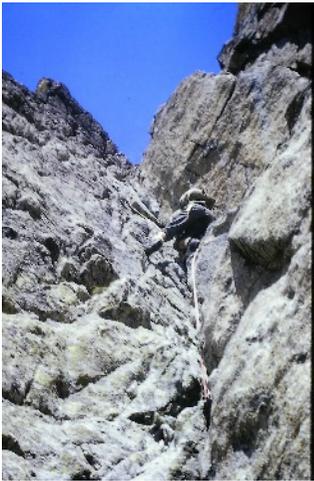


For our first excursion, the AD graded Boell Route on the Aiguille Dibona, we drove a short way down the valley to Les Étages, whence we set off at 06:45 to walk up to the Soreiller Hut, arriving at 9 a.m. and having our second breakfast outside.

Off at 10 up scree and névé to the end of a terrace on the east side of the Dibona, the start of our route, along the terrace to the foot of a couloir where we roped up, FDS - CRA - RG. Up the couloir, then round onto the S.E. ridge, along a wide ledge and down into a big corner.

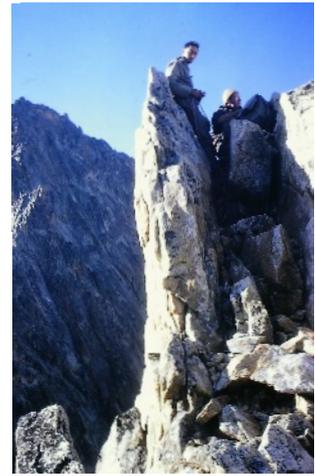


Aiguille Dibona  
and  
Refuge du Soreiller



Roger leading  
big corner pitch

This gave good climbing, then we traversed down a slab and up onto the shoulder of the S. ridge, at 1 p.m. We spent a long time there while David, mistakenly following the preceding party (there are several routes, all much harder than the Boell, which intertwine with it) pegged up a steep crack, using slings. My job, as last man, of retrieving these, was strenuous! Very pleasant climbing, though sadly not in the sun, up grooves on the east side, took us to the 3,130 m. summit of the Dibona (my second visit to my first Alpine peak) at 6 p.m.



David and Roger on the  
3,130 m. summit of  
Aiguille Dibona

We rappelled down the ordinary route to reach the end of our starting terrace at about 9 p.m. In failing light, we descended to the hut and walked in starlight down to Les Étages and up the road to our camp at La Bararde



Dinner in camp after the  
Aiguille Dibona

Next day, after a lie-in and a good lunch at the main hotel in the village, we set off at 4.30 p.m. up the Vénéon through showers to the Plan de Carrelet, then a pleasant zigzag path through pines, with good views of Les Bans, on which I'd had an epic with the OUMC in 1957, to the pastures of the Vallon de la Pilatte, to reach the Temple-Écrins hut, at 2,410 m., at 6.45 p.m. There we found Albert Chapman's friend Brian Daynes, who was working as a translator in Grenoble.

Next day with a rather misty morning, we followed a good path and easy un-crevassed glacier to reach the Col de la Temple, 2,410 m., for an ascent of 3,774 m. Pic Coolidge by its F graded south ridge. At 9.00 a.m. we arrived at the summit, where the mist cleared to give an impressive view of the south face of the Écrins, our objective for next day. As the mist came and went we got some good Brocken spectres. We descended through the mist which soon cleared to give spectacular views of the Ailefroide-Pelvoux chain, finishing with good glissades down the Glacier de la Temple and a pleasant stroll back to the hut.

Next morning we were up at 2 a.m. to some low mist and moonlight. We left following a path which we lost for a while, but soon regained, leading to the Glacier du Vallon de la Pilatte, which we cramponned up to reach the 3.479 m. Col des Avalanches, at the foot of the AD-graded south face of the Écrins, by 5:30.

We roped up and followed Roger up an icy couloir, aided by 2 pitons, then after the couloir petered out, we followed an easy rock traverse to a second couloir and up rocks on its left to opposite a steel cable.

**On the Ecrins south face, looking past the Ailefroide to Les Bans**



We crossed the snowy couloir then climbed rocks with aid from the cable, then up easy rock to arrive above the icy Champeaux Couloir at around 9:30. This should have been crossed lower down; after some debate, we continued up rocks to cross (my lead) above where the couloir petered out, then worked our way up rock ribs and across the odd snow gully. The face then clouded up, with the occasional clearing; we followed the rock rib up, then rotten snow, finally reaching the S.W. ridge of the Écrins' subsidiary Pic Lory, which we followed with quite pleasant climbing to arrive on the 4,086 m. summit of Pic Lory at 6 p.m.

The 4,101 m. summit of the Barre des Écrins was visible looming through the mist, but in view of the time we decided to forego it. I led off along a very sharp west ridge, thin snow on rock (a bad moment when some trusted snow gave way) to the Brèche Lory, to which we descended by a 100 ft. rappel. After crossing the rimaye, in gathering dusk we followed tracks down the standard north face of the Écrins, between great séracs and crevasses, to the level glacier below. Torn between tiredness and the thought of a comfortable night in a hut, seeing the lights of the Caron Hut, quite high above the far side of the Glacier Blanc, we opted for a bivouac on the spot. We stamped out a depression to take Roger's one-man and my two-man bivvy tents, placing them mouth-to-mouth to share our supper then at about 9.30 settled down for a reasonably comfortable night, sharing mine with David who got the worst of the expected condensation, which in fact, wasn't too bad.



**David looking out from my bivouac tent**

Next morning we woke at 4:00, Roger preparing soup for breakfast. While we were preparing for off, parties passed us on their way to the Écrins. We set off with snow starting, to the Col des Écrins which would lead us direct back to La Bérarde, but when we arrived there, the snow was falling quite heavily and the route down the other side looked most uninviting, so we beat it to the Refuge Ernest Caron, at 3,170 m., an old-style high mountain hut, crowded with men returning after abandoning the Écrins; these soon left us, and after a second breakfast, we slept from 11.00 to 3:30. After soup and bread we set off down at 4:30 in improving weather, thick snow which petered out and a little rain, following good tracks, heading for the Refuge Cézanne at 1,874 m. down the valley but, pausing outside the Refuge du Glacier Blanc at 2,550 m., we decided it was a better place to stop since we would lose less height, so booked in.

While the staff were busy cleaning, with the aid of nice English-speaking Minnie, a vac. student working at the hut, we secured an excellent cheap dinner with wine, followed by bed at 9.00.

Away at 5.00, after a good hut breakfast on a cold morning with mist dissolving to reveal splendid plastered peaks, we crossed the snout of the Glacier Blanc, descended towards Pré de Madame Carlé and to the moraine of the Glacier Noir which we followed onto the glacier, after stopping for a bite in brilliant sunshine with superb scenery, the rugged peaks of Pelvoux, Coup de Sabre and Ailefroide. We trudged up the glacier then scrambled up an obvious couloir with tracks in places, past the Refuge-Bivouac de la Temple to arrive at the Col de la Temple and followed the now familiar route, with much new snow, to the Temple Écrins hut (1:40) where we changed into shorts, had bread and soup and were interviewed by a reporter from the regional newspaper Dauphiné Libéré, who credited us with the first ascent of the season of the Écrins south face; Brian Daynes later sent us the relevant cutting from the paper. We left at 2:30 for a descent in the sunshine, again with splendid views up towards Les Bans, seeking to replicate Frank Smythe's classic photo, to reach our camp at La Bérarde.



Top - Descending lateral moraine, Glacier Noir and bottom, Pic Sans Nom from Glacier Noir

Les Bans from Val Veneon (inspired by Frank Smythe's 'A Camera in the Hills'  
Roger and David descending from Refuge Temple-Ecrins: Les Bans, with alpenrose

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July was taken as an off-day in brilliant sunshine, which David and I indulged too much, rather scorching our backs. We photo'd and shopped around La Bérarde, enjoyed an excellent lunch cooked by David, and a light supper. Here I should mention that early in the trip, David's camera packed up, so we shared mine, taking every shot twice.



**Camp at La Bérarde, Roger and David**

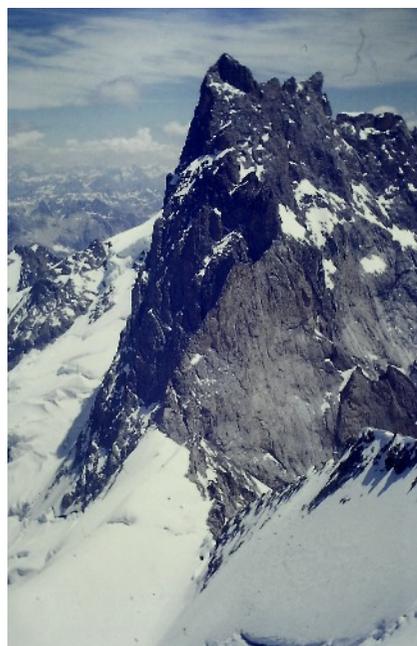
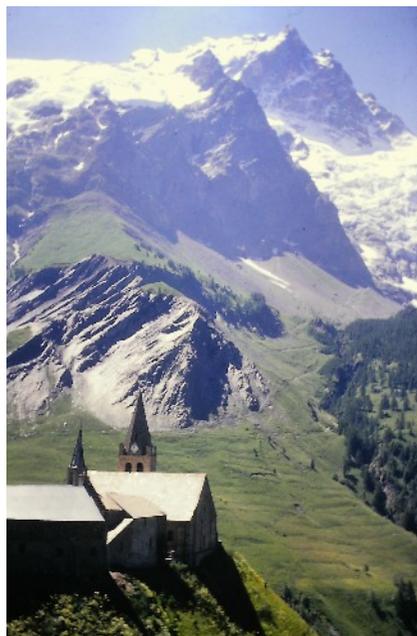
After a good lunch at the Hotel des Alpes, we parked across the river without pitching camp and set off for what should have been a delightful walk up to the Refuge Evariste Chancel (2,508 m.), but our sunburned shoulders turned into one long agony! Above the pines, rock soapwort and mountain avens were growing in profusion; we passed some boys having trouble with stubborn donkeys and arrived at the hut soon after 7, a pleasant old hut delightfully situated above a lake with views over alps and green hills to the north, but an uncongenial warden, whose rough wine did nothing for our otherwise, excellently cooked steaks!

**La Meije, from La Grave**

After a fine sunset with some clouds to the S.E. we retired to bed at 9 in a small dormitory which we had to ourselves.

Away 4:30 with a view to traversing Le Râteau and crossing the Brèche de la Meije to the Promontoire Hut, for a traverse of that great mountain back to La Grave, we followed a path to the Col du Lac, then across to the Glacier de La Girose, up which we cramponned to arrive at the Col de La Girose (3,518 m.) at 7:30, with fine views. We roped up to descend down a steep couloir to the upper Glacier de La Selle (8:15), and crossed to the Brèche du Râteau (3,235 m.) at 9:30 for a nice scramble up an easy rock ridge, followed by an unpleasant snow ridge into which we kept sinking, very tiring, and up to the summit ridge where David and I left our 'sacks and followed Roger up the summit ridge, which became tricky, so we roped up for a traverse over slabs with unstable snow, to reach the 3,809 m. east (main) summit of Le Râteau at 1 p.m.

**La Meije from  
Le Râteau summit ridge**





Descending the east ridge of Le Râteau, with La Meije beyond

After a snack from Roger's 'sack, we returned to ours where we lunched amid gathering clouds from the southwest and high overcast. With very impressive views of La Meije we descended the east ridge, CRA-RG-FDS, quite nice climbing, to the first shoulder where we rappelled off a peg, neatly over the rimaye to reach a snow shelf leading to the upper Glacier de La Meije below the Brèche de La Meije.

With the weather thickening, we decided to go down; when we passed the Brèche it looked steep and difficult (in fact according to the guidebook the route goes up the far side of it) so I led off down very wet, soft snow, picking up tracks, to rocks, Les Entfetchores, which went easily at first but steepened on glaciated slabs which we gingerly descended, getting quite difficult, to reach a snow band.

Le Râteau: Roger and Richard approaching the summit





It was now raining heavily and Roger and David, following behind me, decided to rappel. The rope stuck, so we left it to return next day, and we soon found the proper path down in a thunderstorm to the foot of the Glacier de La Meije, as dark fell.

#### **Roger and David taking a break on Glacier de La Meije**

Here David led off to the left across the hillside to meet the path through trees which led to the Evariste Chancel path at Chalet Puy Vachier, but we missed the proper crossing of the Meije torrent and had a nasty scramble down to the road, reaching the car at 10:30.

With the rain now stopped we pitched camp and, after supper of soup and bully hash, retired to bed.

We woke at 9.00 to a very fine morning to find that we had pitched right on the path, so after hastily moving our tents, we relaxed until 2:30 when we set off to retrieve the rope. There was cloud down the valley and the Meije was plastered. We walked pleasantly up the right bank of the Meije stream past Chalet Chavachiere and stopped at 3:30 for a good lunch of bread and cheese at the upper limit of the grass. With clouds now building up, lightly clad and geared, carefully marking our way we ascended to the rocks, light rain starting as we reached them.

When David and Roger reached the rope, they found it easy to retrieve. With a much easier descent than the previous day, we reached camp, rather wet, for a good dinner in camp and drinks in the village.

Next morning, we got drying underway before breakfast and wrote cards home, then after a large salad lunch we packed up, in sunshine but with clouds building up before setting off for the Bernese Oberland, with our first stage a fine drive to break our journey at Chamonix. Over the high Cols du Lautaret and Galibier, the latter a very fine alpine pass with many hairpins, down to St. Jean de Maurienne, over the Col de Télégraphe to Albertville and Mégève, with a long winding descent through Les Houches and up to Chamonix, where we used the excellent Douches Municipales, 1 franc each, before checking in at the Brévent chalet, completely changed and modernised since my previous stay there in 1958, with the dear old Madame gone, the barn pulled down and replaced by rooms, with no self-cooking and 5 NF per bunk bed.

After searching in vain for a restaurant serving fish - on a Friday in Catholic France! we went into a restaurant opposite the Marmotte for a disappointing, lukewarm meal then went to Le Choucas to make up for it with Fondue Savoyarde, Blanc des Blancs and raspberries and cream (Chantilly).

Next morning we were up in good time and after shopping we set off, pulling off the road for breakfast at Tréléchamp above Argentières, beside a little stream with a fine panorama of the Aiguilles and Mont Blanc. Over the low, (4,793 ft.), easy Col des Montets to Vallorcine and into Switzerland, up the Trient valley and over the 4,997 ft. Col de la Forclaz, on a road very rough in places with rebuilding in progress, quite steep with several hairpin bends then a pleasant descent through vineyards to Martigny where we changed money and shopped. We then drove down the Rhone valley to Aigle and up a wooded valley, where we stopped for lunch below Leysin. From Leysin we crossed the Col du Pillon, an easy 5,070 ft. pass, to Gstaad where we tried to phone Tim Watts at his home there, but drew a blank; we later found out that he was away fishing in Scotland! We descended to Spiez (ice cream stop) and along Lake Thun, through the outskirts of Interlaken and up to Wilderswil where we shopped, clouds robbing us of the famous Jungfrau view, then up to Lauterbrunnen where we pitched on a large site (Weidi), a grand spot below the Staubbach Falls. The facilities were good, but not big enough for the summer crowds. We dined in camp on pork chops with some rather poor Fondant.

Sunday dawned clear, soon becoming very hot, with good views of the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn and Grosshorn and, from the village, of the Jungfrau. After writing cards we explored the village and the Staubbach Falls, with a gallery behind, then packed and set off for the station aiming for the 1:30 train to Kleine Scheidegg, but underestimated the distance and missed it, so we walked up the road to Trümmelbach, hoping to see the famed scenery, but found the through and scenic paths to be not coincident. We ascended steeply above the Trümmelbach, seeing nothing of the falls, to Brech, then Mettlenalp and up to Wengernalp. It started to spot with rain for a while after Brech, with the Jungfrau and its neighbours clouded over.

Missing the train from Wengernalp by 10 minutes, we slowed down to reach Kleine Scheidegg and a beer and chocolate before catching a train to Eigergletscher, with a group of American ski-wear models. We found the hotel and its dormitory closed, but as the last train had now gone down, the staff kindly obliged and let us share a comfortable room, providing us with a good scratch supper in the kitchen: bread and cheese and apricot tart, plenty of it, good and filling, with as much coffee as we could drink. We turned in for a very comfortable night.

David and Roger were away at 4.00 for the ordinary route up the Eiger, leaving me (who had traversed the mountain a few years before - YRCJ 1960; 9(30): 32-36 'A Traverse of the Eiger and the Monch' by R Gowing) to take our kit up to Jungfraujoch on the train, but they found it running wet and returned just after I'd had breakfast. After settling up - very reasonable - we took the 8:15 train to Jungfraujoch (3,454 m.), with stops at Eigerwand to look out of the window on the north face, and Eismeer on the south face, where the scheduled 5 minute stop was only 2 minutes and I was caught with a film to change. We left the Jungfraujoch at 10, unroped, down the Jungfaufirn to lunch and siesta for an hour on the Grüneegg moraine, then up the Grüneeggfirn to the Grünhornlücke (3,289 m.) with a few drops of rain - would it be just as in 1989 when bad weather robbed my party of the Finsteraarhorn? and down to the Finsteraarhorn hut (3,050 m.) by 4, seeing a Pilatus Porter ski-plane land with supplies. We dined on a wet and inauspicious evening on curry and rice before turning in hopefully.

After a good night we were almost last away at 4:10, bound for the Finsteraarhorn by its ordinary route. We followed a well-marked path up a spur behind the hut in gathering light; at its top we put crampons on and sorted out an abominable rope tangle and set off, CRA-FDS-RG, now last party but 2, up and across the glacier to the S.W. ridge at 05:00, which we followed for a little way, then creamed up for the ascent of a steepish glacier above an icefall. The snow was not too bad but our crampons were balling, so we doffed them and continued up to reach the Hugiattel (4.094 m.) at 6, in mist in the updraft of the terrific, steep north face. Now in a caravan, RG-FDS-CRA, mostly following the guide, Bumann of Saas Fe, whom I'd met before, with his middle-aged client, and overtaking a slow pair, nice climbing though a fair bit of snow on rocks, led us to the spacious summit, at 9:00, of the Finsteraarhorn, at 4274 m, the highest peak in the Oberland.

At 9:30 we set off, last to leave (continentals don't seem to eat much on top, maybe unacclimatised as I found out 44 years later), in shifting mist and light snow showers, a pleasant descent to regain the Hugiattel at 10:30. The mist was thinning by now and it was becoming rather hot. We trudged down through soft snow and after deroping, decramponning and idling at the top of the hut spur, reached the hut soon after midday. After soup we sunbathed until the mist drove us in for a long session of log-writing. By 4.30 p.m. it was quite clear, with cloud around 4,000 m.

Next morning, away at 2:30 under a clear, starlit sky, with a slight, cool north breeze, we ascended the well-frozen glacier to the upper icefall of the Fieschergletscher, where Roger led, following tracks up the N.E. side, which became increasingly soft, new snow having prevented refreezing of the old soft snow. Above the icefall we came into sunshine (06:00) and after creaming up, I took over the lead to reach the Fieschersattel, 3,923 m., at 8:10. This gave splendid views, to the Finsteraarhorn and range upon range to the east: Schreckhorn, Wetterhörner, Aletschhorn, Jungfrau, Pennine Alps and Mont Blanc.



David and Roger looking back at the Gross Fiescherhorn from the upper Ewigschneefeld

Very pleasant climbing up good easy slabs led us to the 4,048 m. summit of the Gross Fiescherhorn, where we relaxed for half an hour before setting off down the N.W. ridge, at first over rocks with good views over the Lower Grindelwald Glacier to the Eiger's south face, but soon snow, with in one place a 200 ft. very exposed descent on softish snow adhering well to the ice above the north face, which I led and David came down last, a corkscrew peg making a good halfway belay.

Old tracks led over and around a much contorted snow ridge to a steep bit above the saddle 3,615 m. Here we dithered a bit, the sight of a small snow slide on the direct descent deciding us to follow the tracks which led us ingeniously, south round the steep bit then contouring, then the same again and round the Walcherhorn to a small icefall on its south-west flank, where we missed the track and crossed a bit too low. We rested on rocks below the S.W. ridge of the Walcherhorn for a snack and drink, then set off (CRA-RG-FDS), contouring round the head of the Ewigschneefeld, leaving the tracks which went off to the Bergli Hut and joining another heading for the Ober Mönchjoch (3,626 m.) which we crossed at about 4:30 to reach the Jungfrauoch at 5 p.m.

The dormitory was full of a meet; the undermanager wanted us to take 3 single rooms at 22 francs each and wouldn't let us share just one, so we reluctantly forewent the Jungfrau and caught the last train down, arriving at Lauterbrunnen at 8. 00. We enjoyed an excellent dinner at the Hotel Steinbock before retiring to bed in camp at midnight.

Next morning we packed up in showers (so we wouldn't have got up the Jungfrau anyway) and shopped in Lauterbrunnen before setting off down the valley in heavy rain which cleared before we reached Interlaken. There we took an hour's break for shopping and coffee.

The weather cleared to give us the famous view of the Jungfrau before we set off heading for Lucerne, stopping in rain at Ebligen beside Lake Brienz for a snack, then over the 1,007 m. Brünig Pass to Lucerne, where we enjoyed another excellent dinner at the Hotel Continental. Finding the Lucerne Lido campsite full, we drove on to Meggen, where we pitched in the rain, as it turned out, in a big puddle! Heavy rain continued, with a long break, through the night; during the second spell of rain we found water flowing over the groundsheet but after taking defensive action we avoided further wetting.

After that wet night, we breakfasted in the campsite building before moving off in showers and low cloud, which soon cleared as we drove via Küssnacht, Zug, Zürich, Schaffhausen with the famous Rhine Falls and so into Germany.

We changed travellers' cheques and bought food at Hüfingen and stopped for a roadside picnic and drying session just beyond Donaueschingen, then followed the river Neckar to Horb, via Calw to Pforzheim and autobahn via Karlsröhe to Heidelberg, where we parked in the university square for a brief stroll in this lovely city before dining at the Ritter on Ungarische Gulaschsuppe, a good and plenteous Wienerschnitzel and fresh raspberries with cream, Asbach-Uralt schnapps and coffee, a lovely meal.



Our last picnic lunch, beside the Rhine, before our dash to Ostend for the ferry

Returning to the autobahn, we continued to the Frankfurt exit, where we followed signs a long way to a well-equipped campsite at Heddenheim, not marked on any map of ours, where we pitched by our headlamps on ground which was very hard due to lack of rain, for a good night's rest.

On our final Saturday, we set off via Hoechst (with its chemical works) and Mainz to Bingen, where we started on a delightful drive down the classical Rhine: castles, crags, barges, all bar Rhine-maidens! After shopping in St. Goar, we stopped for lunch and a sun bathe just beyond Andernach, on the left bank of the Rhine. On casually checking our ferry ticket we realised with alarm that our boat was due out of Ostend at 8:45 p.m. rather than 12:30, so we hastily packed up and got a move on. I drove to Bonn, following the autobahn past Cologne, with a glimpse of the cathedral, to Aachen where, after a rather bumpy and slow frontier crossing, David took over and averaged 55 mph through Belgium, via Liege, Louvain, Brussels and onto the Ostend motorway, with a stop for petrol at Ghent, to board the MV Prinses Josephine-Charlotte with just 25 minutes to spare. Occupying bunks in the dormitory, after a light snack we had 2 hours' rest before the attendant turned us out with an hour to go before we docked at Dover at 12:30. We had obviously mistaken the arrival time for the departure time.

We were soon off, and after sausage and chips in Dover, we camped for the rest of the night on the roadside between Dover and Folkestone. In the morning we followed the A20 to London where we stopped at Westminster Cathedral for David to attend Mass, then up A5 and M1 to Rugby (to avoid a general 50 mph speed limit in force at the time), then A5 to Hinckley and across to Nottingham, stopping for lunch near Breedon. We continued via the Doncaster bypass to Leeds, to arrive at Roger's home at 4:30. After we'd sorted our gear, Roger's parents gave us a substantial tea before David and I set off at 4:30 p.m. to drive our separate ways home, in my case arriving at my parents' home in Keswick at 9:30 p.m.

# Winter Chippings

## Looking Forward - Looking Back

As lockdowns came and went, members found ways to occupy themselves and Mick Borroff ended up looking to the future and then to the distant past.

After their nail-biting escape from Morocco, with lockdown soon in effect, his first YRC priority was to crack on with building the new website, a project that eluded completion during his term as President, despite Andy Syme's and his best efforts. Andy identified the website developer behind the new FRCC and CC websites and Pete Sterling was engaged to take on our project. He was a pleasure to work with and helped Mick enormously, to acquire the skills to work with WordPress.org the web platform and understand its many complexities.

Becca Humphreys, Michael Smith and both Tim and Richard Josephy helped with content and workflows for our bespoke huts and meets booking systems. The new website went live in May and stands on its merits.

Alongside this, Mick also took the opportunity for local activities in North Yorkshire including walking in search of antiquities.

As he puts it.....

"It was a pleasure for Hilary and me to expand our knowledge of the local path network in Nidderdale and the southeast Yorkshire Dales. We devised lots of different circuits with as much variety as we could. Fortunately, there was lots of choice on both the surrounding gritstone moorland as well as the limestone landscape.

Google Earth's aerial imaging was very useful in finding shooting tracks crossing Open Access Land on the grouse moors which are unmarked on OS mapping, to help devise new circuits with a minimum of heather bashing.

I also used the mapping on the Historic England website to identify sites of cup and ring marked rocks and other antiquities. In some areas there are a lot of rocks on the ground, but few have carvings and so the GPS was very useful in locating them in heather and bracken. Burhill ridge above Skyreholme has some good and easily accessible examples, as does Guiscliffe near Pateley Bridge.

As lockdown eased, the car parks at the honey pots became rammed and local knowledge was invaluable to plan parking at less frequented spots. Walks with Ian Hawkes, John Sutcliffe, Rory Newman, David Hick, Richard Taylor and Peter Chadwick were also enjoyed in Nidderdale, Wharfedale, Wensleydale and the North York Moors."



John Sutcliffe and the walk-in along the Langstrath valley.



John getting to grips with the Blencathra slate and nearing the top of Cam Crag Ridge after .





Richard Taylor and  
Peter Chadwick near  
Great Shunner Fell

John Sutcliffe and  
Ian Hawkes on the  
Nidderdale way near  
Scar House Reservoir



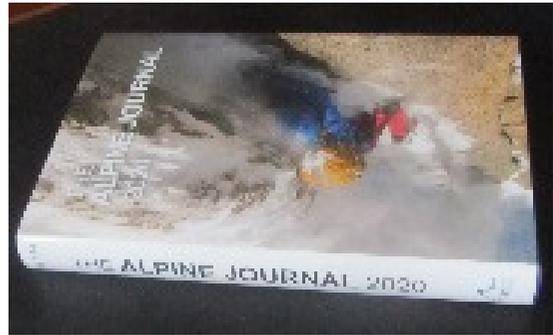
## Grampian Speleological Group

The latest bulletin will be lodged in our library and as usual, it has interesting caving exploits. This time it covers two expeditions to the Jaintia Hills in northern India. The first followed the ridge of Nongkhlieh into the area and a big part of this trip was training young locals interested in becoming serious cavers.

A month later, as part of an international team, they returned to Meghalaya and visited the Jalaphet area before moving on to explore caves in Thlang Moi.

## The Alpine Club

This journal is also on its way to our library.



As usual the journal is full of interesting reads, a mixture of recent events, history and the environment in which we pursue our interests.

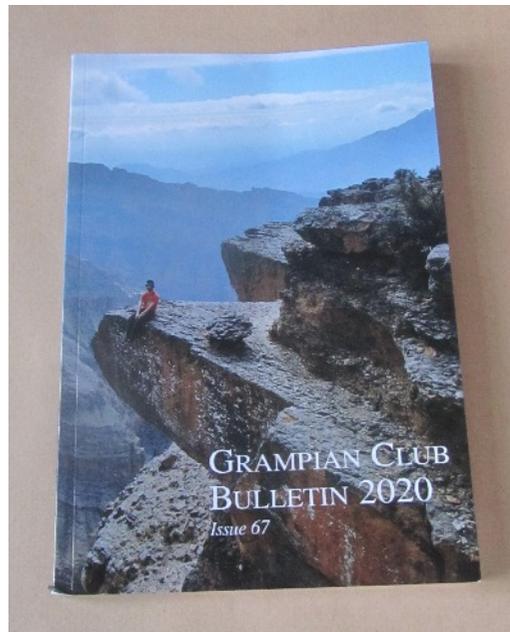
It includes a report of the first ascent of Link Sar (7041m) in the Karakoram by its south east face, long thought one of the last great challenges.

## The Grampian Club

Another club journal finding its way to our library is that of the Grampians whose Inbhirphaolain hut we have used in numerous occasions.

Unfortunately planning consent has been given for a hydro-electric scheme in the Glen.

This edition includes a trip to Oman and its grand canyon (pictured on the front of their Journal), walking in Ethiopia, a trek to Laya in Bhutan and winter walking in Catalunya, Spain



### “You lot are addicted to mountains”

This is a quote on an Alpine Meet from Sylvie Nickels, widow of George Spenceley who herself died earlier this year.

She was his second wife and was a travel writer whom, as a friend, he had known for many years. She had been the first to give him advice on Lapland for one of his trips.

Sylvie, apart from other writing, was for many years a regular travel feature-writer for the Financial Times and editor of guide books.

One of her books is called 'Tomorrow Will Be Better' but her tomorrows have come to an end.

After they married and with common interests, their further journeys could be combined. They needed to be somewhere central for George's numerous talks and lectures and not far from London airports for her work, so they settled for a house in Deddington, a village in north Oxfordshire, on the edge of the Cotswolds.

They were barely settled before George embarked on a five-week canoe journey across the Barren Lands of Canada's greatest wilderness.



Newly married, Sylvie announced that she would go with him on the next trip, so in 1979 they canoed almost the full length of the Danube; 1,700 miles through seven countries. They completed the Romanian section down to the Black Sea the following year.

Having canoed Europe's greatest river, they turned their attention to America's. In 1984 they canoed almost the full length of the Mississippi, providing a further lecture subject for George, and for Sylvie a book; 'The Big Muddy'.

"If you want to travel, marry a travel writer" George has advised and in his case the rewards were considerable. Quite apart from the pleasures of their relationship, Sylvie's writing regularly for a distinguished 'national' brought many freebies, some of which extended to her husband.

Sylvie was born in Switzerland on 10th October 1930 in the French-speaking town of Neuchatel. Her Swiss mother, Yvonne, and British father, Stanley, first met on a ship travelling to New Zealand, and this is what Sylvie has often attributed her love of travel.

Her childhood was spent near London and as a child she loved climbing trees and wanted to be a boy, so she could do 'more interesting things' – and become an RAF fighter pilot! Since becoming a pilot seemed unlikely, Sylvie resorted to her other love in life and became a writer. As a child, she wrote numerous stories, and was delighted at the age of 17 to sell her first short story to a magazine for the princely sum of 18 guineas. After studying at secretarial college she got her first job as secretary to the editor of Estate Magazine. She then worked in public relations, all the while writing short stories - some of which she sold to Women's magazines.

Her love of writing and travel came together in 1955 when she was offered the role of Assistant Editor to a travel magazine. The hours were long and the salary low, but it was the beginning of her career as a travel writer. Sylvie spent a year in Finland in 1959, where she taught English in various hotels. She fell in love with the forests and spectacular scenery, made life-long friends, and returned there many times in years to come.

In 1976 Sylvie moved to Oxfordshire with George and married in 1977.

Sylvie and George were a perfect match. George had been an RAF pilot who flew with Bomber Command, until his plane was shot down and he became a prisoner of war. He was a geography teacher, lecturer, photographer and mountaineer. They shared a mutual love of travel, camping, bird-watching, writing and photography, though it's fair to say, Sylvie was happy to leave the mountaineering to George!

Her love for trees and of woods was maintained and, when she was living in Deddington with George, she was instrumental in setting up and raising the funds for and planting a small wood called Daeda's Wood as part of the Woodland Trust's Millennium Wood Project.

It was there that John Brown, our new President, first met Sylvie who he says was quite inspirational and driven to make things happen.

John relates "I remember her first celebration event where she managed to get John Craven to visit and celebrate her achievement in getting the wood established.

We had some very robust discussions about the management of the trees but always remained good friends.

It is strange how fate works, as this was where I met George for the first time, who convinced me to come along to my first YRC meet in the Dales."

As well as travel articles, Sylvie took on the editorship of Fodor Guides to several European countries in the 1970s and 80s, notably Finland, the former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

In all of these travels and others extending to the Baltic States and Russia, George was a regular bag and camera-carrying companion.



From 2005, Sylvie's career as a fiction writer really blossomed. She self-published a trilogy of novels, and a book of short stories about village life. She also published a novel set partly in Finland, and one on overcoming alcohol addiction.

After George died, she continued to write. In 2014 she published a book of short stories about life in a retirement village, and her memoirs in 2018.

A writer until the end, Sylvie was working on ideas for her next novel: a thriller to be set in a nursing home, with a hero suffering from dementia. Sadly she never had time to complete it.

She currently has a dozen or more books in print, available from online sellers.

## Geoparks

Earlier in the Journal, we touched on Charnwood Forest Regional Park with its internationally important rocks. They are working towards an application to be classed as a UNESCO Geopark.

A Geopark is an area of geological significance, managed with three main objectives: to protect the geological landscape and the nature within it; to educate visitors and local communities; and to promote sustainable development, including sustainable tourism

Last year UNESCO designated fifteen new Global Geoparks, of which ten were listed partly for their caves and /or karst features. This would not have been achieved without the work of many speleologists and karst scientists who explored, documented and published reports of their findings in these important and sometimes unique locations.

Charnwood is being assisted by Oxford University specialists, who have played a recent part in very similar sites in Canada, achieving that status.

The sites of caves and karst interest just designated were:

Discovery in Canada, Xiangi (China), Hantangang (Korea), Dak Nong (Vietnam), Yangan-Tau (Russia), Lauhanvuori-Hämeenkangas (Finland), Djerdap (Serbia), Granada (Spain), Maestrazgo (Spain) and Rio Coco (Nicaragua).

There are seven such parks in the U&K. They are Anglesey, the 'Great Forest' on the western side of the Brecon Beacons, Torbay, Shetland, North West Highlands, the Northern Pennines and underground, Marble Arch Caves, Northern Ireland.

Global Geoparks promote the geological heritage of particular areas along with their natural and cultural heritages.

There are less than 150 in the entire world.

# Caves & Karst

Next year (2121) has been designated the International Year of Caves and Karst, with the specific aim of teaching the world about the importance of caves and karst, something of which the general public knows very little. There will be a major effort to make the world aware of the value of caves and karst with a series of public lectures, programs, demonstration of caving techniques etc.

No doubt some of our cavers will be participating and we look forward to hearing how it went.

## Meets they are a changing

Back in the late 1960s our meet programme was very different, some typical meets have been dropped, some are now infrequent, some have changed out of all recognition and new ones are with us. When older members have been reminiscing during 'lockdown' it has reminded many of these very different times.

The fun element has to an extent been lost. No more are the dafter pastimes pursued like becking (trying to get up hills or even mountains without getting dry); we dropped the annual high level camping meets (somewhere over 2000 feet) and caving meets for all-comers are rare.

At Derek Clayton's funeral, we chatted at length of such things and it became apparent that to a large extent this is because the age profile of the Club like many others, has changed dramatically. Membership holds up but people join far later in life. Looking back at Derek's exploits, we recalled a high-level camp by Red Tarn when Derek had carried up a two litre plastic bottle full of his own made elderberry wine. Shaken and stirred by the time we had camped, it was a frothy light pink mess but tasted OK. There was even some left at the traditional Sunday breakfast, when we all pooled any leftovers before breaking camp. Some very strange breakfasts ensued over the years but none more so than porridge made with what was left of the elderberry. Pink Porridge!

The Christmas meet has however always followed a traditional format but not this year. Given Covid restrictions, as detailed in the meet report a virtual meeting this time but nothing virtual about the cheese. Members subscribed to a selection of six rare cheeses and were tutored at home via zoom.

Hopefully next year we can revert to tradition.



Caving meets were where the 'proper' cavers would be accompanied by other members in crude outfits, usually an old boiler suit. As acetylene torches gave way to battery power, hemp ladders to electron and eventually, single rope techniques our cavers progressed to really serious work all over the world leaving the climbers and fell walkers behind.

We also had several meets each year based on or around country pubs. The more elderly and better-heeled members would take the rooms and others slept in a barn out back, camped on the lawn or on many occasions put our air-beds on the bar room floor. Fire regulations put paid to that.

One pub meet each year, our lady folk were invited along to see what we wanted to have them think we got up to. This required a larger hotel with more rooms and usually near a site for caravans and motor homes.

This has evolved to a point where a cohort of couples now have a midweek holiday break for a few days in a very smart and not inexpensive country house hotel with no camping provision. No longer of any real relevance to unaccompanied member or the few still in work.. Paul Dover, who has organised recent social gatherings, has reviewed the programme and hopes this will trigger interest from potential attendees. Over the last 15 years the members participating have slowly reduced in number as age takes its toll. The idea for this article came as a result of their frustrated attempts to organise one this year, twice cancelled owing to Covid. He has found it an interesting reminder of enjoyments past.

There is of course a very large plus side. We now have more meets in the high mountain and more remote areas and mount far more overseas meets and expeditions. This does though mean we provide far less opportunities for the older and less fit members to join many weekend meet activities in the UK.

The meets committee will consider any meets suggested if the party making the suggestion is happy to organise it, unless it means a large financial outlay with uncertain take up.

## **Let there be not a trace left behind**

The Club has been looking at whether there is any way or scope to lessen and improve our environmental impact. We already have as energy-saving design and lighting/heating as is practical and share cars to meets whenever possible.

We pride ourselves in leaving no evidence of our passing and there seems little else we can do, but ideas are always welcome. Indeed most of us when confronted with litter on a hillside will take it away even though not of our making.

There have been massive exercises to clean up man made debris in many places including Ben Nevis and in the Khumbu Valley and other Himalayan hot spots. (if that is not a contradiction of terms).

The great and the good of caving played their part this year, as they traditionally do. Over 300 speleologists gathered on the Vercors plateau in France and amongst other things set out to clean additional sections of the Gouffre Berger. This time the old 'Bivouak Mélusine' at -950 m was targeted by the clean-up teams and over 200 kg of rubbish were taken out of the cave and properly disposed of.

This camp, beside the Gouffre Berger, hosted cavers from 11 countries and the cavers also tackled the Salle Eymas, -750 m where scientific work, surveying and mapping was carried out and samples of sediment deposits taken for study in the laboratory.

## Research

It is odd what you unearth when researching one subject. I have learned of a quote from a local artist in respect of a sitter posing nude "it was hard to get all the folds in the frame." As the sitter and now elderly gentleman is a member we will save his embarrassment.

## Doug Scott

In a year of many losses, we must now mark the passing of Doug Scott, regarded as one of the world's greatest mountaineers. He died of a cancer at the age of 79. After studying at Loughborough in geography and P.E., he started a career as a teacher in Nottingham where he worked in the 1960s and 70s, but climbing was his main love.

He climbed Everest in 1975 with Dougal Haston, the first Brits to summit. Doug had been on over forty expeditions to the high mountains of Asia including the Ogre or Baintha Brakk, one of the most difficult mountains in Pakistan, where he broke both ankles near the summit carrying on, on his hands and knees: a really tough and determined man.

In 2011, Doug was awarded the most prestigious climbing award, the Piolet d'Or, to go with his CBE and Royal Geographical Society's Patron's Gold Medal.

Doug was also tireless in promoting responsible tourism in the Himalayas and founded Community Action Nepal, a charity that supports the mountain people of that country.

## Reginald Farrer

As tenants of the Ingleborough Estate, we have for many years been closely linked to the Farrer family and those of us long-time members have known several generations of landlord. Like many I have heard anecdotes about Reginald, the famous plant collector and I can remember BBC Gardeners' World doing a piece about him.



Ray Harben has just pointed out that the Yorkshire Gardens Trust has just had a lecture on him and, from the publicity, we learn that five years ago Historic England did a comprehensive survey of the old Ingleborough Hall gardens. His legacy obviously lives on.

There was mention of the Alpine Garden Society and, being a keen rock gardener myself I followed this up and learned a lot more about Reginald.

The Society's top award is actually a Farrer Medal, named after Reginald, described as an eccentric plant hunter, gardener and writer, often referred to as the 'Prince of Alpine Gardeners'.

Reginald Farrer was born in 1880. He grew up in Clapham, fascinated by plants. As a youngster he memorised a school botany book and rebuilt the rock garden at his parents' home. He went on to create a nursery with a sloping garden of rocks mixed with leaf mould, with water trickling through it. His ambitions did not stop there and he proceeded to plant the face of the limestone 'cliff' we can see across the lake in the grounds. He included all manner of Alpines collected on his travels. He is said to have fired seeds into the rock from his shotgun, sitting in a boat. The end result was superb.

Travel and plant hunting became an obsession as soon as he left university. While at Oxford he had created a rockery there.

Reginald went on his first expedition in 1902 visiting Japan and Korea and writing his first book, 'The Gardens of Asia: Impressions from Japan'. In 1907, 'My Rock-Garden' followed to great acclaim and still available, and the following year 'Alpines and Bog-Plants'. Numerous other titles followed, but he died doing what he loved best, when at 40, out on a plant-hunting expedition in Burma.

His legacy is that his enthusiasm for Alpines and advice on rock garden construction inspired a generation of gardeners and still does.

## Forgotten Techniques

Or perhaps techniques never learned. There was a small fall of snow early December, even down as far as the lowlands of Rutland and Lincolnshire and for a short period chaos ensued. People just don't know how to drive in snow.

In the past, I have got into trouble doing so and as such, I know sometimes it is unavoidable, but for many years now we have seen so little that younger drivers don't have a clue.

Snow is a nuisance, but for our interests provides interesting challenges, but nowadays we have to go further and further afield to find it. Memories fade and I cannot be sure, but back in the middle of the last century, I seem to remember far harsher winters. Most Christmas meets were in snow as were many January meets but I cannot remember the last time we had those conditions. As reported in YRCJ 2011; 13(9): 39 in January 2010 we had to clear the icy LHG track using ice-axes.

Sometime in the 1990s we had a Christmas meet at the Whitefriars in Settle, in heavy snow conditions and having set off with a group of five to walk over the hills, I turned back as I realised my kit was not up to it. You could get in over head-high in the hollows. I decided to drive down to Skipton but having dropped down into a dip in the road half way to Gargrave I could not get up the other side and I think eleven cars in all were stuck there.

We were getting progressively buried in snow. It was up to the roof on one side, but we managed to keep drivers-side doors free, Nobody in any car had a mobile phone; hard to believe these days. It was late morning when we got stuck and late afternoon before help arrived. Apparently a passing train driver had alerted the police, who had raised two farmers with snow blades and had been digging towards us.

I was finally freed, but towards Gargrave and I was looking for somewhere for the night. Enquiring in a pub the landlord kindly rang the railways and found that one last train was going north in 45 minutes so I left my car there and hoofed it to the station, and ended up walking back to Settle from Giggleswick in time for the second course.

It was even worse in Leicestershire and the M1 was closed and I had to wander all over the place to get home on the Sunday. Will we ever see conditions like that again?

I remember cars stuck at LHG for days on end unable to get out. Another meet not able to get from Hawes into Wharfedale and having a 40 mile detour. I got to one meet near Malham by driving with my nearside tyres in the grass verge for traction. There was a white out on High Street walking over from Kentmere to Kirkstone. Those were the days.



Ray Harben has provided this picture from a Hill Inn meet, persons unknown but one possibly Trevor Salmon.

### **‘Walking Class heroes’, by Roly Smith.**

The twentieth anniversary of the Countryside & Rights of Way (CRoW) Act in 2020 provides a good opportunity to look back on the doughty band of campaigners who fought for so long to give ramblers their cherished right to roam. This century-old battle brought to the fore a number of larger-than-life characters who were prepared to go to extreme lengths--in some cases even imprisonment--to reclaim the right of access, which were taken from the people by the hated Enclosure Acts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This book describes the life and work of twenty of these 'wilderness warriors', retelling the battles they fought, against seemingly intractable politicians and the Establishment, and includes memories of personal encounters by the author with many of them. From the nature-loving romantic poet John Clare and access pioneers such as Tom Stephenson and Benny Rothman, to present-day activists and writers such as Jim Perrin, Fiona Reynolds and Kate Ashbrook, ‘Walking Class Heroes’ describes the contributions made by philanthropists, writers and political militants. Their battlegrounds included the Peak District, Dartmoor and Scotland and their tactics encompassed campaigning journalism, legal dexterity and even mass trespass. Some are no longer with us of course, but several continue the fight for the same kind of public access to the countryside currently enjoyed by our neighbours in Scotland and the rest of Europe.

## Seeking Simple Shelter

Richard Genner has produced an enjoyable, interesting and informative read, coming about as a result of his interest in both heritage and history, aided enormously by the various Climbing, Mountaineering and Hill Walking Club members and their journals including our own. He has used bothies and similar all his adult life and gained immeasurable enjoyment and long-lasting friendships from the activity which far outweighs any downsides (overloaded cars, full tanks of petrol emptied, and in his own words 'his own energy reserves depleted, etc. and on one occasion a torn cartilage!').

He does not agree with or support the efforts of those who seek to make personal financial gain from writing about the bothies in books which they subsequently sell and so *Seeking Simple Shelter* is an electronic book only being mentioned within the climbing and walking fraternity to people who will appreciate and understand it.

As the world returned to normal after the war, an increasing number of hill walkers started to use abandoned cottages as a base nearer the hills. These deserted former homes were tough and it took decades for roofs to collapse and windows to rot away, so they made adequate sleeping accommodation for those wandering the hills. In the early sixties, the more adventurous took their bikes into the wilderness, including a college lecturer named Bernard Heath who noticed that many of the places that he used were deteriorating.

In 1963 Bernard saw Tunskeen with its slate roof on, not too bad a doss, but returned in 1965 to find a sad broken ruin. It took an inspired entry in the Backhill of Bush bothy book and Bernard's dogged determination to put a roof on the remaining decent walls, to start something still flourishing to this day. Out of this, the Mountain Bothies Association was founded and Richard was secretary for a time in the late 70s/early 80s.

That walkers, climbers and cross-country cyclists here in Britain use abandoned former homesteads for overnight accommodation in wild and lonely countryside, is probably not unique to these islands, but certainly there is not a lot of it going on around the world. The word bothying has now entered the English language, at least on these shores, to describe such use, but also to express the social and cultural aspects of this practice; it is a development of the word bothy, previously little known outside Scotland and itself derived from the Scottish word bothan. What Richard says he believes is unique is the organisation, the Mountain Bothies Association, that takes responsibility for the renovation and maintenance of such places on a national basis.

The only place I know with anything similar is New Zealand and that is not the same.

In his introduction, Richard writes that many accounts now available, as to how bothying started, usually identify two factors as the cause of the birth of it; the economics of the use of such wild and lonely land, changing land use and practices meant that it was no longer necessary to maintain staff living in such remote spots; and as part of a greater general social change (accelerated by the effect of two World Wars) which meant that a generation or two

of young people saw no benefit in living in such remote locations contrary, to the example of a number of generations before them.

Some suggest that bothying started between the two World Wars, this may broadly be true of the bothies in the Scottish Highlands, but it is not such an accurate observation when applied to the upland areas of the Scottish Borders, England and Wales. Some evidence of this is found in Richard's digital 'book'.

Undoubtedly, it is certainly true and accurate to state that the formation of the Mountain Bothies Association in December 1965 is a landmark date in this activity, but it was not the start of the practice. That there is a lot of written and photographic material around, describing bothying activity following the formation of the MBA, is undeniable, but dig deep enough and there are also accounts of bothying type activity to be found recounting 'bothy trips' before this landmark 1965 date. Richard's *Seeking Simple Shelter* is a compilation of accounts of such pre-MBA use.

Those of us starting to get active in the hills in the 1960s can vouch for the practice of dossing down anywhere you could find.

Richards digital 'book' concentrates on bothies now maintained by the MBA. There are bothies out there, outside the MBA fold, which quite successfully provide simple accommodation in wild and lonely places. These bothies are very much a part of bothying practice and culture but Richard firmly believes that it is important that they remain 'under the radar', that they do not get publicity, so they don't get much attention in this book.

If you want a PDF of the publication please contact Richard at [rgatrg11@gmail.com](mailto:rgatrg11@gmail.com)

## **The BMC**

The BMC has had its share of organisational problems of late and a recent Organisational Review identified that affiliated clubs and their members did much for the BMC as volunteers, but that the clubs had little say in development of policy and new initiatives. While the Organisational Review Group has produced some ideas on how to restructure to ensure this happens, the means to best engage with the clubs, and ways that engagement will then lead to policy input into the National Council and the BMC Board, have yet to be agreed.

At present there is a University Clubs Forum and also a forum for those clubs with huts, but nothing for the national and regional clubs.

There is a bit of an anomaly in that we, amongst other clubs, do have huts but also have a national membership.

The BMC have produced a proposed strategy for clubs and clubs were consulted on it, however, the strategy has yet to be considered for adoption by the BMC Board. The overarching goal of the proposed clubs strategy is that: the BMC and clubs work in partnership to promote a shared mission and values and support a thriving club community.

Key to the success of this goal is developing a method by which the BMC and all clubs can engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue.

It is proposed that this situation be changed through the establishment of a regional clubs forum and possibly another for national clubs. The clubs' fora will be different from the BMC Area Meetings, which are open to all members and are primarily a means to disseminate information from the BMC. The clubs' fora will be made up of club officers (or their proxies) representing their members, and, although facilitated by the BMC, it will function for clubs' benefits. A good idea in principle, but possibly just more meetings and more duplication.

The Midlands is the first such forum set up and already gaps in the basic idea are appearing. The 'National' clubs no doubt have issues which don't affect local clubs but national clubs have members in the locality, who can contribute to local issues and as a Leicester based member of the YRC your Editor has been invited to join this forum.

The current thinking is that each regional forum will be coterminous with the existing BMC areas, with an additional forum for the national clubs but the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

The BMC have already got means of disseminating information to clubs and I see the only benefit being if it provides a genuine opportunity for clubs to raise issues that may not be currently being considered by the BMC. It could also allow clubs to get to know each other and generate opportunities for inter-club cooperation, such as shared meets, training, resolving local issues and so forth.

With my many connections and detailed knowledge of the open country available, I can help East Midlands Clubs with access issues, but it remains open to some question as to whether I can gain much for the YRC from this. Time will tell.

## **Lowstern under Covid-19 restrictions - Michael Smith**

Hadrian's Wall divided the Picts and the Scots from the civilised Romano-British - the Berlin Wall, the east and western sectors - the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, North and South Korea. In 2020's it was yellow and black hazard marking tape which divided Lowstern's dining and sitting rooms, each into zones 1 and 2 for the use of their respective 'bubbles'.

Some explanation is needed here for future readers ignorant of the niceties of 'lockdown', 'household bubble' and 'social distancing' which became common parlance as our Government legislated and guided us in an attempt to reduce the spread of corona virus 19 (Covid-19) infection which was wreaking havoc worldwide.

This corona- or crown-shaped virus spread readily through populations, but most seriously affected older people, especially those with respiratory or circulatory problems – for them, treatment often involved many days breathing oxygen enriched air and even weeks sedated on a ventilator, though eventually therapies were found which reduced the need for such dramatic interventions.

*Lockdown* was the first restriction: stay in your own home, strive to shop only once a week if you can't have food delivered, shops selling non-essential items had to close, leaving the house permitted only once a day for one's exercise or walk a pet dog. Those living together in a single household together (perhaps with a nearby person they were caring for) were considered to be a *bubble* or group who were to be kept away from others to avoid the spread of the infection. *Social Isolation* was introduced as lockdown was eased and people were allowed out more often to exercise, shop for a wider range of goods and later, go to pubs, restaurants and hotels – it meant keeping 2m away from others, wearing a mask indoors apart from at home and only reducing the separation to 1m where this was impractical.

Covid-19 first impinged on the YRC by curtailing the March 2020 meet in Morocco, so those planning a second week had to scramble for seats on flights back to anywhere in the British Isles before almost all planes were grounded. Then came the cancellation of one meet after another through that spring and summer until the Club was allowed to hold camping meets (stay outdoors, no communal catering) from early August onwards. Two camping meets were fitted in before the likely weather was considered too inclement: Swaledale and Ravenstonedale.

Most members were not badly stricken by the virus despite many being in the age group considered to be at high risk. However, one senior member was very ill, placed on supplemental oxygen for several days before being released from hospital.

Once hotels and B&Bs were to be re-opened, the YRC's officers started looking at ways of reopening the Club's cottages from August onwards. Richard Sealey, Mick Borroff, Becca Humphreys, Robert Crowther and Ged Campion swung into action deep-cleaning, checking the premises after their six-month enforced closure and devising arrangements at Lowstern to keep two 'bubbles' from joining up – presumably to form a sud.

Low Hall Garth, being the more bijou of the two cottages, was only fit for one 'bubble'.

Use of the cottages was restricted to from Thursday afternoon to Monday morning giving 75 hours through Tuesday and Wednesday for any leftover infection to die out before the next occupants arrived.

Hence Lowstern's yellow and black taped lines between tables and splitting the sitting room in two. Each side was clearly labelled 1 or 2, corresponding to similarly labelled bathrooms and dormitories.

Many of the regular meet attendees were keen to book the cottages and Lowstern's bookings were quickly filled. Clearly, these members valued getting back to their familiar cottage and have a chance to meet up with other members despite the limitations.

Besides the usual walking activities, these visits saw a ukulele being strummed, socialisation and retelling of old tales across the taped divides and shared meals, even if we were sat at different tables.



The then President Elect, now President, John Brown and Ros keep their distance from Membership Secretary, Helen Smith

That the above arrangements for coping with the risk of infection were sound was evidenced by the late September national revisions to restrictions and guidance requiring no changes to be made.

Regrettably, a halt was called in November with another national lockdown. Hope remains though as I finish this note that early December may see our cottages available again for bookings to tiers 1 and 2.

## **Remember today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday**

Things have been tough, still are tough and will be tough for a while yet. None of us would have wished for the current situation, but there are some benefits come out of it. It is all too easy to worry about what is a serious situation and get depressed and desperate, necessity is the mother of invention.

We have seen more of each other than normal in the fairly regular quiz nights we have organised by zoom and with time on their hands more members have put pen to paper.

Not able to have our normal Christmas meet an alternative was devised by Becca Humphreys, novel to say the least.

We had a cheese and tittle evening preceded by presentations by members (on zoom) of activities this year including the Morocco and Ravenstonedale meets.

Having mastered the intricacies of Zoom meetings much more use of this may be made in the future

Committee meetings usually involve some members travelling very long distances and most could now be done using this platform. In our early days as a Club we used to organise lectures and talks but as the membership spread across the country these ceased but could perhaps now be resumed.

# Club Proceedings

## AGM

Despite COVID restrictions the Club decided to hold an AGM this year, coupled with a video and audio conference facility, to provide an opportunity for members to hear the President's address and the presentation of the Accounts by the Treasurer, and to question Club Officials about their reports as usual. In addition to the usual AGM, an Extraordinary General Meeting agreed a number of amendments to the Rules, some modernising in nature, some administrative and two, to do with running our General Meetings.



It was reported that we had three new members and several prospective members; had made two new Honorary Members, but have had seven deaths reported and four members resigned.

The Club officers and appointees remain the same, other than Ged Campion has added joint Hut Warden at Low Hall Garth to his duties and our new President took up his position, supported as Vice President by Rebecca Humphreys. Helen Smith our Membership Secretary continues her role but has now joined the committee.

## Retiring President's Presentation

Rory Newman started by thanking members for making the effort to attend this very different AGM and thanked Becca Humphreys for moderating the meeting.

He went on to mention those who had passed away and noted that of them John Lovett and John I Middleton, had reached the notable milestone of 70 years membership.

“This has been a difficult year for most of us, and for the club.



We had two successful meets at the beginning of the year, then a trip to Morocco - the second week there, which was meant to be spent trekking, was mostly spent scrambling to get flights home as air traffic rapidly stopped - and since then all the meets on the calendar, including a trip to Kamchatka, have been cancelled. I think it was a good selection - I certainly hope it was, as next year's meet calendar will look very much like this year's; Tim Josephy has done a lot of work setting things up, cancelling them, and re-booking, and we owe him a big thank-you.

We DID manage a 'virtual' long walk, and a couple of socially-distant camping meets in late Summer, before regulations were tightened again, and members have continued to meet for socially-distant day walks when allowed, but it has been frustrating.

We have to hope for better things next year, but I fear we MAY still have Covid-19 restrictions to contend with, and meets planned for early 2021 already look doubtful; at this stage I think we have to plan the meets program hoping things will be OK and adapt it if necessary as we go on.

We have also had to close our huts for a time. The hut wardens, Richard Sealey and Alister Renton, plus Ged Campion, have worked very hard to allow us to declare them, as much as possible, Covid secure and to reopen them on a limited basis to members and their parties only. The committee, and Mick Borroff in particular, have put a lot of time into risk assessment and planning; Richard Josephy has also taken on a lot of extra work, cancelling bookings and organising these new ones.

Thanks to all of these - and also to the volunteers who kept Lowstern free from Legionnaires disease and helped get the hut clean and ready for re-occupation. Of course we have had to spend money on extra precautions while losing most of our hut income, but Martyn Trasler our Treasurer cunningly negotiated local authority grants for both huts, so this hasn't been too disastrous. Again, we can only work within current guidelines and hope for better things in the future.

Finally, the restrictions have stopped planned progress with the archive, and with the library at Lowstern - work was ongoing until March and will resume when restrictions allow. As a result the committee has not asked for reports from Alan Linford our Archivist, or Arthur Salmon our Librarian, this year - I hope this will be acceptable to the meeting, and that there will be more to report next year.

After all this gloom, perhaps a little optimism is due.

We are still functioning as a club; we still have two excellent huts; we have an attractive and varied meets program planned for next year. Due at least in part to Covid-19 - which gave our web developer unexpected time to work on this - we have a new and very much improved website - particular thanks to Mick for his input on this, but also to Becca Humphreys, Andy Syme, Michael Smith, Richard and Tim Josephy.

I would urge anyone who hasn't already done so, to log on and have a look: apart from up to date information about club activities, and an improved meets booking system, you can now access all the previous journals reliably, and much other useful material.

We are also in a good position as regards new and potential new members - I'm sure the improved website is helping here - and, on the subject of membership, I'm delighted to say that Helen Smith our Membership Secretary, has agreed, subject to your approval, to join the Committee, where she will be a big asset.

I hope you have all enjoyed the new-look journal - thanks to Roy Denney, our Editor, for much hard work on this; another effect of Covid has I gather, been to stimulate the YRC to write during lockdown, and in spite of fewer meet reports we are promised another bumper edition.

This is just about my last duty as President. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be your President for the last 2 years. I am immensely grateful to the club officials (who do all the work), to the Committee, and to many ordinary members, all of whom have been hugely supportive in a very unusual sequence of events.

Given all the problems I will be relieved to hand over the reins to my successor - I hope you will give him all the support you have given me.

You may know the traditional Chinese curse 'may you live in interesting times'. John, I hope you won't take this amiss if I wish you a Presidency with a lot less 'interest' than mine.

I'd like to finish on a happy note. I had hoped to see many of you at the Dinner; given that this will not be possible, I would like to ask all of you to raise a glass of something appropriate later this evening, and join me in three virtual toasts: to absent friends, to Yorkshire and to the YRC."

## **PRESIDENT Roll Of Honour**

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- 20 RR Newman  
 2021- JF Brown

## **HONORARY MEMBER (PAST)**

1892 Edward Whympier  
 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)  
 2017 John Middleton (m 1962)  
 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 Stemberidge  
 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 Dosser  
 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  
 2021- RC Humphreys

**MEMBERS ELECTED  
 TO THE ALPINE CLUB  
 (CURRENT)**

MJ Borroff  
 G Champion  
 PRP Chadwick  
 J Colton  
 R Gowing  
 DA Hick  
 A Renton  
 M Smith  
 CM Goba

**LIFE MEMBER***(after 35 years in Club)*

Aldred, K  
 Blair, AJ  
 Bush, CD  
 Casperson, JD  
 Chadwick, PRP  
 Chapman, IE  
 Crowther RM  
 Crowther, WCI  
 Denney, RJ  
 Duxbury, AJ  
 Elliott, PA  
 Ellis, JR  
 Errington, RD  
 Farrant, DJ  
 Gowling, 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  
 Lomas, H  
 Marr, AM  
 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  
 Smithson, DA

Stembridge, DW  
 Stembridge, SW  
 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

**MEETS SECRETARY**

1996-09 JH Hooper  
 2016-18 P Elliott  
 2018- TW Josephy

**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

## **ARCHIVIST**

2009-11 JH Hooper  
2012- WA Linford

## **TACKLEMASTER**

2010- G Campion

## **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

2008-16 MJ Borroff  
2016- H Smith

## **WEBMASTER**

2001-08 CG Renton  
2008-09 A Renton  
2009- A Syme

## **WARDENS**

### **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  
2021- G Campion

### **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

## **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 Stembridge  
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



## **Changes**

The Club has a new and more sophisticated web site where you can access back copies of the journals. Journals have been published since 1899 and in those years when, for whatever reason one could not be published, reports of that year were to be found in the subsequent edition.

Up to 1992, forty issues of the YRC Journal were published in eleven volumes, with understandable gaps during two World Wars.

Since then they have changed shape and size twice and have gone under different banners but as always are a rich source of historical and current information about the Club and the places we visit. They include a host of first-ascents, explorations of new caves and details of expeditions, treks and a diverse selection of members' activities all over the world. They also cover over a thousand club meets

Now in full colour they can be searched on the website for material. There are comprehensive indices and more recent editions can be searched electronically. As a result certain elements like the index currently in the journals will be discontinued after this edition.

## The New President

I would like to express my thanks to Rory and all the members who have placed their faith in me to see us through the next 2 years and especially to Becca, agreeing to be vice president, if 2020 is anything to go by, it could be interesting!

Looking back at the last year, who could have foreseen what was going to happen in March and what measures the committee would have to take to ensure the safety of the huts and members, and thanks to Tim Josephy, members were able to gather at campsites, and carry out day walks when the rules of Covid 19 allowed. We have all managed some adventures this year which shows resilience of our members in difficult times.



It is important to look forward, even though things are still uncertain and one thing that has not changed is the need to encourage new members. We have a great platform now in our Website that is easy to navigate and use, which will help reach people and encourage them to join us.

I hope we can include younger people in our adventures, as when they come on our meets, they will see the social interaction we have which is one of the best-selling points of being in a club, coupled with the opportunity to stretch and learn skills from more experienced members. Young blood has to be the future of the club.

Our huts are very popular, not only with our own members, but the many visiting groups, so in conjunction with our Hut Wardens, the committee are looking in the New Year at some improvements in these facilities, that will bring them up to date. Any ideas you have will be welcome, so please let me know.

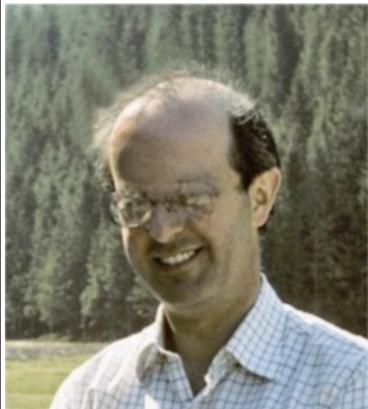
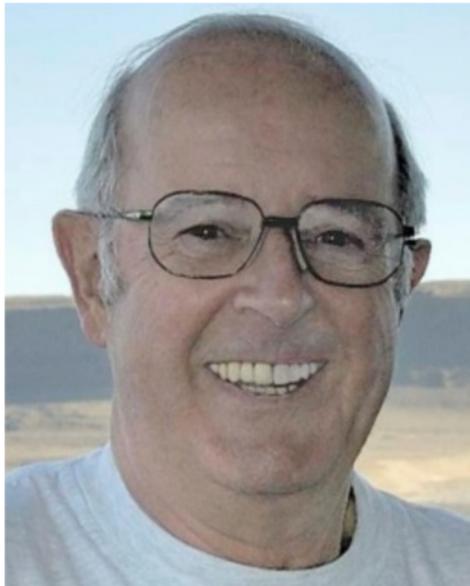
Lastly, I am sure that this current crisis will pass although we are not sure when, but the committee members, who works very hard on your behalf, will respond to all that comes along, so we can be together again on the hills that we love.

Let's look forward to 2021.

# Obituaries and Appreciations

**J. E. Snoad**  
**1934 - 2020**  
**Member 2017 - 2020**

In his earlier years, John walked extensively in the Yorkshire Dales with visits to North Wales and the Lake District, often with our ex-President John Barton. He also attended some of our Scottish meets as a guest. He was a member of the teams who completed the Dales Way and the West Highland Way in the early nineties. Between these, in 1992 he acted as route guide for the group of members on the Norwegian Project, tackling the Jostedal Glacier (Jostedalsbreen), repeating some of Cecil Slingsby's lesser known routes. Four long routes, two of them rarely attempted, were successfully completed by all of that group.



Going back a little further, John's thirty or more years' pulking, camping and skiing experience in that Jostedal area, led him to identify a need for a cairn to show the route off the glacier. That route had to be marked as it is easy to stray and come to grief descending that icecap's crevassed and serac-strewn convex slopes.

In 1964, with the help of three local men, a large cairn and two smaller direction markers were built on the southwest lip of the glacier.

Subsequently, the name Snoadvarden (Snoad's Cairn) was proposed for that cairn to the Norwegian mapping authorities (Norges Geografiske Oppmåling) by a route inspector for the Den Norske Turistforening (DNT 1972).



**John and Alan Brown  
at the cairn in 1992**

The name was accepted early in 1973.



John's cairn is marked on the 1:50k M771 Brigsdalen 1318 II map.



Snoadvarden

Incidentally, that inspector's name was Claus Helberg. The same Claus Helberg who used the three pink elephants codewords to the Special Operations Executive's Operation Grouse team in 1942, whose target was the heavy water plant at Rjukan.

Few foreigners have their names on Norwegian maps. The only other Brit we know of as being honoured in this way, is our second President, William Cecil Slingsby. The Slingsby Glacier (Slingsbybreen) on Storen is named for him. John was something of an authority on Cecil's life and family, having published a number of articles on the subject. One in the Y.R.C. Journal was 'Wm Cecil Slingsby (1849-1929) His Background and Working Life' in Issue 12, Series 13, Winter 2011. A glance at the pictures taken near John's and Slingsby's cairns show how much equipment has changed over the last fifty Years.



John beside Slingsby's Cairn also on Jostedalsbreen, 1977



The hut on Kvannbakknova near Snoad's cairn above Befring valley on the Jostedalsbreen



John using his Trangia for a brew after descending the Smattene icefall 1978



Group of YRC with John, after they had made the return crossing east to west of the glacier and descended into Befringsdal  
Names omitted to save embarrassment



Churchyard at Carleton-in-Craven, visiting the grave of Cecil Slingsby  
Knut Toensberg, John Snoad and Michael Smith

John (centre) with friends  
Michael Gibbons and the late  
Dr. Kristian Talle

It was taken in the late 1970s  
at Kristian's summer hut  
in Luster ready for take  
off to the glacier



John had participated in a 'Brekurs' (glacier course) at Finse in 1963, arranged by The Norwegian Turistforening, where he met Kristian Talle.

One day, Kristian fell into a crevasse and was left hanging there for quite some time before

John and others helped drag him out. When safe, Kristian discovered that he had hurt his leg with his crampon, and as a doctor, he simply sat down and sewed it up himself, without any anaesthesia of course.

From that day on, John and Kristian became close friends, a friendship that lasted for the rest of their lives. Kristian died just a few months after John.

Following the course came the incident leading to the Snoad-cairn. John and a friend attempted to cross from Flatbrehytta to Befringsstølen, but did not find the right spot to leave the glacier, finding themselves in very steep terrain and losing a rucksack with food and other important equipment over the cliffs. They struggled their way back up again and had no option other than to return to Flatbrehytta; a rather rough walk. They returned by car and boat from Fjærland to Befringsdalen and found the rucksack down in the valley.

The next year John returned, and together with three friends, built the cairn which bears his name. John did not actually establish a new route when building the cairn. Locals had crossed the glacier for hundreds of years and knew the best route from Befringsdalen. John's intent with the cairn was to guide people to the correct location to start the traditional descent.

John and Mike Gibbons had a spectacular tour on the glacier in 1978. They made a S-N traverse in 16 days. They started from Flatbrehytta and ended up in Sunndalen. Norwegians usually do this tour with skies in 3-4 days. John and Mike used snowshoes and were heavy laden.. This tour was impressive, very unusual and possibly unique. John had many Norwegian friends. Kristian Talle was the most important one, but others included Norvald Befring, Anders Øygard, Johan Støyva and Stein Næss, all closely connected to the glacier. John's contributions were acknowledged when it was agreed he should never have to pay when staying at Flatbrehytta. An honour not many people achieved, we presume.



John, Michael and Kristian,  
Lodalskåpa in 1978



John, Lodalskåpa in 1978

John Edwin Snoad was a keen photographer, and by profession, was an engineer with the BBC; a civil engineer, specialising in such matters as transmitter masts including those in remote spots such as Shetland and Orkney.

John's executors have given us (via Alan Kay) access to John's papers and he secured for the Club, dozens of box files of records labelled Norway, Slingsby, etc. in addition to many photographs and the like. They will be transferred from Alan's keeping to Archivist Alan Linford for sorting and cataloguing.



John on the summit of  
Lioksla June 1975.

Provided by Michael  
Gibbons with a famous  
Shipton quote

"There are few treasures of more lasting worth than the experience of  
a way of life which is in itself wholly satisfying.  
Such, after all are the only possessions of which no fate,  
no cosmic catastrophe can deprive us; nothing can alter the fact,  
if for one moment in eternity we have really lived."

From, 'Upon that Mountain'

## Rob Ibberson Member 2002 - 2018

Rob's friend, Peter Green offers this tribute.  
"Having been introduced to the YRC by his old University friend Iain Gilmour, in 2002, Rob soon spread the word of all that the Club had to offer, to his own circle of friends and that is how I came to join in 2004.

Over the following years, we went on a wide range of meets and expeditions together, most memorably in 2007 to Bhutan, a unique experience for us both, and especially, for our sharing a tiny 8 x 4 foot tent for 2-3 weeks.



We were both noted snorers, but solved the problem by removing our hearing aids and, after days walking at altitudes of up to five and a half thousand metres, sleeping like logs, apart from excursions to the loo, often out into the snow.

Rob, sometimes accompanied by his wife Gabrielle, ventured further afield with the YRC including Bolivia in 2010, and experienced some really tough walking terrain, such as when he did the GR20 in Corsica in 2007.

He was a man of many interests, among them, cycling, singing baritone in a local choir, going to the opera in Leeds, visiting the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and particularly sailing, sharing this activity with fellow YRC members Iain Gilmour, David Hick and Peter Chadwick.

His enjoyment of all things outdoor, whether experienced on foot, on wheels or on the water, was something he was eager to share, particularly with the younger generation. His sons, Andrew and Duncan Syme, both attribute their lifetime interests in walking, climbing and sailing to his encouragement, and Rob was always keen to support the YRC's involvement in family meets based at Lowstern.

One of Rob's key attributes was a talent for friendship, and hospitality. He kept up with friends he made at school from the age of 7, friends made at Cambridge where he read engineering, friends made all over the country and indeed, the world, during his working life. He was still increasing his social circle even through his latter years after Gabrielle died and while he was dealing with Parkinsons'.

The evenings spent on YRC Meets with old friends over supper and a glass or two, gave him enormous pleasure, experiences of which those of us who were there with him, have some equally happy memories."

## W. D. Clayton 1932 - 2020 Member 1967 - 2020

Derek, who was in many ways a larger-than-life character, passed away in January after a period of deteriorating health. Derek was responsible for introducing me to Ian Crowther and the YRC. We had all lived the other side of the Pennines, but Ian and subsequently I, had moved our families over to Yorkshire while Derek retreated to deepest, darkest Cheshire.



It seems hard to believe that it is 50 years since the likes of Cliff Downham and Stanley Marsden used to call us the young hooligans.

Ian had first encountered Derek when joining the scouts, where Derek was a Patrol Leader 4 years older than Ian. Later they had a local 'YHA' group and were enjoying great and continuing adventures on the hills and in other outdoor pursuits. Derek rode a 'Velocette' motorbike and they sometimes went to North Wales or the 'Lakes' together on that machine.

When Ian moved to Leeds for work in 1961 they were both already married. Ian quickly joined the YRC and soon persuaded Derek to join. They did a lot of mountain camping together, sometimes sleeping out on mountain tops in bothies and under rock shelters, many times in snowy conditions in the Highlands. Derek was never afraid of trying anything, no matter how 'daft', usually managing to get away with it, helped by the fact that he was a strong and fit man.

Derek in his younger days was an enthusiastic caver, climber, canoeist and a prodigious Walker, but had suffered a stroke and spent his last months in a care home.

In those distant days when people joined the Club much earlier in life, they partook of many activities not considered these days. I recall Derek canoeing out to sea off the west coast of Scotland, and a crowd of us going to the Dee in Galloway to paddle or drag canoes along its course.

Derek was especially fond of becking. We climbed mountains up their watercourses, jammed ourselves into water shoots until the pressure shot us out into the pools below and were known to wade lake edges to get to a hostelry.

The most dramatic becking trip I can recall, was a Lakes meet with snow on the higher hills when we decided to climb Scafell by Piers Gill

This involved almost four hours, largely immersed in snow melt including swimming across one deep pool to climb out up a ten foot waterfall that took delight, in constantly throwing us back. We finally exited this obstacle when Derek stood on a rock well below the water surface whilst we climbed up him and then over the lip, by standing on his head or shoulders.

In his younger days he was a very strong man, as Alan Linford recalls, when we were assisted up Hell Gill.

Derek and I had lives surprisingly intertwined. When he started work as bank clerk in Manchester, he had to count up the takings from Manchester City games, at the same time as I was taking in some of that money, selling golden goal tickets inside the ground, as a young teenager.

I then joined a bank, and we both ended up working in neighbouring branches in Withington, sharing a common interest in the local hostelries, folk music and wandering the hills. In later life, Derek and I had one other thing in common, in that people used to say of both of us that we were not in any way typical bank managers.

He was actually a very successful bank manager, despite what his bosses expected of him. Shipped out to a market town and agricultural back-water, he made outstanding inroads into the farming fraternity. Notoriously suspicious of the financial sector, Derek's ability to corral this new business, gained him surprised praise from the upper echelons of management.

What they didn't know, was that the secret of Derek's business success was his more than a little unorthodox approach and enterprising nature. Most of the farms at that time were arable and had no use for the vast amounts of fruit produced by the apple trees which lined their perimeters, or the hips and sloes in their hedgerows.

Much to the amusement of the farmers, Derek was more than willing to visit the local farms in person and spend days talking to them about how their farm worked, whilst collecting disused apples etc., which he converted into cider using a heavy-duty press. His home had fermenting liquors of various types, all over the place.

He was wise enough to gift some cider he'd made back to the farmers who had donated the apples



It was a mutually beneficial arrangement although what trade-offs against potential bank charges happened may have been at the expense of Barclays shareholders. The excise man would have been a bit concerned at the rosy hew of the diesel in Derek's tanks, had he had occasion to doubt an upstanding pillar off the community.

I also owe Derek for a more unusual favour. I met my wife when she joined his staff and as my wife's father was housebound by the time we got married, Derek actually gave her away at the wedding

William Derek Clayton was born in Bramhall in 1932, went to the prestigious William Hulme Grammar School on a scholarship and while an 'aircraft spotter' in the Royal Observer Corps, met and eventually married Wendy.

Derek always had competitive instincts, probably fostered by his early interest in the sport of lacrosse which, when I went to watch him, I always thought was legalised warfare.

Other lasting memories:

Derek was an inveterate maker of beers, wines and other drinks as well as cider, most of which were very drinkable; his damson whisky well remembered by several of us. Sloe gin was another speciality, as was sloe whisky.

For some years, he had a habit of taking bottles out on meets, and stashing them in various hiding places to be retrieved on subsequent meets. Quite a surprise the first time you experienced this. We will probably keep finding them for years to come.

Other memories include practicing bouldering whilst wearing formal attire, when crossing the Pennines on the way to a Club dinner and his largely misplaced ambition to sing and play an instrument. At his well-attended funeral, his granddaughter actually recounted that as many people paid to have him stop as did, in recognition of his efforts. Those of us who remember his efforts on meets can understand that.

Underlying all the various outdoor activities he took up, was a lifelong love of challenging hill walks refuelling at suitable inns.

Alan Linford also reminds us that Derek had an encyclopaedic knowledge of places, events, people and happenings and was always bursting to share that information, usually quicker than members could absorb it.

There was never a dull or quiet moment when Derek was around.

We must not however forget that Derek was a hard man in his younger days and could put many much younger people to shame with his stamina and can-do attitude.

Derek was also something of a collector. In addition to collecting 'pubs' he also had an extensive collection of musical instruments including Northumbrian 'small' bagpipes and accordions, etc. He did actually have a go at jazz trumpet playing whilst very young, but that didn't get very far!

Wendy died two years ago but Derek is survived by his offspring Julia and John and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The Club was well represented at the funeral where a piper led each element and a cèilidh band and a couple of Irish folk singers entertained us afterwards. Derek's coffin bore his squeeze box and his original ice axe and climbing rope.

Derek also had a passion for making walking sticks from branches he found and he had joined the Guild of Master Stickmakers.

A pleasant surprise for all present was that his collection of sticks was in church and we were all asked to take one.



The manager of the care home where he was resident, talked of his escapes to the pub, him hiding out and scaling walls; even with a broken hip!

It would seem you can't keep an old bear down.

Perhaps one of the most appropriate adjectives to apply to Derek was irrepressible.

Another lasting memory I have of Derek is his habit of referring to any acquaintance as 'my mate'.

I don't imagine I will ever forget 'my mate' Derek.

I hope those on the pearly gate, were prepared, as they will certainly have soon known he had arrived.

Roy Denney



## Dr. D. Brandon

1937 - 2020

Member 1983 - 1990



Derek was a remarkable man:  
highly intelligent, multi-talented, multi-faceted,  
somewhat obsessive - complex - gifted...

Anyone who spent any time in his company  
would invariably hear him ask, 'Did you know...?'  
before being told exactly what Derek knew in  
expansive detail!

His life of eighty-two years was as fascinating as the Bury man himself, banjo playing well and Boogie Woogie pianist, an Inorganic Chemist with a doctorate from Salford University, teacher of chemistry at The North Wales Institute of Science and Technology all his career, and accomplished amateur cosmologist. He was big into folk music, jazz, and bluegrass music and ran The Bluegrass Club in Chester, where he and wife Jean lived from 1973. He had a house in France, a country he loved and, having a daughter living over there, he spent weeks in San Francisco each year.

On top of that, he spoke French, Welsh and technical German and had two Guinness World Records. He was a Radio Amateur, call sign G4UXD and wrote a computer programme to teach Morse Code.

During Rag Week, his team set a World Bed-Pushing Record by getting from Saint Helens to Salford - a distance of 20 miles in three hours and fifty- minutes. A girl sat on the bed throughout, there was no resting, a left-hand camber and a stiff wind from the right to contend with. Derek ran in boots and was the only one of the eight to escape bleeding feet. That said, he couldn't walk for three days after.

In 2014, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate as a by then renowned expert in his field. He had sat his final exams in 1960 and then went into research, followed by an academic career as a lecturer starting in 1966. The University had been working closely with him around the launch of the new Medicinal Chemistry programme

More of direct interest to those of us old enough to remember him, he was a potholer and cave explorer and member of the Cave Rescue with an explosives license. Entrusted with the gelnite explosive, he kept it at home at a stable temperature, next to his high-quality wine - as you do.

His other World Record was set during a week beneath the Yorkshire Dales which he spent with his fellow cavers and potholers, managing to ascend an extremely high vertical shaft deep underground, the exact details of which are, unfortunately, lost to history - nevertheless, it was World Record Number 2.

Derek was also part of the team who, back in the late Seventies, discovered 'Link Pot' - a much sought after subterranean system that connected Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria and as such, an important breakthrough in the world of caving.

*Taken from NPC Journal 3(2).*

*The exploration continued elsewhere, but no new discoveries were made.*

*The next big find came two weeks later when Tiger and Derek Brandon announced that they had pushed Tiger's Inlet and found Handpump Hall and, more significantly, they had come to Serendipity.*

*Tiger's Inlet to Serendipity*

*Tiger's Inlet is where a small stream enters the canyon from a large hole in the wall about 20 feet up.*

*No apparent direct climb could be seen, so a traverse back along the rift at a higher level is required. Climb (back and foot) up the rift to a large ledge at the same level as the inlet.*

*The stream passage can then be entered by applying a layback, using a good handhold on the wall and the right foot on the lip of the ledge. After this, lean across and place the left elbow on the opposite wall using the fist-sized ledge; at the same time placing the left foot on a small but safe knob, then elbow traverse the last few feet until reaching the floor (sounds easy doesn't it!)*

## **T. H. SMITH 1935 - 2020**

### **Member 1952 - 2020**

Timothy Hattersley Smith died in July in Dales Care Centre. Tim, in later years of Appletreewick, was brought up near Silsden between Keighley and Skipton.

Arthur Tallon knew Tim and his twin brother Stephen in those days and remembers staying in their substantial home. Tim went on to open an outdoors kit shop in Skipton and his brother, garden centres in the area. His brother is still alive.

Tim joined the club in 1952 and, during the 1950s and 60s Arthur and he did several meets together and Arthur remembers one Hill Inn meet, building an igloo on top of Whernside and actually sleeping in it with Tim and Albert Chapman

In 1958 Tim and Albert, together with Pat Stonehouse, travelled the High Level Route from Saas Fee to Chamonix by way of the Britannia Hut to Zermatt, the Schönbühl Hut and Col de la Tête Blanche to Arolla, Vignettes Hut, Ottema Glacier, Chanrion Hut and Col du Sanadon. Six hours of step cutting followed on the descent to the Valsorey Hut from the Plateau du Couloir and so to Champex. A few days' rest then on to the Trient Hut, Aiguille de Tour and Chamonix. Perfect weather until the end, but a storm foiled their attempt on Mont Blanc.

In 1959 the three of them and Pat Stonehouse were in the Bernina starting with the traverse of the Piz Palü from the Diavolezza Hut; the weather broke so they moved to the Oberland and climbed the Mönch, Weissenallen and Finsteraarhorn. They moved on to Saas Fee and climbed the Weissmies and finished with the Fletschhorn/Lagginhorn traverse.

In 1960 Tim Arthur and Albert went to Corsica, camped in a cave near the village of Calasima, climbed several mountains and made many good friends among the villagers.

Tim trekked to Everest Base Camp in 1967, on a trip organised by the legendary Col Jimmy Roberts and walked in from Jiri.



Piz Palü

He was also a keen skier.

Arthur comments that Tim always liked to eat well and was the only person he knew at the time who would order from a menu in a restaurant without looking at the price.

Tim had married Louise along the way, and a family service was held in Skipton with donations going to the Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association.

## **T. R. Lofthouse 1960 - 2020**

### **Member 1978 - 2020**

Tim was born in Halifax and enjoyed a childhood full of adventures spending most of his time walking, riding bikes and skiing with his sisters and some close family friends, especially the Newmans. They spent many family holidays skiing in the Scottish Highlands and walking in the Yorkshire Dales and Pennines.

Tim's love of the outdoors led to him joining the Club and made history by being the youngest member to join. At the age of 17 he completed the Pennine Way with Chris Newman and two friends.

He took part in many expeditions and made the trip back to Yorkshire, every November, for the Club Annual Dinner.

In 2015 his Long Walk meet by the Mourne Wall was very popular.

Tim went on to study Mining Engineering at Newcastle University, however the social aspect of university was more appealing to Tim than the academic work and so he dropped out after a year moving to London and working for a bank for several years.



His holidays were spent doing what he loved the most - skiing. On one trip to Serre Chevalier in SE France, he came away with more than he bargained for - meeting Brid. They married in 1987 and had three children.

After living in both London and then Harrogate, they moved back to Ballycastle in 1997 where the way of life suited Tim's laid-back personality.

He continued to enjoy the outdoor life, particularly tennis and fishing and he was often seen out walking with his dogs. Tim took on the extremely challenging role of being a house husband and looking after three energetic children.

He embraced the Irish culture and bought his own hurling stick so he could play with the children although, his swing was still very cricket like! Tim never lost his love of Yorkshire, and the family spent many happy summers there visiting the extended family.

At the tender age of six, Tim thought it was a good idea to put young Riona on a pair of skis and whisked the family away to Andorra, for the first family ski holiday - and they were all hooked from then on.

His passion for skiing has been passed down to all of the children, with Andy following in his tracks by becoming a ski instructor.

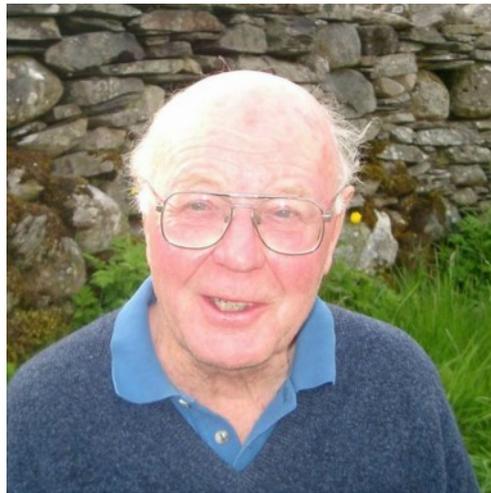
The family's fondest memories of Tim are on the slopes, where he skied so effortlessly and made it look easy, while continuing to give them advice - sometimes unwelcome!

## **J. H. Sterland** **Member 1939 –2020**

John, aged 92, died peacefully in August, in care home in Cambridge.

John wrote in his will “I request that my funeral shall not be a sombre occasion but one of thanksgiving for my very full life”; and he did indeed have a very full life.

Although not very tall, John was a larger than life character and excellent company.



a

Probably best remembered by newer members for his ‘entertainment’, he had a very varied and complete life in earlier years. It must be said though, that he loved to perform and entertain and would not miss any opportunity to dress up as Vera Lynn or perform sketches, often accompanying himself on his violin.

At Club dinners John, with a few fellow members, used to entertain the gathered company with adaptations of ‘A Policeman’s Lot’ and other G&S songs.

John was actually an accomplished violinist and continued to play the violin until a few months before his death. For a number of years he played in the Hunts Philharmonic Orchestra and the entry music to his funeral was ‘Angels Dream’, an extract from a concert that they recorded in Ely Cathedral in 1984 with John playing in the Violin Section.

John was entertaining company on meets and made YRC members’ lot a happier one.

John had a wide range of interests and was a passionate and accomplished sportsman, as reflected in his autobiography which he wrote in 2003 and simply called ‘Sporting Life’.

At seventeen, he was offered a place at Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, which he turned down deciding that he would prefer to become an Articled Clerk and study for his accountancy exams. Probably, looking at his success in starting and building up his own accountancy practice, a sensible decision.

John continued to play cricket, playing for The Travellers Cricket Club and Cambridgeshire. In his younger days. John was a keen cyclist and during his National Service in the Navy he cycled all over the country. He was part of a specialist team of radar mechanics who used to tour the country troubleshooting problems on land based installations and John always managed to find room in the van for his bicycle.

He played rugby until he had to stop, due to his early arthritis, although he did return to play one further game in 1974, when he played in a father and son game at the Perse school.

He was a keen gardener and proficient carpenter, a skill he learned as boy from the carpenters working for the family building company.

He was also a keen golfer and skier and loved walking in the hills, particularly the Lake District and his house there, Town End Farmhouse, saw a considerable number of visits to the Lake District by his friends and family. After he retired he used to visit Town End at least once a month.

After joining the Club in 1974, he was an enthusiastic member and in 1988, at the age of 60 was deputy leader of our expedition to Bolivia.

Following the 1953 success on Everest, Hunt spoke at the YRC Dinner and encouraged the Club to launch their own Himalayan expedition and we indeed organised the first non-national such expeditions in 1957. On Dorje Lhakpa the survey and exploratory work was going well then descending a glacier the leader, Fox, and several Sherpas were swept away by an avalanche and killed. This curtailed our enthusiasm for expeditions to the greater ranges for a generation but by 1987, new blood in the Club, including John, was looking for another such trip and put together the 1988 Apolobamba trip. It aimed to make a first ascent of the attractive looking southwest ridge of Cololo (it had been climbed previously, but from the easier eastern side) and the team asked John to be deputy leader.

John was always downplaying his part in the trip, emphasising that he was there mainly to systematically survey, record and collect seeds for members of the Alpine Garden Society, while also acting as basecamp manager. This meant though, that he would be returning to basecamp each day rather than being stuck out somewhere on a mountain, a good reason for him to be deputy leader as he would be in the right place to reorganise things in case of mishap.

He did those jobs well, giving those up on the glacier reassurance by his presence and contingency plans – thankfully, the worst that happened was a shortage of decent food and he sorted that out by making a re-provisioning trek.

Each basecamp night, in their thin nylon bell tent, as the temperature plummeted, John kept them entertained, amused and distracted from their concerns with endless anecdotes and songs.



John on the expedition

He was the glue holding together the disparate team.

He found himself administering medical care to a member with severe mouth ulcers, arranging doctor's visits, going to pharmacies, administering medications, seeing to changing plasma drips and the like.

John was key to the success of that trip. A trip which the members of the team consider the best, and the edgiest, of the many they have been on.

It was a talk by John about that trip that first brought the YRC to the attention of Paul Dover and we now have four Dovers who are members.

Encouraged by that expedition, the Club soon started venturing further afield, with many trips to the Himalayas and elsewhere.

Once, in Brazil as members relaxed after their exertions, John picked them up reciting Stanley Holloway's 'Albert and the Lion' in a taxi there one day.

One December meet in Settle, there had been a heavy snowfall on the Friday and the rest of the world was cut off from Settle. Several of us had fairly tricky experiences that weekend.

Your scribe had to abandoned his car in Gargrave and catch a train and ended up walking to the guest house in time for the second course as mentioned in Chippings.

John, being of similar stature, also had difficulties. Five of them decided on a walk over the hills but the sections by walls were above waist deep on taller members and John was making no progress.

The problem was resolved by John lying on his back and being towed over the worst bits – again, teamwork.

At the funeral celebration his granddaughter remembered many happy times with John and reported that when she was born, apparently everyone had said she looked exactly like her Grandpa.

She admitted to certainly having inherited some characteristics like a distinct lack of height, fair colouring and the Sterland family trait of always being right.

John never took life too seriously – there was always a twinkle in his eye. He will long be remembered.

Roy Denney

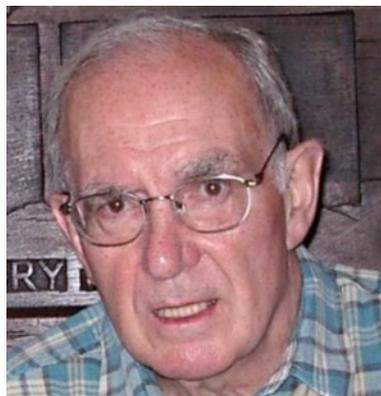
## **Bill Lofthouse**

### **Member 1951 - 2019**

Like Rob Ibberson, last year's journal included a late brief note to mark Bill's passing. Members have now had an opportunity to expand on that.

Bill was a regular attendee on meets across the UK and was a keen skier, mountaineer and climber.

But he was more than that, being for many years a tireless worker for the Club in various ways.



Derek Bush recalls seeing him once climbing and leading 'in nails' in the Quarry at Ilkley. He had been on Skye a few times and Derek also remembers he led Harry Robinson up a severe on Quinaig on a Scottish Whit meet. He took part in the 'Munro' Meet of 1983, along with John Hemingway and Neville Newman. He organised several meets including the 1992 Shap to Wasdale.

For six months each year, he organised popular Wednesday evening walking and climbing meets for those in the Leeds, Harrogate and Knaresborough areas.

He actively sought and supported potential members: encouraging them to attend meets, developing their skills and introducing them to new partners for outings.

Perhaps his greatest, certainly his most permanent, contribution to the Club is Lowstern. With Ron Goodwin, Bill oversaw the design and project management of this key development.

Bill drew up all the plans and once the outside building was completed Bill took over. Bill along with Ron and Ron's two sons, who both were in the Club at the time spent the best part of the summer putting in the kitchen, both bathrooms and toilets and installing the electricity.

Bill also served on the Committee in the 1950s and as Vice President and President in the '70s and 80s.

Bill and Brenda were long-time supporters of the Nidderdale Society and in 1998 Bill was a major contributor to their publication of 'Walks in the Nidderdale Area - In the Monks' Footsteps'. He produced all the maps, the texts for the introductory and historical chapters and researched and described two of the walks.

Bill's son Tim is of course a member of the Club

## J Lovett Member 1950-2020

Goodbye John. What more can you say? Well, actually, a great deal! Those of us who have been in the club for a long time will all have memories to tell of shared experiences or wonderful conversations. He was a Club institution and an icon of sorts and an incredibly interesting companion. When I first met him in the sixties he was already an established 'character' in the club who talked of places and deeds I was in awe of.



As our paths crossed over the years my experiences had broadened and I travelled the UK and the world quite a lot, our conversations became a lot deeper and often went late into the night. We frequently took entirely different positions and disagreed on worldly events, but the last time I sat with him putting the world to rights till late at night, his parting words, as he went off to bed were something along the lines of "you usually talk rubbish and I am always right but I always enjoy our discussions". I will miss those chats.

Strangely my lasting memories of John are fairly mundane. Three of us stayed at his guest house prior to a Dinner, or possibly during a Christmas meet, and at breakfast we received rashers of bacon tasting as I had not tasted for many a year and to this day have never enjoyed as good again. As I grew up in my father's open-all-hours corner shop just after the war, flat-backed trucks went by collecting food waste that even the resourceful wives of those days of shortages could do nothing with and this swill was eaten by the pigs enhancing bacon flavour. What John's butcher's pigs were fed on I have no idea but I have never forgotten just how good that bacon was. Another memory was the many times he reminded me of the time I took a party of scouts to Lowstern and forgot my key and had to knock him up to borrow his.

During his working life, which took him to many exotic places, he spent a period regularly visiting the quarries in Charnwood where I live and knew the area well and he often reminisced about the area when we chatted

Richard Gowing writes, "I first got to know John through his regular attendance at potholing meets during the period in the 1960s when I attended just about every meet on the Club calendar. He was always a strong, experienced member of the team and this was exemplified by his performance at the May 1962 Gaping Gill meet. This was held as part of the Club's seventieth anniversary celebrations, in particular commemorating Edward Calvert's first YRC descent on May 9 1896.

*(YRC Journal Vol. 1 pp 123-133: Gaping Ghyll (sic) Hole Part II. By Edward Calvert)*

We diverted Fell Beck from the Lateral Shaft, which descends a clear 340 feet to the floor of the Main Chamber and put a ladder down the sheer shaft, which John, clad in his exposure suit, descended in record time, followed shortly by Trevor Salmon. While Trevor came out via Bar Pot, which other members of the meet had rigged, John, as recorded by Cliff Downham in his meet report “climbed up the lateral shaft.”  
*(Meet Report “The Lowstern Hut”/Gaping Gill, May 11/13<sup>th</sup> 1962 by Cliff Downham).*

Apparently, whilst still fearfully wet, sufficiently so to severely batter a man on the ladder, the Fell Beck had gone down, to justify the ladder climb out. It was a very remarkable effort in such a short space of time and if Edward Calvert and the early stalwarts of the Club were with us in spirit it was quite certain that that they must have been satisfied the Club was still in good hands and benefited by the precepts laid down in the 1890s

A truly remarkable effort by John, as will be remembered by the present-day surviving members of that meet: Trevor Salmon, Albert Chapman, Jeff Hooper, myself, David Stembridge and John Middleton.

In 1963 I was elected onto President Pat Stonehouse’s YRC Committee. At the time I was working at Windscale in west Cumberland, and was able to arrange to take two half afternoons, leaving work at 3 p.m., as one half-day’s leave. I would drive my Morris Minor to John and Betty’s home at Far End, Austwick and then share the driving of it with John (who was Lowstern Warden) to the committee room in the Leeds City Reference Library. After the meeting, we’d all go to a nearby Chinese for a late supper, then John and I would return to Austwick and I’d continue back to my lodging at the UKAEA staff hostel at Holmrook.

During these drives John would keep me entertained with accounts of his experiences and escapades, notably his participation in one year’s Monte Carlo Rally. These trips came to an end when in July 1965 I was posted to Japan for a year – although I nominally remained on the Committee, I only attended one more meeting with John, in November 1966, before coming off the Committee in 1967, after a second stint in Japan and subsequent marriage.

One evening with John in that period stands in my memory, as do certain such world-shattering events: on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November 1963 I was spending the evening at John and Betty’s fireside, prior to representing the Club at the CPC Annual Dinner in Settle the next day, when the news came through of US President John F Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas. On such occasions it’s always good to be with friends!

Since those days we would often get together at meets to reminisce, our final time together being at last year’s Annual Dinner when I had the good fortune to have John as my table companion. Now I, like the rest of us in the Club, will miss a good old friend.”

John was a tower of strength, no better man to be at the top of a long ladder pitch. He was a keen caver in his younger days and went on our Irish trips. One of his claims to fame was that he climbed out of Gaping Gill on rope ladders in 3.5 minutes.

He will be sorely missed but members have, not only memories to remember him by, but a standing memorial to remember his contribution to the club.

The committee were looking for a suitable memorial to Crosby Fox, Leader of our ill-fated Himalayan Expedition.

John was the catalyst and thought provoker when, in 1957, he suggested that the old and derelict hut known as the 'The Golf House' in the Lowstern Plantation was worthy of consideration. There was, as there always has been, sharply divided opinion on the location of huts and this suggestion was no exception. But John prevailed, and the rest as they say is history. Some 60 years service to Lowstern at one time or another making another significant contribution in recent times - the security of a water supply to the hut which called on all his physical strength and local contacts. .

Quite obviously, John's family knew John best of all and his son Andrew spoke for his extended family at his funeral. Among his comments he reminded us that John had been brought up Clapham near our HQ, walking across the fields between there and Austwick, a walk most of us have done many times. Commenting on John's long life Andrew described it as a big life, a life of people, of National Service., of motor-rallying, of cars and motorbikes and driving, of caving and climbing with friends in a venerable club. Of international travel and working, of making and mending things, of building houses and revelling in being outdoors, especially the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District.

He also commented on John's strange fascination and unfashionable urge to cut down trees hence some of our furniture; the oak benches at Lowstern were built by John from trees from Lowstern plantation He also confirmed the views of those of us who had known him for some time; his father had strong opinions and loved discussion.

He remembered a year earlier when the family all gathered for John's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, at our Lowstern Hut, looking out towards Bowland. Andrew said it was a place close to his father's heart and a long-time part of his life and that the YRC, had been in the background of all their lives as an immensely important, formative and positive influence on John, right up to his death.

The YRC gave his father many life-long friendships and many shared experiences and the family should thank the YRC for that.

Two lasting recollections which Alan Linford brings to mind were firstly in 1960, arriving at Austwick to find John astride a roof, "What do you want you young whippersnapper?" "Ladders!" I replied. "In the loft, help yourself.", only to find John at ground level waiting to offer guidance and advice a rare commodity in the YRC at that time.

The second recollection is of a wet meet at LHG. A walk with John to a seat at Tarn Hows where we sat for some considerable time brewing tea and sharing inner thoughts.

Perhaps a reflection on Johns character, Alan also remembers John's last words at the joint meet in 2019, when referring to Alan, barely any younger than John, he addressed the assembled crowd with the comment

"I taught this young whippersnapper all that he knows".

John is survived by his wife, seven children and numerous grandchildren.

Alan finishes by saying that John was a truly great Yorkshire Rambler.

Amen to that. Many will cherish his memory.

Editor

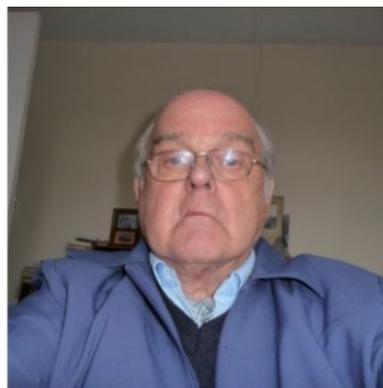
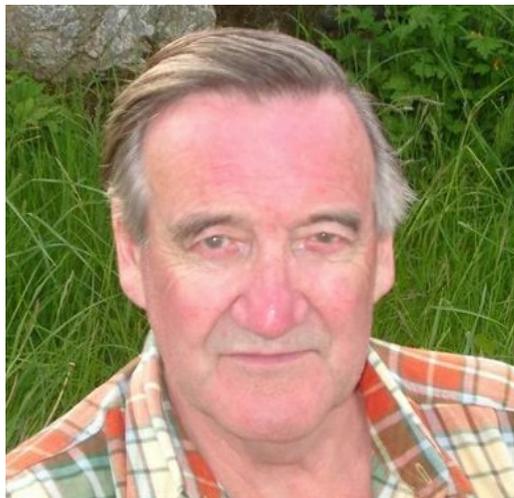
## **J I Middleton** **Member 1948- 2018**

John Ieuan Middleton, a life member, died at the end of 2018.

Having long outlived his contemporaries in the Club he maintained his membership long after his active involvement, to receive the journal and follow our activities and my only involvement with him was a brief conversation when I inadvertently posted some extra journals to his namesake at his address.

Unfortunately we know nothing of John's active period with the Club and whilst nobody likes to tempt fate as the Editor who has to pull these obituaries together, I am happy to hold details for members, if you want to ensure an accurate reflection when you pass on as inevitably we all must.

Editor



## **P. T. Hodge**

### **Member 2007-2017, 2020**

Peter, who had just re-joined the Club, had been on a number of expeditions when previously a member, but had resigned when he thought his trekking days were over.

He had second thoughts and had re-joined to go on our expedition to Kamchatka before the pandemic put a stop to all travel.



Peter passed away on 24th November, having been diagnosed in mid-September with terminal pancreatic cancer. His working life was spent in the merchant navy initially, training at the Warsash School of Navigation on the Solent and culminating in him being captain of a number of large vessels before enjoying many years in retirement in Hebden, Wharfedale.

He was a stalwart member of the parish council of Hebden and also Chairman of The Fountaine's Hospital Trust in Linton which manages the Fountaine Hospital Almshouse described as 'an almshouse of ambitious, sophisticated architecture, of English baroque style'.

His career gave him a love of far-away places and he was an inveterate traveller outside the YRC orbit and, with his wife Liv and friends, they had several epic trips - a rail journey across Russia from St Petersburg to Vladivostok in September 2012; the Hurtigruten Antarctica cruise in December 2015, and more recently in 2019 cruising the Northwest Passage to Alaska. He travelled frequently to Norway, his wife's home country, spending time exploring the mountains there.

His companion on two of his epic trips, is chairman of Wharfedale RUFC where Peter had been heavily involved with their junior section, whilst his son Andrew was growing up, then as a manager of their lower teams for many years.

'Salty', as they knew him was a great supporter of the juniors including his running the London Marathon in a rugby club T-shirt in 1997, to raise money for them. Although well into his 50s, Peter finished the course in under 4 ½ hours.

His attention then turned to following Andrew's rowing career around the world. Andrew is a treble Olympic Champion and quadruple World Champion, and one of the most decorated members of the GB Rowing Team. He was awarded an MBE in the 2009 New Year's Honours list.

Peter had trekked in the Himalayas with the Club a number of times and had also been with us in Peru in 2014, the Chachapoyas trek.

In 2005 he was on our Ladakh expedition as a guest and summited Samgyal Peak in the Nubra Valley (5810m).

Peter on the ascent of Samgyal Peak



By then a member, in 2007 he joined the Bhutan trek and in 2009, the Sikkim trek to Goeche La.



In Sikkim

Peter is remembered as a quiet man; unobtrusive, down to earth, often in the background, but interesting and easy to chat to and with a dry sense of humour.

He is survived by his wife Liv and children Andrew and Carry.

Peter at the moment Andrew won his gold medal at the London 2012 Olympics

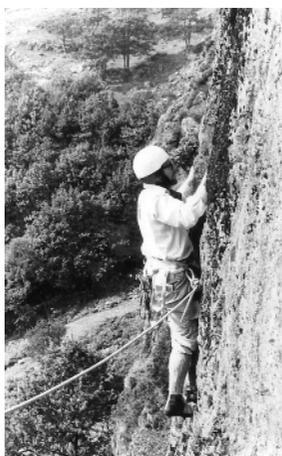


## J. Richards 1932 - 2019 Member 1963 - 1978

John Lovett's sister Jean was hospitalised after a fall and then caught Covid and passed away late in 2020 after infecting her husband John Richards who also then died on November 14th. They had lived at 'Brooklands' in the hamlet of Newby, not far from the Lovetts and our hut at Lowstern. John was 87 when he died in Lancaster Infirmary.



Photographs taken in 1971  
on Wallowbarrow Crag.  
Top, L to R, Ray Harben,  
Arthur Craven,  
John and Alan Brown.



In his younger days, John had been a keen motorcyclist and had made trips to the IoM for the TT as well as being a fell runner, climber and caver going by the nickname of *Grimper* (*French verb to climb*).

A former member, he was Lowstern Hut Warden from 1964 to 1967, following on from John Lovett.

Bob Peckham says that it was Richards who took him on his first rock climbing trips when Bob was about 15/16. John did work for the YHA in Ambleside for a while and then in east Lakeland where, one day, a fussy mum came up to him and complained that one of his bees had stung her son. John replied "Mam, point out which one it was and I'll give it a good telling off"

Bob recalls he was living in Clapham while John lived just a mile away and hearing Bob was getting into fell walking and caving, decided to teach him the basics of rock

climbing and the methods of belaying and fixing runners which were in use at the time. “climb in balance with your weight on your feet, not your hands, keep your body away from the rock, don’t use your knees, etc...”

Their trips together took in Borrowdale (he is pictured in ‘The Attic’ at Dove’s Nest Crag in the photo) Langdale, and Dow Crag.

It was a wonderful introduction to the sport to be coached by such a caring, encouraging and considerate companion. John was always bursting with enthusiasm and passion for the sport, while at the same time keeping a careful eye on safety.



He also introduced Bob to the climbing literature - loaning books like ‘Nanga Parbat Pilgrimage’, ‘Conquistadors of the Useless’, and ‘The White Spider’. On one trip they stayed in Low Hall Garth, not long taken over by the YRC. Bob will always remember John with great gratitude for what he did for him.

John did all the illustrations for David Heap's 1964 book: ‘*Potholing Beneath The Northern Pennines*’ and also provided an excellent article entitled ‘*Some Climbs On Limestone In The Clapham Area*’ (YRCJ 1968, 10(34): 159) The article is well worth repeating and follows this obituary.

In 1965 John recorded a first ascent: ‘*A New Climb On Greenbow End — Deepdale. Sargasso. 435 ft. V. Difficult. A vegetations route, but follows a natural line and has a nice finish. 1st ascent: J. Richards, G. Batty (alternate leads), 1st August, 1965.*’

Even though he had by then left the Club, John led members after our 1999 annual dinner, over that small but impressive hill, Farleton Fell, wedged between the M6 and B6254.

It was described as an interesting walk through woodlands, across limestone pavements, passing outcrops with short varied climbs. The rocky summit providing a splendid panorama of the Lake District and the Kent estuary.

His old friend John Colton remarks that John always enlivened any occasion, with his humour and energy

As late as 2007, John had done some climbs on Ash Tree Crag, that bold, upstanding cliff above Clapham, plus some routes on Beggar's Stile, Crummackdale, including Wall and Corner climbed with Mike Hobson.

Mike and his other long-time friend, Derek Bush, offer their personal appreciations.

Inevitably, there is overlap in their stories but I trust readers can live with that.

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I first met John in either 1955 or 1956, after my father's work took him from time to time, to Lancaster gas works where he met Bill Fairbank, the works chemist and an ex-member of the Craven Pothole Club. He suggested my father should meet a 'young lad' who had come to work there. And so the friendship with John was born. I certainly remember in 1956 overhearing a telephone conversation John was having with my father to arrange climbing for the forthcoming weekend. There was a sudden outburst from my father along the lines of: "Good heavens John! No! Absolutely not! It doesn't matter about the rest, but you do NOT miss the first one." Apparently, John had casually let slip that the Saturday in question just happened to be his and Jean's first wedding anniversary and did my Dad think it would matter very much if they went climbing!

John was a climber, but had recently taken an interest in caving. He was friendly with Arnold Brown, the guide to Ingleborough cave. So we explored the Abyss, and beyond the tourist section to Giant's Hall and possibly Lake Avernus. Bill Fairbank had suggested the upper reaches of Lost Johns, on Leck Fell, to my father and we had made some cautious sorties into the initial stream passage. With John, we investigated the New Roof Traverse, and he managed to rig a 15/20 feet length of rope ladder along one wall to give me a better handhold.

We also went to Birkwith where, amongst other things, we did the classic Calf Holes to Browgill trip on rope ladders. John Lovett was John's brother-in-law and a YRC member, so access to tackle could easily be arranged. John and Jean lived in Clapham, then later Newby. He used to take me climbing on some of the small limestone crags in that lovely area behind Clapham, Austwick and Feizor. It was nice to see in a recent guidebook, that some of those routes were included as first ascents.

Those outings invariably ended with tea/coffee and homemade cakes. I have a fondness for chocolate cake and it was invariably on the menu from Jean. It led John to comment that feeding me scones and cakes was like tossing buns down Gaping Ghyll!

As I grew older, our climbing exploits turned more and more to the Lakes. John's favourite crag had always been Dow, but amongst others, we also climbed on White Ghyll, Raven Crag, Pavey Ark, Gimmer, Bowfell, Esk Buttress, Scafell and various crags in Borrowdale.

On one epic trip to Dow, we left the car at the Fell Gate above Coniston in a brisk gale. The clag was well down. Further up the Walna Scar Road, a strange white mist could also be seen drifting in front of the grey cloud. This, it turned out, was spray being whipped up by the gale from the surface of Goat's Water. It erupted like a huge white cone from the outflow. In those conditions, the crossing of that outflow was truly epic and the subsequent ascent of C Ordinary seemed mild by comparison! But we also climbed away from the Lakes: Crookrise, Rylstone, Twistleton, Crummackdale, Attermire, Farleton Knott and, many years later, the small limestone outcrop at Hutton Roof, were all visited.

In 1969, we went to Skye, with Bill Fairbank and Gordon Batty making up a foursome. We stayed in a caravan rented out on the Glen Brittle campsite and had a great week. One highlight of the week was the ascent, by John, Gordon and me, of White Slab in Coire a'Ghrunnda, which John climbed in nails! The week ended with the same threesome, supported by Bill, completing the Ridge Traverse. The outing was enlivened by the discovery, at the top of the TD Gap, that while we had a rope, we had no slings! I had been entrusted to ensure the rope came with us, and similarly Gordon was responsible for the slings. But he had forgotten! So the Gap, and subsequently, the In Pin took longer than expected, as back then, there was no fixed abseil point. Gordon dropped off at the Am Basteir/Gillean col. He had already done the ridge back in the 50s when on National Service, in about 8 hours. John and I shook hands on Gillean after about 12 hours. We were delighted and would have been quicker without the 'lack of slings' episode. We met no one on the Ridge that day.

The following year, in early June, saw John, Gordon and me, plus Gordon's little dog departing with enormous rucksacks from Kinloch Hourn. We were on Knoydart for a week, and this was John's planned 'outing' to backpack all the Knoydart Mountains. The weather was superb. Endless blue skies and sun. And heat...! The weather just got hotter and hotter and we fell further and further behind schedule until we simply gave up. The only member of the party who seemed unfazed by the heat was the dog! And rather like the Ridge the previous year, we saw nobody. We retreated to Ardgour, where we had just one full day left of the holiday. We climbed The Great Ridge of Gharbh Bheinn, via the direct start and got caught in a thunderstorm on the descent when that incredible spell of weather finally broke.

When John was working for the YHA, he became heavily involved with the Lake District Mountain Trial for many years and also took up fell running. At a Coniston trial, he even engineered me starting at the same time as Joss Naylor.

John had always been an artist. He belonged to the Clapham Arts Group, and a number of his paintings hang on our walls at home. For many years he sent me hand drawn and painted Christmas cards, usually with a caricature of me involved in some escapade from the previous year. I have kept them all, together with a number of illustrated missives he sent to my father from time to time.

Some years ago, he recovered from major surgery for cancer of the oesophagus, but the subsequent chemotherapy weakened him badly. He never fully 'came back', to where he had been, and despite persuasive attempts by me and his niece Judy Lovett, his final Wainwright, Barf, was never done.

More recently, he turned his hand to poetry, each poem being illustrated with one of his pictures. I had no idea of this until a little spiral bound book, entitled 'Ingleborough and other Poems' arrived through the post with a note inside: 'I thought you might like one of these'. He followed it up with a second, 'The Northern Hills and other Poems', and in one

of the last conversations I had with him, he was thinking of contacting his publisher about a possible third book.

I have an old black and white photo of me as a small boy, sat outside the entrance to Browgill Cave, very proud in my little woolly hat and nailed boots, having just achieved my first rope ladder climb down Calf Holes on the through trip to Browgill. And the young man with glasses, a large moustache, and a wonderful impromptu sense of humour, had taken care of me the whole way through. Little did I know then, of the years and the great days to come, in the company of this same 'young man', walking and climbing on the crags and hills of Scotland, Wales, the Lakes and of course the Yorkshire Dales.

John was my friend and mentor for over 65 years. Whatever we did, wherever we were, whatever the conditions, he was always so much fun to be with, and his enthusiasm knew no bounds. He has left me with countless wonderful and happy memories.

Mike Hobson

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John was brought up in Silverdale, North Lancashire on the edge of Morecambe Bay. It is a beautiful area and it is where his love of the outdoors must have grown.

He went to Lancaster Grammar School where we first met. After the Grammar School he did an arts course in Lancaster and then went to do his National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corp. During this time his parents moved to Clapham and John joined them there after his service. This was in the early 1950's and he travelled to work in Lancaster at the Gas Board on a BSA Bantam (John's pride and joy) This splendid machine took him all over the Lakes on his walking and climbing adventures.

He somehow met Jim Cameron, the first professional Lake District climbing guide who lived in Coniston and he played a part in his early climbing career. In Clapham he met Jean, his future wife who was the sister-in-law of John Lovett our member, who was a leading caver and potholer of that era.

John was a member of the Lancaster and Morecambe YHA which at the time had an active walking and climbing group. One winter Sunday, a group of us walked from Keswick Youth Hostel to Blencathra over Sharp Edge and then John volunteered to ferry us all back to Keswick to catch the last bus home to Lancaster. Needless to say, he took the girl members back first, one of whom became my wife. A photograph of that occasion is still in circulation. I climbed with John regularly in the 1950's and 60's. His favourite crags were Dow, Gimmer and Shepherds in Borrowdale. I also remember climbing with him in Birkness Combe in Buttermere. In those early days we were in nails. Vibrams were considered unsafe!

John also did me a huge favour, he introduced me to the Hobson family who lived near Milnthorpe, who became life-long friends. His father, who we all knew as 'Hobby' worked for the then Ministry of Fuel and Power and his job was to go around all the various gas works and do tests to ensure that the gas supplied to consumers was of the correct calorific value. Lancaster gas works was one of his ports of call where he first met John.

Hobby had an intensive knowledge of motor sport, in which John was very interested. John reciprocated by taking him and Michael (Hobson) caving and climbing. They both joined the Club.

One early walk John devised was from Kettlewell to Newby via Great Whernside, Buckden Pike, Birks Fell, Darnbrook, Fountains Fell, Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Newby. It taught me what long distance fell walking was really like.

We kept in touch over the years and I knew he had joined the YRC of which, at the time, I was rather reluctant to join, although I had a boss who was in it. Anyway in 1967, John invited me on the Long Walk which was the Welsh 3000's/ It was a memorable day finishing with a thunderstorm on the last stretch of the Carneddau and it was a day when I started friendships which were to last for the rest of my life. When we finished at Aber, we were transported back to our campsite and a huge row broke out in our car because one member was insisting on stopping for a drink. The Welsh pubs were still open! John who was driving showed his true character and refused because he knew he had to get me back to our tent as I was on the point of being ill. The next day we went and climbed Grooved Arete on Tryfan. Altogether, a splendid mountaineering weekend.

Another day I remember, was a very wet and windy ascent of Gillercombe Buttress where we completed the last pitch in our stockinged feet.

Much later, after I had retired, John introduced me to the delights of Farleton crags and even Ingleton climbing wall.

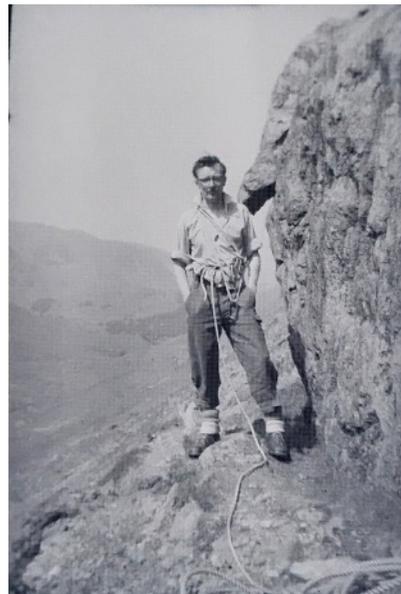
John knew and loved Scotland especially the North

He was a talented local artist, a member for many years of the Clapham Art Group. He illustrated for the national Wine Society for which he was suitably rewarded. He also wrote, illustrated and had printed two books:-

Ingleborough and Other Poems 2019  
Goredale Beck and Other Poems 2020

John was one of my oldest friends. He died within a week of his beloved wife Jean. He had had major cancer surgery five years ago and his natural toughness and character saw him survive as long he had. It took a world-wide pandemic to close the final curtain.

Derek Bush



John in the early 1960s

## Some Climbs On Limestone In The Clapham Area

John  
Richards

Free climbing on the limestone outcrops has been a recognised part of the climbing scene for the past few years. It all started rather earlier when English climbers, anxious to practise their technique in preparation for artificial climbs on the Continent, realised that they could drive their pitons into the limestone without being accused of desecrating the crags of a classical climbing area. They quickly discovered that these steep, overhanging walls yielded first class artificial routes and that, more surprisingly, free climbing of a high order was also possible. It had hitherto been assumed that limestone was unreliable, as indeed much of it is, but in certain areas the rock is reasonably sound.

Exploration continued and the number of routes multiplied. The standard is very high; 'New Climbs—West Yorkshire Area' by J. A. Austin, published about two years ago by the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, lists forty-four new climbs on limestone, of which thirty-nine are 'Very Severe' and the remaining five 'Severe'. This state of affairs may be admirable for the tiger, but is apt to discourage the climber who expects to find holds on his 'Very Difficults', and who likes his 'Severes' mild, from investigating those steep, little grey crags in the Yorkshire Dales.

There are in fact, within easy reach of Lowstern, several climbs of a non-terrifying nature, on pleasantly sound limestone. In describing the rock as sound, it does not follow that there are absolutely no loose holds, but you certainly will not bring the whole crag cascading about your ears in the form of five-hundredweight blocks. All doubtful looking holds must be tested and loose holds must occasionally be used, but this tends to improve technique rather than the reverse. The exponent of 'grabbing hopefully' will either improve or find himself contemplating his hold on his way back to the start of the climb.

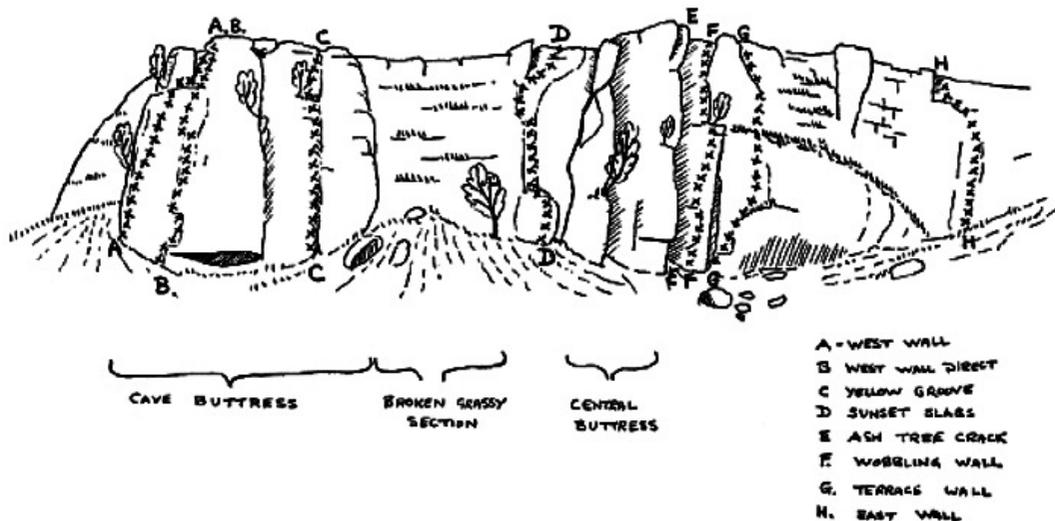
The Yorkshire Ramblers played their pioneering part in the area when, in 1948, king the Clapham-Austwick lane. The first of the easy climbs followed in 1950/51 by the ascent of a few obvious chimneys and broken buttresses, then in 1953, two routes (Ash Tree Crack and Wobbling Wall) were made on a small steep crag where the Norber ridge bends round to form the right flank of the valley containing Clapham Cave. 'Wobbling Wall' is a complete misnomer. This was a first attempt on a worth-while route on limestone and, after the absolute reliability of Lake District rock, the presence of one or two loose holds on the ledge halfway up the climb, resulted in its rather unfortunate name. In fact it is doubtful if there is a more reliable 40 feet of limestone in the area. Other routes followed at rare intervals over the next ten years, mainly in the form of flank attacks on other outcrops. Occasionally, however, a good climb was discovered but there still remains much to be done.

The average climber will find a lot of enjoyment in being able to climb from the Club hut in a pleasant secluded area; once he has developed his technique to enable him successfully to

overcome the rather different problems found on limestone, he too will be able to look around and make climbs of his own. For the novice, I should add that limestone, when damp is very greasy and is best avoided.

The climbs on each drag are described from left to right.

#### A — ASH TREE CRAG



**ASH TREE CRAG - AUSTWICK** drawn by *J. Richards*

Approach from Clapham by the lane to Austwick, through the tunnels. Take the left fork (Long Lane) and then through the third gate on the right and up the steep field. On the left, there is a long line of scars parallel to the lane, in the centre of a small outcrop with a disused lime kiln; on the right behind a large ash tree is Ash Tree Crag.

#### West Wall.

30 ft. V. Diff. Starts from a grassy bay and runs up the steep left-hand side of the undercut buttress. Climb to a narrow rock ledge, reached from the left with the aid of a fine incut hold. Then up and diagonally rightwards over a series of ledges to an exposed finish on excellent holds.

#### West Wall Direct.

40 ft. Severe. Starts on the left of the low cave. Climb the undercut and doubtful looking blocks by a semi-layback movement, then up the crack in the shallow corner. Make a two step traverse left and mantleself up on to the handholds, avoiding a loose block on left. Straight up to the finish of West Wall on improving holds.

### Yellow Groove.

40 ft. Mild severe. About 6 yards right of last climb, up the second groove, containing a small ash tree. The start is rather awkward, but a good left hand jam in the crack is useful. Ledges are reached below an open corner (running belay on ash tree). Climb left wall of corner, stepping right to finish.

### Sunset Slabs.

40 ft. V. Diff. An interesting climb; better than it looks. Starts at the right hand end of the broken grassy section in the centre of the crag, below a series of little walls ending in a 'V' chimney. Climb the first little wall by a crack on its right, move left, then up the steep corner. Step left and up to the foot of the chimney and a doubtful spike. Step right on to perfect rock and so up to the top of the crag.

### Ash Tree Crack.

40 ft. Severe. The start is immediately right of the clean 'central buttress' of the crag. Climb the crack using holds on the right wall. After a narrow section there is a small spike on the left for a running belay. Straight up to the overhang then traverse right using an excellent incut hand hold and small ledges for the feet. When both hands are grasping the good hold, make a strenuous pull over the overhang on to easier ground.

### Wobbling Wall.

40 ft. V. Diff. Starts six feet to the right of Ash Tree Crack.

25 ft.: Climb the wall on good holds to a stance and belay by a withered elder tree.

15 ft.: Climb above belay up an awkward groove to the top.

### Terrace Wall.

40 ft. Diff. Starts a few feet to the right of the last climb.

25 ft.: Leaving the ground is rather awkward; after attaining a standing position on an overhanging block, easier climbing leads slightly right to the terrace and a small spike belay. (The large flake by your feet is loose).

15 ft.: Climb above the belay to a gangway slanting up to the left, huge holds lead to the top of the crag.

### East Wall

30 ft. V. Diff. The terrace, halfway up Climb (g), runs across the crag to descend at the foot of a large detached tower. Further right is a miniature tower on the skyline, this climb follows an incipient rib a few feet to right.

20 ft.: Climb the poorly defined rib (a small incut hold for the right hand is very useful) to a stance and belay on a grassy ledge.

10 ft.: Move left and up a little crack in the corner.

### Rib and Chimney.

45 ft. Diff. The scars running parallel to Long Lane are rather broken and loose; the only climb so far lies just to the left of a large detached mass of rock, approximately half way

along the crag. Climb the rib from its lowest point, then up broken rocks and grass. Traverse left to a nice little chimney which leads to the top of the crag.

On the left of the above chimney is a large block bounded on its left by an oblique chimney. This has been climbed by continuing the traverse on the last climb, the rocks below being too loose and broken to give an independent start. Some twenty yards further left is a prominent nose, on its immediate right is a fine crack; this has been approached from below by means of a loose scramble, the crack itself appears sound but has not yet been climbed.

#### B. — ROBIN PROCTOR'S SCAR

This large cliff is to the right of and lower than Ash Tree Crag. The only weakness is a groove which runs up the centre of the crag to the right of a 'V' shaped growth of ivy.

Central Groove. 90 ft. Severe. Awkward rocks lead to the foot of a steep crack which is climbed until it widens into a grassy gully. Climb the back wall of the gully to the top. Several running belays are available.

#### C — CRUMMACKDALE

From the farm, follow the track above Austwick Beck Head to where it swings left to run in front of the cliffs at the head of the valley, then up the scree to the first steep outcrop, a few yards to the right from where a broken wall has been built on the scars. There are two routes, one either side of an overhanging block on the upper half of the cliff; both are rather artificial, in that the line can be varied somewhat.

Wall and Corner.

40 ft. V. Diff. Up a steep wall via a thin crack to a grass ledge, then up the square cut corner stepping on to the right wall to finish.

Cranesbill Crack.

40 ft. V. Diff. A nice climb. A few yards to the right of the last climb, below an obvious zigzag crack in the upper half of the cliff. Up steep little walls to an overhung ledge. From the ledge climb the overhang and follow the crack which gives good holds to the top. Further to the right above the centre of the valley the cliffs become much larger; a rusty peg and wooden wedges are evidence that some work had been done here. The wall with the rusty peg has been climbed. Start at the left, climb to the peg (runner), traverse right and up steep corner to the top. (About V. Diff.).

#### D — FEIZOR NICK

Feizor Nick is the gap in the hills behind the hamlet of Feizor (M.R. 789682 O.S. Sheet 90). Follow the road through the second gate where parking is available on the right. The rocks have been quarried on the extreme left and there is more loose material lying on the ledges than there is on the rocks previously described.

Ivy Buttress.

50 ft. V. Diff. Starts above the ruined lime kiln, between a hawthorn and a rowan, up a wall with ivy growing on the left.

30 ft.: Climb up to a flake in a corner, then from the flake make a delicate step leftwards up the steep wall to a square stance and a flake belay.

20 ft.: Climb above the belay to a large ledge which, unfortunately, breaks the continuity; a choice of routes then leads to the top. A more direct finish up a groove, reached by traversing right from the belay, has been investigated but needs extensive clearing of loose rock before it would be safe.

Crackstone Wall.

30 ft. V. Diff. A nice little route, about 20 yards to the right of the last climb, in a grassy bay near a big ash tree. Takes the obvious cracked wall forming the left hand side of a steep corner. Start at the bottom left hand side of the wall, climb diagonally right to a small hawthorn (running belay), then step back left to finish. There are several loose rocks on the ledges at the top of this climb.

## E — TWISTLETON SCAR (NEAR INGLETON)

Twistleton Scar is covered by an article in *The Climber* (July 1964) which contains an excellent diagram of the crag. This is one of the better limestone outcrops and is well worth a visit. The grading of the climbs is sensible and (an important point) consistent.

In the next field, towards the Hill Inn, from the existing Twistleton routes are four more climbs. A prominent cairn on the skyline is a good landmark and the place to make for. On the crag itself is an obvious narrow pillar, bounded left and right by wide cracks. To the left of the pillar is a smooth wall and the first climb runs up the extreme left edge.

Shelob.

30 ft. Severe. Climb on to the pedestal blocks, then move diagonally rightwards up the wall to easier ledges, then straight up to the top.

Rowan Tree Wall.

30 ft. V. Diff. A few yards further right, just to the right of where a thin crack runs down the blank wall. Straight up the wall to the small tree (runner), then slightly left to the top.

Immediately right is an easy chimney behind the pillar, a useful easy way down.

Central Pillar. 30 ft. V. Diff. The obvious pillar between two smooth cracks. Start using the left hand crack, then the right hand one about half way up. Finish directly up the front of the pillar.

Pillar Ridge. 30 ft.

V. Diff. A ridge comes down to the right of the Central Pillar and is reached via a shallow scoop round to the right. This is rather awkward but moving back left on to the ridge leads to easier rocks which are followed to the top.

***Ash Tree Crag - Austwick by J. Richards. © Yorkshire Ramblers' Club***

# On The Heights With Grimper

John  
Colton

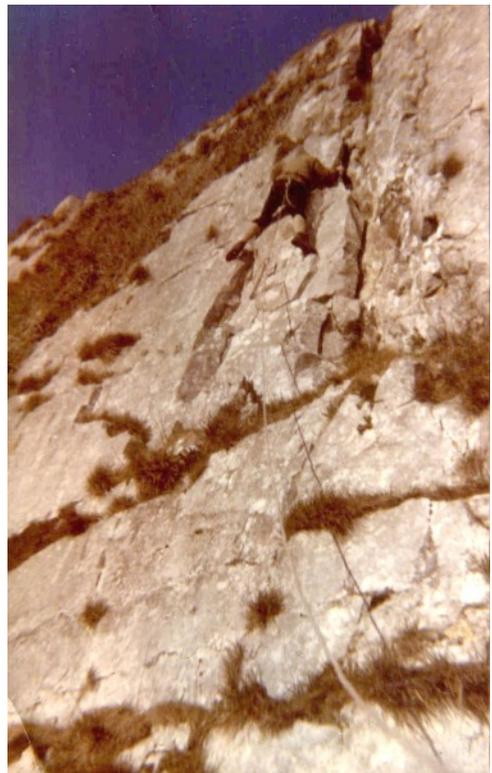
A sparkling day during the winter of 1963/64 saw me up at a large, flat frozen area at the bottom of Robin Proctors' scar, equidistant between and above Clapham and Austwick below the ragged limestone pavement known as Thwaite scar. Robin Proctors' is a smooth, vertical 60ft cliff visible from the northern end of the Settle bypass. Supposedly, Mr Proctor fell over it one night on his way home, the worse for drink. He was on horseback and got lost because he was on a borrowed mount, but this seems unlikely to me. To fall down it, you would first need to be at the top and the top has no significant routes to anywhere, unless you are a sheep or a hare. Getting to the top on a horse, even when sober, would be a great achievement.

The flat area is probably a 'dew pond', but my attention that day was on the steep bit above. A grassy crack splits the crag and this weakness set me thinking about climbing up where Robin had fallen down. I returned when the weather warmed and managed to get a third of the way up before running out of handholds and courage. Holds were not far away so very rashly I went round to the top and climbed down to just above my high point. Galvanised first by determination and then by fear, I succeeded.

This is a route in the Yorkshire Limestone Guidebook, Central Gully, grade Severe and was possibly the first recorded climb on Yorkshire Limestone, done in the year of my birth, 1948. It was my first brush with a proper rock climb and luckily, it wasn't also my last. It now seems odd that I managed to get down rather than up. Having done that, I then managed the ascent fairly easily.

Something must have come out at home because mum and dad decided if I was going to climb on rocks, I might as well do it properly. They entailed the help of a small, energetic wiry man from Newby who was known as John Richards or 'Grimper' to his friends. He already knew us from tennis which he played with an erratic rashness that a casual observer might mistake for brilliance.

John and Jean, his long suffering, glum looking, wife had no children but two demanding beagles and a sports car which he drove like he played tennis. John did a lot of climbing and yes, he would show me how to use ropes etc.



We had an evening up at Bowland Knots on some small gritstone outcrops followed by a Sunday on Dow (or Doe as Grimper called it) in south Lakeland. Dad drove us, beagle-less, up to Coniston and then steeply up to the rough bit of the Walna Scar track. An hour's walk saw us at Goatswater, where dad waited as John and I trudged up the steep scree to the high, forbidding cliffs.

We did four severe climbs that day, about 1000ft of climbing and, apart from apprehension during the approach, I was elated and totally hooked. I had also quickly made sense of rope management and leader protection which is difficult to explain (later) but easier to demonstrate. Dad soon retreated down the track as he couldn't watch for long. Grimper was well pleased with his pupil. He had learned to climb in nailed boots and was very neat and precise. Nails on dry rock seem only slightly preferable to roller skates but early climbs still bear the worn bits and scratches from the time when nails were the 'in' footwear. Woolworth's pumps with the orange soles were carried for the more technical bits (a grade above our routes that day) but climbs that people wearing sticky, stealth rubber shoes struggle up today, were often first done in this kind of footwear.

By the 1960's specialist rock shoes, developed in France were available, but if you were an Alpine climbing aspirant it was desirable to climb up to Very Severe in Vibram soled mountaineering, or 'big' boots as they are known.

Now, as enthusiastic as my dad was terrified, I saved up and bought a white, cable laid Viking number 3 rope, 120 ft long, 5 yards of hemp line, a snaplink or carabiner with locking gate, 4 ordinary carabiners and some lengths of nylon rope of varying thickness. The hemp line was wrapped several times around one's waist, tied off in a reef knot and the locking carabiner clipped through all the turns and the rope tied to that using a bowline knot. Roped climbing safety evolved from sailing ship technology. I once took a 40ft fall tied on like this and it was not as uncomfortable as you might imagine. Even those early nylon ropes had plenty of stretch and it was more like a bungee jump. Had I been using a hemp rope, I wouldn't now be writing this.

I acquired other bits of gear, filing the threads out of a few sizes of engineering nuts and threading them on the lengths of rope or slings as we call them, completing the loop by tying both ends together with a fisherman's knot. These could be draped over a pinnacle or flake, threaded through a hole, or the nuts slotted into a tapering crack in order to attach yourself securely to the rock, while your partner climbed. He or she would do the same as you climbed, paying out or taking in the rope as required.

As a leader you would deploy these slings on your way up, clipping your rope in using the ordinary carabiners so that your falling distance potential was reduced. Getting one of these placed just before a hard bit or 'crux' gave you a psychological boost. Of course, if you fell, it put a considerable strain on your partner and gear in stopping you. It follows from this that you don't climb with people (a), likely to benefit from any policies you may have, or (b), think you have designs on their girlfriend!

With our local rock being limestone and mostly vertical the climbs are usually severe and above with the advantage that when you fall you don't bounce, assuming your partner or second isn't asleep and actually knows what they are doing.

The normal option of climbing up through the grades, to gradually improve wasn't available to me, but I was fit and strong, so reasonably happy to throw myself at the local routes.

Grimper had some unfinished business on Ash Tree Wall, a 40ft crag round towards Clapdale from Robin Proctors. He thought I was ready to do battle with the unclimbed central section. I had a few soft steel pitons and borrowed a large hammer from our tool box in case, the cracks wouldn't take the nuts. The start was overhanging and quite gymnastic. About 15ft up was a crack suitable for nuts and I continued to the top at a reasonable grade without using pitons and my huge 'coal hammer' as Grimper called it. He was delighted with this result, as being a traditionalist, he disapproved the use of pitons. It would also have been easier without the weight of the hammer and he said that had I used it, the crag would have been demolished. He called the route Nutcracker and we graded it V.S. I notice that in the Limestone Guide that the first ascent is credited to me but that Dennis Gray had his eye on it and thought the prize was his when he got up it a few months later.

Four friends from school also became interested in climbing and, by the time we were in the sixth form, we were getting out regularly. School was so laid back about it that we went to Attermire in PE, conveniently on an afternoon. These crags are a 40 minute uphill walk from Settle towards Malham. They are on the west and north side of Stockdale, a secluded place where Curlews fill the air with haunting territorial calls and Snipe drum over a marsh, formerly a lake in medieval times. The remains of bears and Sabre tooth tigers littered the caves and the climbs have evocative names like Hares Wall and Moonshine. The valley was also the place where Rabbity Dick once took 2000 rabbits in a week. This place, Malham Cove, Great Close Scar and Twistleton were our stamping grounds. Ian, Colin, Stephen and later, Peter were the close knit team of these times. Colin passed his test and we sometimes had the use of their family car, otherwise we hitch-hiked, walked or biked. We also got to Langdale, Dow and the Duddon valley.

Easter 1965 and the Geography department had booked a village hall as accommodation, at Loch Duich, Kintail, within sight of the Isle of Skye. I used a free rail pass to make the fabulous 450 mile journey to the Kyle of Lochalsh, catching a MacBrayne's bus from there. My ice axe point went through the bus roof as I shouldered my rucksack to get off, but the driver would only find out when it rained which it does there is most of the time.

The mountains were well plastered with snow and we did a few walks low down before embarking on the traverse of the Five Sisters. I was the only one with an ice axe, so you get some idea of how naive teachers can be. These 3500ft hills were in serious winter condition. I only had a pair of Veldtschone shoes on, losing a boot earlier in the week, during a river crossing when I went under because I had a tall friend called Robert on my back. We had been at the Falls of Glomach and became separated from our party in order to rescue an over-adventurous photographer who got into difficulties. Intending to catch the others up by taking a short-cut, we ended up on the wrong side of the river. I found a stout pole; took my boots off and gave them to Rob who then got on my back and we then lurched off into the current. The stick broke fairly quickly, we went under and my boots sailed serenely down the river. One was easily retrieved, but the other was circling in a deep eddy. Rob, who could swim, tried to get it with another stick but he fell right in and the boot sank in the ensuing confusion.

I never saw it again, despite Rob making a couple of spirited dives in the snow meltwater. After that, we got a wry bollocking from the staff, one of whom was Rob's dad, Deputy Head of the school and a man of great humour and fairness.

I cut steps up and down the highest peaks. One boy, Philip, lost his footing descending and slid towards the valley at speed. I was sure he would die. Something stopped him after a few hundred yards so I slid after him, braking in the classic manner by falling on the adze bit to force the pick into the ice. He was a bit battered and limping, having been stopped by a protruding rock. His sciatic nerve was damaged and troubled him for quite a while, especially so, as he was a committed distance runner. I cut steps back up to the others and we continued without any more epics, arriving back in the dark.

This trip didn't seem a big deal at the time, although I was pleased at my role that day. It gave me enough confidence to engage an attractive Scots girl in conversation that night in the nearby hotel bar. She was on a University Club meet and knew enough to realise that we had a true adventure that day, incredulous as to our success, as her team declined to do the traverse because some had no crampons! It began to dawn on me that I was quite at home in this environment (not just the immediate one) and was ready for more. It was also a good lesson, as I knew we were lucky to escape without a fatality. Conditions had been totally underestimated by the staff, who though good company and regular hillwalkers were certainly not winter mountaineers.

By the summer, I was climbing comfortably at VS, grade 5 on a 6 point scale of difficulty. Yorkshire and Scotland refused to acknowledge a grade harder than VS but in Wales and Derbyshire you could climb at Extremely Severe. I was getting up a few hard VS's, notably an early repeat of Alan Austin's Mellow Yellow at Attermire and a long, lonely lead of Birkett's Leopards Crawl on Dow, when the boys refused to follow and I had to abseil to recover the two paltry bits of protection, I had arranged in over 100ft of thin climbing that was both strenuous and delicate.

Nuts were now available in a few sizes, manufactured in aluminium alloy. Kernmantle ropes (where the business bit is protected inside a woven sheath, like a kettle flex) and line for slings of varying thickness all made the game a bit safer. I bought a helmet when they became available.

Chris Bonnington and Ian Clough inspired us by getting up the infamous Eiger North face. Bonatti, Terray, Comici, Cassin, Hertzog, Welzenbach became familiar names. Our own Whillans and Brown were household names vying with Mallory and Irvine and Hillary and Tenzing.

The awesome 300ft central wall at Malham Cove, Kilnsey, Gordale and Malham Overhangs were subdued with expansion bolts and pitons. There was a lot going on, new heroes emerging.

They seemed god-like in their experience and ability, it was to be a couple more years before I caught on that, if they could stand up there then so could I.

# Index of Modern Journals

| Country                   | Location/Topic            | Vol No and / or Series-Issue            |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Australia                 |                           | 12-8, 12-9, 12-13, 13-9, 13-21          |
| Austria                   | Kaisergebirg              | 13-2                                    |
| Austria                   | Skiing                    | 13-1                                    |
| Austria                   | Stubaital                 | 13-8                                    |
| Austria                   | Silvretta                 | 13-1                                    |
| Azerbaijan                |                           | 13-21                                   |
| Bolivia                   | Cordilleras Cocapata      | 12-12                                   |
| Bolivia                   |                           | 12-1, 12-12, 13-10, 13-11               |
| Bolivia                   | Quimsa Cruz Range         | 13-10                                   |
| Bolivia                   | Real                      | 12-12                                   |
| Bosnia                    |                           | 13-3                                    |
| Brazil                    | Bom Jesus de Lapa         | 13-10                                   |
| Brazil                    | Caves & Karst             | 13-9                                    |
| Bulgaria                  |                           | 12-9, 13-19, 13-20                      |
| Canada                    | Canoeing across           | 13-10                                   |
| Canada                    | Newfoundland              | 12-3                                    |
| Canary Islands            | Hill walking              | 12-6                                    |
| Canary Islands - La Palma | Hill walking              | 13-15                                   |
| Canary Islands - Tenerife | Paragliding               | 12-5                                    |
| Canary Islands - Tenerife |                           | 14-2                                    |
| Chile                     | Paine Circuit             | 12-23                                   |
| Chile                     |                           | 12-6, 12-23                             |
| China                     | Great Wall                | 12-24                                   |
| China Caving              |                           | S12-15,18,19,22,23 / S13-1,2,6,13,19,20 |
| China                     | Jade Dragon Snow Mountain | 13-4                                    |
| Colombia                  | Darien gap                | 12-6                                    |
| Crete                     | SW Crete                  | 12-20                                   |
| Croatia                   | Sailing                   | 12-21                                   |
| Czechoslovakia            | Sudetenland               | 12-23                                   |
| Easter Island             |                           | 12-6                                    |
| Egypt                     | Sinai                     | 12-16                                   |
| Ethiopia                  | Caves                     | 12-22                                   |
| Ethiopia                  | Erta Ale & The Danakil    | 12-21                                   |
| France                    | Arêtes du Sapey           | 13-1                                    |
| France                    | Beaufort-sur-Doron        | 13-22                                   |
| France                    | Chamonix to Zermatt       | 13-17                                   |
| France                    | Chartreuse                | 14-2                                    |
| France                    | Climbing Haute Savoie     | 13-12                                   |
| France                    | Climbing Saint-Jeannet    | 13-5                                    |
| France                    | Drôme Provençale          | 154-3                                   |
| France                    | Gouffre Berger            | 12-1                                    |
| France                    | Haut Languedoc            | 13-19                                   |

|                 |                             |                                        |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| France          | Haute Provence              | 14-3                                   |
| France          | La Meije                    | 12-17                                  |
| France          | Lozère                      | 13-20                                  |
| France          | Mont Blanc                  | 12-2                                   |
| France          | On snow shoes               | 13-11                                  |
| France          | Pic Du Midi D'Ossau tour    | 12-18                                  |
| France          | Alps                        | 12-22                                  |
| France          | Haute Savoie                | 12-9                                   |
| France          | Monte Rosa Circuit          | 13-12                                  |
| France          | Massuif ded Bauges          | 14-3                                   |
| France          | Trekking Haute Savoie       | 13-16                                  |
| France          | Treks in the Écrins         | 13-14                                  |
| France          | Trou de Ver, caving         | 12-7                                   |
| France          | Vercours                    | 13-14                                  |
| Greece          | Climbing, Kalymnos          | 13-8, 13-20                            |
| Greece          | Macedonian Caves            | 12-11                                  |
| Greenland       |                             | 12-5, 13-18                            |
| Guatemala       | Caving                      | 12-4                                   |
| Iceland         |                             | 12-7, 12-10                            |
| India           | Nanda Devi Sanctuary        | 12-16                                  |
| India           | Spiti - Lhakang Expedition  | 13-5, 13-6, 13-7                       |
| India           | Trekking in Sikkim          | 13-9                                   |
| India/Kashmir   | Ladakh                      | 13-1, 13-2, 13-3                       |
| Indonesia       | Volcanoes, Sulawesi,        | 12-8                                   |
| Iran            | Southern part               | 13-6                                   |
| Iran            | Valleys of the Assassins    | 12-13                                  |
| Ireland         | Cycling & hill walking      | 13-13                                  |
| Ireland Photos  | Co. Clare and Fermanagh     | 12-7                                   |
| Ireland         |                             | 12-7, 12-20, 13-13, 13-20, 13-21, 14-1 |
| Isles of Scilly | Walking                     | 13-2                                   |
| Italy           | Dolomites                   | 12-10, 12-24, 14-2                     |
| Italy           | Fauna of Gran Paradiso      | 13-3                                   |
| Italy           | Grande Anello dei Sibillini | 13-22                                  |
| Italy           | Julian Alps                 | 12-12                                  |
| Italy           | Monte Baldo                 | 12-7                                   |
| Italy           | Monte Rosa                  | 13-1                                   |
| Italy           | Telemarking-Piz Bernina     | 12-8                                   |
| Italy           | Valnontey Aosta Valley      | 13-2                                   |
| Jamaica         | Blue Mountain Peak          | 12-11, 13-2                            |
| Japan           | Mount Fuji                  | 13-1                                   |
| Java            | Sulphur mines               | 12-1                                   |
| Kazakhstan      | Tien-shan mts               | 13-22                                  |
| Kazakhstan      | Mangystau                   | 13-23                                  |
| Kyrgyzstan      | The Pamir Road              | 14-2                                   |
| Laos            | Three caves                 | 12-15                                  |
| Lebanon         | Levant Caving               | 13-8                                   |
| Libya           | Caves & karst               | 13-5                                   |
| Madagascar      | Caves & Karst               | 12-17, 12-21, 13-1, 14-3               |

|                  |                          |                        |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Malawi           | Mulanje Mountains        | 13-16                  |
| Malaysia         | Gunung Ledang            | 13-4                   |
| Malaysia         | Mount Kinabalu           | 12-14                  |
| Malta & Gozo     | Climbing                 | 13-17                  |
| Mauritania       | Karst and caves          | 12-24                  |
| Mongolia         | Alti Mountains           | 12-20                  |
| Morocco          | Anti-Atlas: Tafraoute    | 13-2, 13-7, 14-3       |
| Morocco          | High Atlas: Snow and ice | 13-19                  |
| Morocco          | Jebel Sarhro             | 13-21                  |
| Morocco          | Western Atlas            | 12-17                  |
| Nepal            | Annapurna                | 12-3, 13-2             |
| Nepal            | Annapurna region         | 12-24                  |
| Nepal            | Dorje Lakpa              | 12-2, 12-5             |
| Nepal            | Jugal Himal Expedition   | 12-1                   |
| Nepal            | Kanchenjunga trekking    | 14-1                   |
| Nepal            | Langtang                 | 12-3                   |
| Nepal            | Loengpo Gang, Himalayas  | 13-3                   |
| Nepal            | Mera Peak                | 13-14                  |
| Nepal            | Rolwaling                | 12-12                  |
| Nepal            | Rolwaling & Khumbu       | 12-9                   |
| Nepal            | Taplejung                | 14-1                   |
| Nepal            | Trekking in the Khumbu   | 12-8, 13-12            |
| Nepal            | Upper Dolpo to Mustang   | 13-23                  |
| New Caledonia    | Karst and caves          | 13-7                   |
| New Zealand      | Oparara Basin            | 13-4                   |
| New Zealand      | Rock climbing            | 13-11                  |
| New Zealand      | Tramping etc             | 13-8, 13-22            |
| Northern Ireland | Mountains of Mourne      | 13-20, 13-21           |
| Norway           | Andalsnes                | 12-8                   |
| Norway           | Climbing the Geita       | 12-1                   |
| Norway           | Hardangervidda           | 12-4                   |
| Norway           | Ice climbing             | 13-8                   |
| Norway           | Ice climbing             | 14-1                   |
| Norway           | Jotenheimen              | 13-3                   |
| Norway           | Lofoten                  | 12-2                   |
| Norway           | Skiing                   | 13-23, 14-2            |
| Norway           | Telemarking with Pulks   | 13-4                   |
| Oman             | Karst and caves          | 12-7, 13-14            |
| Pakistan         | Gondogoro La             | 12-15                  |
| Pakistan         | Karakoram                | 12-15                  |
| Pakistan         | Trekking in north        | 13-4                   |
| Panama           | Darien gap               | 12-6                   |
| Peru             | Chachapoyas              | 13-15, 13-18           |
| Peru             | Condors                  | 13-9                   |
| Philippines      | Cave                     | 12-15                  |
| Poland           | Tatras                   | 12-6                   |
| Pyrenees         | Walking the length of    | 13-17                  |
| Romania          |                          | 12-6, 12-7, 12-9, 14-1 |

|                      |                            |                                |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Russia               | Kamchatka                  | 12-3                           |
| Sardinia             |                            | 12-19, 12-21                   |
| South Africa         | Drakensberg Trek           | 12-19                          |
| South Africa         | Table Mountain             | 12-12                          |
| South Africa         |                            | 12-9, 14-2                     |
| South Georgia        | Kohl Larsen Plateau        | 12-13                          |
| South Georgia        | Mapping                    | 13-5                           |
| Spain                | Almeria, Sierra de Cabrera | 13-19                          |
| Spain                | Costa Blanca               | 12-4, 13-4, 13-11, 13-17, 14-1 |
| Spain                | Cueva del Gato             | 12-5                           |
| Spain                | El Chorro                  | 13-8, 13-23                    |
| Spain                | Majorca                    | 14-2                           |
| Spain                | Sierra Nevada              | 14-2                           |
| Spain                | Sierras Tejada             | 13-23                          |
| Spitsbergen/Svalbard | Ice pack crossing          | 12-14, 13-2, 13-5, 13-9        |
| St. Lucia            | Pirates of Piton           | 14-1                           |
| Sweden               | Lapland                    | 12-4                           |
| Switzerland          | Biancograt                 | 13-18                          |
| Switzerland          | Chamonix to Zermatt        | 13-17                          |
| Switzerland          | Lagginhorn                 | 12-12                          |
| Switzerland          | Matterhorn                 | 14-3                           |
| Switzerland          | Monte Rosa                 | 13-1                           |
| Switzerland          | Pontrasina                 | 13-15                          |
| Switzerland          | Mönch                      | 12-4                           |
| Switzerland          | Weissmies                  | 12-12                          |
| Switzerland          | Zermatt valley             | 12-20                          |
| Syria                | Levant Caving              | 13-8                           |
| Tajikistan           |                            | 14-1, 14-2                     |
| Tanzania Kibo,       | Kilimanjaro                | 12-24                          |
| Tanzania             | Mountain of God            | 12-8                           |
| Turkey               | Demirkazik                 | 12-23                          |
| Turkey               | Rock climbing              | 13-13                          |
| Turkmenistan         | Karst and caves            | 13-18                          |
| U.S.A.               | Appalachians               | 12-22                          |
| U.S.A.               | Baya California, Whales    | 13-16                          |
| U.S.A.               | California, High Sierra    | 12-22, 13-2                    |
| U.S.A.               | Hiking in the South-West   | 12-13                          |
| U.S.A.               | John Muir Trail            | 12-16, 12-17, 12-18            |
| U.S.A.               | Wyoming, Wind River        | 14-2                           |
| U.S.A.               | Yosemite, California       | 12-23, 13-10                   |
| Uzbekistan           | The Pamir Road             | 14-2                           |
| Venezuela            | Roraima                    | 13-2                           |
| Yemen                | Socotra Island             | 13-7                           |

**Following - Index of main articles by issue,  
1994-2020; Volumes 12, 13 & 14**

**Number 3 Volume 14**  
**2020 includes**

Charnwood Forest  
Morocco  
Massif des Bauges, France  
Lady mountaineers  
Madagascar caves  
The Matterhorn  
Drôme, France  
Haute Provence, France

**Number 2, Volume 14**  
**2019 includes**

Wind River Mountains,  
Wyoming  
Tenerife  
The Pamir Road  
Sierra Nevada, Spain  
Caves of Majorca  
Norway  
France, Chartreuse  
South Africa  
Snowshoeing in France

**Number 1, Volume 14**  
**2018 includes**

St Lucia  
Calpe, Spain  
Romania  
Ice Climbing  
Tajikistan  
Arran  
Taplejung, Nepal  
Ireland  
Kanchenjunga, Nepal

**Issue 23, Series 13**  
**Summer 2017 includes:**

Trekking History.  
Sierras Tejada, Spain  
Upper Dolpo to Mustang  
Mangystau, Kazakhstan  
Norway Skiing  
El Chorro, Spain

**Issue 22, Series 13**  
**Winter 2016 includes:**

Grande Anello dei Sibillini  
Beaufort-sur-Doron, Savoie  
Tien-shan mountains  
New Zealand

**Issue 21, Series 13**  
**Summer 2016 includes:**

Trekking in Morocco  
Azerbaijan  
Mountains of Mourné  
Australia

**Issue 20, Series 13**  
**Winter 2015 includes:**

Lozère, France  
China caving  
Bulgaria  
Climbing in Kalymnos  
Mountains of Mourné

**Issue 19, Series 13**  
**Summer 2015 includes:**

China caving  
Bulgaria, climbs & caves  
Morocco, snow and ice  
Almeria, Spain  
Haut Languedoc, France

**Issue 18, Series 13**  
**Winter 2014 includes:**

Turkmenistan  
Greenland  
Peru  
Biancograt, Switzerland

**Issue 17, Series 13**  
**Summer 2014 includes:**

Chamonix to Zermatt  
Cycling in Keilder  
Malta & Gozo  
Calp, Costa Blanca  
Walking the length of  
the Pyrenees

**Issue 16, Series 13**  
**Winter 2013 includes:**

Baya California, Whales  
Mulanje Mountains, Malawi  
Trekking in Haute Savoie  
The Mysterious Mrs Johnson  
Ironman Eventing

**Issue 15, Series 13**  
**Summer 2013 includes:**

Chachapoyas, Peru  
Pontasina, Switzerland  
Walking on La Palma  
Early caving  
Ilkley Moor

**Issue 14 Series 13**  
**Winter 2012 includes:**

Oman and its Karst  
Treks in the Écrins  
Mera Peak, Nepal  
France, The Vercors

**Issue 13 Series 13**  
**Summer 2012 includes:**

Turkey, Rock climbing  
Ireland, cycling & hillwalking  
China, caving

**Issue 12 Series 13**  
**Winter 2011 includes:**

The Monte Rosa Circuit  
Climbing in the Haute Savoie  
Use of redundant quarries  
Cecil Slingsby (background)

**Issue 11 Series 13**  
**Summer 2011 includes:**

Rock climbing in New Zealand  
Bolivia Expedition  
Trekking in the Khumbu  
On snowshoes in France  
Climbing in Spain

**Issue 10 Series 13**  
**Winter 2010 includes:**

Canoeing across Canada  
Yosemite, California  
Bolivia, Quimsa Cruz  
Range  
Britain's three peaks -  
from Barmouth by boat  
Bom Jesus de Lapa ,  
Brazil  
Yorkshire Three Peaks by  
Ski

**Issue 9 Series 13**  
**Summer 2010 includes:**

The Vercors, France  
Caves & Karst of Brazil  
Trekking in Sikkim  
Australia, walking &  
wildlife  
Pulking on Svalbard  
Condors, Peru

**Issue 8 Series 13**  
**Winter 2009 includes:**

Levant Caving  
(Lebanon/Syria)  
Ice climbing in Norway  
Kalymnos Rock Climbing  
Tramping etc  
New Zealand  
Stubaital, Austria  
El Chorro, Spain

**Issue 7 Series 13**  
**Summer 2009 includes**

Images of Lhakang  
Socotra Island  
The Snow Leopard  
New Caledonia  
Morocco, Anti Atlas

**Issue 6 Series 13**  
**Winter 2008 includes:**

Early Gliding  
Southern Iran  
Images of Bhutan  
Fengshan, China  
Lhakang Expedition  
History - caving in N.Pennines

**Issue 5 Series 13**  
**Summer 2008 includes:**

Mapping of South Georgia  
The early days of Skiing  
Climbing Saint-Jeannet, France  
Ice pack crossing Spitzbergen  
Caves & karst in Libya  
Trekking in Bhutan

**Issue 4 Series 13**  
**Winter 2007 includes:**

A history of Yorkshire Rock  
Telemarking with Pulks,  
Gunung Ledang, Malaysia  
Jade Dragon Snow Mountain  
China  
Skye  
Oparara Basin, New Zealand  
Costa Blanca rock  
Trekking in northern Pakistan

**Issue 3 Series 13**  
**Summer 2007 includes:**

19th century caving in Nidderdale  
Jotenheimen, Norway  
Fauna of Gran Paradiso  
Bosnia  
Loengpo Gang, Himalayas  
China Caving  
Flora of Ladakh

**Issue 2 Series 13**  
**Winter 2006 includes:**

Tafraoute, Morocco  
Jamaica  
China  
Spitzbergen  
Venezuela  
Austria  
California, High Sierra  
Isles of Scilly  
Annapurna Sanctuary  
Ladakh  
The Langdales, a history  
Valnontey, Aosta, Italy

**Issue 1 Series 13**  
**Summer 2006 includes:**

Monte Rosa  
Madagascar  
Skiing in Austria  
Arêtes du Sapey, Lake Annecy  
Japan  
Ladakh  
China Caving (56p. Supp.)

**Issue 24 Series 12**  
**Winter 2005 includes:**

China, Great Wall  
Mauritania  
Skye  
Kibo, Kilimanjaro  
The Dolomites  
Lakeland 3000s  
Newby Moss Cave  
History of Lyke Wake Walk  
Nepal  
The Munroes

**Issue 23 Series 12**  
**Summer 2005 includes:**

Demirkazik, Turkey  
Yosemite  
The Sudetenland

Paine Circuit, Chile  
China caving expedition  
Walking in Nidderdale  
North York Moors  
Wanderings in Scotland

**Issue 22 Series 12**  
**Winter 2004 includes:**

The US High Sierra &  
Appalachians  
Caves in Ethiopia  
Early exploration of Alum Pot  
The history of Carabiners  
Caving Guangxi, China  
Scotland  
The Lakes  
The French Alps

**Issue 21 Series 12**  
**Summer 2004 includes:**

Caves & Karst of Madagascar  
History, Dunald Mill Hole  
Erta Ale & The Danakil  
Sailing off Croatia  
Walking Morecambe Bay  
Climbing on Clogwyn  
Sardinia

**Issue 20 Series 12**  
**Winter 2003 includes:**

Activities in Mongolia  
Crete  
Galloway  
Ireland  
Switzerland  
The Prehistory of Saddleworth

**Issue 19 Series 12**  
**Summer 2003 includes:**

Drakensberg Trek  
Fong Yen, China  
Alderley Edge Mines

Sardinia  
Ben Alder  
The Haute Savoie

**Issue 18 Series 12**  
**Winter 2002 includes:**

Hidden Valleys  
China Caves Project  
Pic Du Midi D'Ossua,  
Activities in Wales  
The Scottish Highlands  
Dartmoor.  
The John Muir Trail  
Sailing a Square Rigger

**Issue 17 Series 12**  
**Summer 2001 includes:**

John Muir Trail full report  
Morocco Expedition Report  
Madagascar caves  
Lundy  
Newby Moss Sink  
La Meije

**Issue 16 Series 12**  
**Summer 2001 includes:**

Nanda Devi Inner Sanctuary  
John Muir Trail  
Skye  
Sinai  
Scafell

**Issue 15 Series 12**  
**Summer 2001 includes:**

Guangxi Caves 2000  
Expedition  
Cave in Palawan & 3 in Laos  
The Bradford Caving  
community a century ago  
Fantan B  
Gondogoro La  
The Karakoram

**Issue 14 Series 12**  
**Winter 2000 includes:**

The Corbetts, Spring Bank  
Svalbard  
Ingleborough Cave Box  
and Giggleswick School  
Mount Kinabalu in rainy season

**Issue 13 Series 12**  
**Summer 2000 includes:**

Valleys of the Assassins, Iran  
Rambling Australia,  
1975 to 1999  
Hiking in the South-West USA  
Kohl Larsen Plateau,  
South Georgia  
Orion Face Direct, Ben Nevis

**Issue 12 Series 12**  
**Winter 1999 includes:**

Cordilleras Cocapata  
Real, Bolivia  
Table Mountain,  
Weissmies  
The Lagginhorn  
The Julian Alps  
Lundy  
The Cullin  
Kanchenjunga  
Seana Bhraigh

**Issue 11 Series 12**  
**Summer 1999 includes:**

Catamite Hole  
Macedonian Caves  
Blue Mountain Peak, Jamaica

**Issue 10 Series 12**  
**Winter 1998 includes:**

Iceland Expedition Report  
Cycling in the Dolomites  
Goyden Pot, Eli Simpson and  
Pudsey Rambling Club

**Issue 9 Series 12****Summer 1998 includes:**

Climbing in Wales  
 The Cullin  
 Knoydart  
 Bulgaria  
 South Africa  
 Australia  
 The Himalaya  
 Life and times of E E Roberts  
 Gaping Gill

**Issue 8 Series 12****Winter 1997 includes:**

Telemarking on Piz Bernina  
 Andalsnes, Norway  
 Bungle Bungle Massif, N W  
 Australia  
 Volcanoes, Sulawesi,  
 Indonesia  
 Mountain of God, Tanzania  
 Caving in the Dales  
 The Eastern Cairngorms  
 Trekking the Khumbu, Nepal

**Issue 7 Series 12****Summer 1997 includes:**

Romania in winter  
 Irish potholes

Caving in Oman  
 Monte Baldo, Italy  
 Cave exploration,  
 Trou de Ver France  
 Exploring Iceland

**Issue 6 Series 12****Winter 1996 includes:**

Romania  
 Easter Island  
 The Tatras, Poland  
 Exploring Chile  
 Hill walking in the Canaries  
 Darien gap, Panama/Colombia

**Issue 5 Series 12****Summer 1996 includes:**

Dorje Lakpa, Nepal  
 Eastern Greenland  
 Cueva del Gato, Spain  
 Paragliding over Tenerife

**Issue 4 Series 12****Winter 1995 includes:**

Hardangervidda, Norway  
 Stolnostinden  
 and Hurrungane  
 Swedish Lapland  
 The English Lakes

The Mönch, Switzerland  
 Rock climbing, S E Spain  
 Elidir, N Wales  
 Caving Guatemala

**Issue 3 Series 12****Summer 1995 includes:**

Annapurna & Langtang  
 Kamchatka, Russia  
 The 'Moon' Gogarth  
 Newfoundland

**Issue 2 Series 12****Winter 1994 includes:**

Lofoten, Norway  
 Mont Blanc  
 Fisherfield and Letterewe trek  
 Dorje Lakpa Expedition, Nepal  
 Sea cliffs climbing, Cornwall

**Issue 1 Series 12****Summer 1994 includes:**

Climbing the Geita, Norway  
 Descent of Gouffre Berger,  
 France  
 Bolivia Expedition  
 Sulphur mines, Java  
 Nepal Expeditiona

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## **THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB**

**EXPLORATION, MOUNTAINEERING  
AND CAVING SINCE 1892**

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