

**YORKSHIRE  
RAMBLERS'  
CLUB**

**JOURNAL  
2022**

# Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal

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### FRONT COVER:

Heading for Sgurr an Iubhair  
in the Mamores

### BACK COVER:

Karabit Pass  
Turkey 2,985m

On the Friday evening a small but nevertheless high quality section of the YRC gathered at Low Hall Garth, welcomed by baked potatoes and a fire which had been burning since early afternoon.

The forecast for Saturday morning was rain and it did not disappoint.

Fortified by Robert's full English, Andy, Conrad, Michael and Richard ventured out to Patterdale.

Although Helvellyn was invisible in the rain they embarked on a cross country route from Glenridding over Birkhouse Moor to the Hole in the Wall below Striding Edge.



Michael, Andy and Richard displaying their taste in headgear.

Michael was feeling a little under the weather and Andy volunteered to stay low with him and sample the cake shops of Glenridding.

On schedule the rain had stopped and Conrad and Richard proceeded up Striding Edge in full winter conditions, in crampons and with ice axes. Visibility improved and the top was reached through a small cornice.

Minimal time was spent on the cold and windy summit before descending Swirral Edge with great care, thence home by Red Tarn Beck as darkness descended.

A visit to a pub was eschewed in favour of Robert's Eccles cakes.

Meanwhile Robert and John had explored locally to the hut.

Dinner was to die for, carrot and coriander soup, shepherd's pie and crumble. Later we were joined by Ged Campion for a most convivial evening.

Our Sunday morning was enlivened by a visit from Becca and prospective member Debby Kuhlmann who had come to inspect the luxury of the hut and go for a run over to Tilberthwaite.

On Sunday Andy went back to Glenridding and completed the Striding Edge /Swirral Edge circuit in a fast time and reported that it was no warmer on the top.

Meanwhile Conrad and Richard ascended the Greenburn Beck behind the hut, thence to Swirl How and over Black Sails to Wetherlam.

There was snow and ice on the ground but crampons were not essential.

A wet return was made via Tilberthwaite and the ford as dark again descended. Robert and Michael meanwhile inspected the mines and workings at Greenburn.

It was unusual to be in the hut for this meet without it being (over) full but the attendees were rewarded with being able to stretch out inside, and outside to have experienced some excellent and challenging conditions.



Richard on the summit of Helvellyn

RT



**Andy Syme**  
**Braving the**  
**elements**

Attendees:

Robert Crowther leader

Andy Syme

John Jenkin

Conrad Tetley

Richard Taylor

Michael Crowther  
(PM)



Little Langdale Tarn  
from beside LHG

# Contributions Of A Well Travelled Man

## ARTICLES IN THE JOURNALS BY J.R. MIDDLETON

.....

*John started his trips and the articles that go with them in 1964, four years before I started walking with the club. I have been accused of having verbal diarrhoea and it was the regular articles I wrote that saw me pressed into the role of editor.*

*There are a few; a very few; other regular contributors and I am pleased to say that in the last two journals a few more members have been putting pen to paper.*

*I suspect though, that the combined contributions of all other members in the last half century do not amount to the pages of material that John has produced.*

*If any members want any advice on almost anywhere they intend to go, then John is the man to turn to.*

In Brief: 54 articles over 59 years membership.

*25 Caving; 7 Caving/ Adventure; 1 Caving/ Climbing;  
8 Adventure; 10 Climbing; 2 Flora; 1 Flora/ Adventure.*

1964. The Reyfad Area – **Northern Ireland**. *Caving*.

1966. The Fieberhohle – **Austria**. *Caving*.

1966. The Eiskogul Hohle – **Austria**. *Caving*.

1968. The British Speleological Expedition to **Turkey** 1966. *Caving*.

1968. **Turkey** Again 1967. *Caving*.

1968. First Descent of the Melon River Gorge - **Turkey**. *Adventure*.

1970. Underground in **Lebanon**. 1968 and 1969. *Caving*.
1973. **Iran**. A Caving Adventure Extraordinary. *Caving*.
1973. The Reseau Felix Trombe - **France**. *Caving*.
1973. 1972, The Year of the Push. **World**. *Caving*.
1992. Some Notes on the **World** Caving Scene. *Caving*.
1994. The Sulphur Mines of Kawah Ijen – **Java**. *Adventure*.
1995. The Moon – Gogarth, **Anglesey**. *Climbing*.
1996. Caverna Corredores – **Costa Rica**. *Caving*.
1996. A **World** Caving Update. *Caving*.
1996. A Walk on the Wild Side – Almost! – The Darien Gap, **Panama**. *Adventure*.
1997. Some Volcanoes of Northern **Sulawesi**. *Adventure*.
1997. Some Caves and Karst of Southern **Sulawesi**. *Caving*.
1997. Ol Doinyo Lengai. **Tanzania**. *Climbing*.
2001. One Cave in Palawan. **Philippines**?. *Caving*.
2001. Three Caves in **Laos**. *Caving/Adventure*.
2002. **Madagascar**. Some Big Caves and Some Small Ones! *Caving*.
2003. Cala Gonone. **Sardinia**. *Climbing*.
2004. Sof Omar. **Ethiopia**. *Caving*.
2004. Even More Caves and Karst of **Madagascar**. *Caving*.
2004. Erta Ale and the Danakil – **Ethiopia**. *Adventure*.
2006. **Mauritania** 2005. *Caving*.
2006. **Madagascar** and its Karst. *Caving*.
2006. Woody Woodpecker and the Cannelures – **France**. *Climbing*.
2006. Tafraoute, Back to Basics – **Morocco**. *Climbing*.
2007. The Oparara Basin – **New Zealand**. *Caving*.
2008. **Libya**. Land of Amazing Karst and Caves. *Caving/Adventure*.
2008. The Flora of Longstone Edge - **Derbyshire** *Flora*.
2008. Salt, Diapirs, Karst, Caves & More in Southern **Iran**. *Caving/Adventure*.
2009. Soqotra Island and its Amazing Caves. **Yemen**. *Caving*.
2009. Some Notes on the Karst and Caves of **New Caledonia**. *Caving*.

2009. **Kalymnos**, The Ultimate Rock Climbing Destination? *Climbing*.
2010. The Remarkable Caves and Karst of Peruacu, **Brazil**. *Caving/ Adventure*.
2010. An Extraordinary Hill in **Brazil**. *Caving*.
2011. Froggatt Edge, But Not as we Know it! **New Zealand**. *Climbing*.
2012. Rock Climbing in **Turkey**. *Climbing*.
2012. **Oman**, a Cave and Karst Tour. *Caving*.
2012. The 'Arab World' Restaurant – **Oman**. *Adventure*.
2014. **Malta** and Gozo, A Rock Climbers Brief. *Climbing*.
2014. Caves and More in **Turkmenistan**. *Caving/ Adventure*.
2015. Sport Climbing & Fun Caving in North-west **Bulgaria**. *Caving/ Climbing*.
2015. **Kalymnos** Climbing Update. *Climbing*.
2016. **Azerbaijan**, Land of Fire (and Mud). *Adventure*.
2016. Hidden Gems Amongst the Mighty Tien-Shan Mountains. **Kazakhstan**. *Flora/ Adventure*
2017. Mangystau, a Name to Conjure With! **Kazakhstan**. *Caving/ Adventure*.
2018. **Tajikistan** Journey. *Adventure*.
2018. Reservoir Draw Down Mud Flora – **South Yorkshire**. *Flora*.
2019. The Pamir Highway. **Kyrgyzstan & Tajikistan**. *Caving/ Adventure*.
2020. Caves of **Madagascar**. A Recent Update. *Caving*.

Anglesey	Kazakhstan	Panama
Austria	Laos	Philippines
Azerbaijan	Lebanon	Sardinia
Brazil	Libya	Sulawesi.
Bulgaria	Madagascar	Tajikistan
Costa Rica	Malta	Tanzania
Ethiopia	Mauritania	Turkey
France	Morocco	Turkmenistan
Iran	New Caledonia	Ulster
Java	New Zealand	Yemen
Kalymnos	Oman	



Ten members and prospective members assembled at Beudy Mawr on Friday evening. After three weeks of dry, calm and often sunny weather, the various forecasts accessed by the IT literate encompassed rain all day to sunshine all day but they all warned of very strong winds. By midnight Harvey was being rocked to sleep by the violent gusts tearing up the valley.

Saturday dawned dry but very windy. Everyone set off west down the valley with the intention of returning downwind at a higher level. Harvey walked to Llanberis then up to Clogwyn d'ur Arddu on Snowdon. The Smiths traversed the quarries to Deiniolen then up to Llyn Marchlyn Mawr where, on the utterly incorrect advice of the local member they struggled round the wrong side of the Llyn to reach the wall leading up to Mynydd Perfedd.

The remaining six whiled away the brief hour of light rain late morning by diverting to inspect the impressive start to the Snakes and Ladders route in the quarry hole of California.

They then climbed to the top of the Quarries onto Elidir Fach where a Welsh flag planted there was being slowly shredded by the wind. The last few yards onto the summit of Elidir Fawr over boulders was rather tricky in the gusts.

Both parties separately continued along the crest of the Glyderau to Y Garn, very gusty again at the top, then down to Llyn y Cwn and back to the hut via Cwm Cneifio, circuits of around 20km.



Descending  
Y Garn

The President, John Brown, arrived about midday and walked up Cwm Cneifio to the top of the Devil's Kitchen, returning by the same route.

Two wood burners soon warmed the hut for the usual convivial Saturday evening dinner and conversation. The fresh air of the day soon told and no one stayed up late.

On Sunday some had to leave but the Smiths parked behind Joe Brown's shop in Capel Curig, walked down the river to Pont Cyfing then up the East Ridge of Moel Siabod, sweeping up a couple of clueless Liverpool lads and conducting them to the top. John and Tim walked a similar route separately but no one encountered any of the others.



Moel Siabod, Daer Du Ridge

The lack of heavy rain was a bonus but the wind and non-existent snow conditions seem to be regular features of this meet nowadays. Maybe next year!

Thanks to the Rucksack Club for the use of Beudy Mawr.

Attending:

John Brown, Harvey Lomas, Chris Hilton, Tim Josephy, Michael Smith, Conrad Tetley, Beverley Eastwood (PM), Fiona Booker-Smith, Dave Booker-Smith, Paul Magson (PM), Tamsin Spain (PM).

### Female Climbers are Rapidly Bridging the Gender Gap

Coffee, cake, and a good old ‘natter’, what more could women want?

After all, these things are considered fundamental and stereotypical to virtually everything women do. And now, thankfully these essentials are provided at a ladies climbing night for an extra £3 per session at the Parthian climbing centre in Manchester, it is ‘just the perfect excuse’.

The mental and physical barriers to success for women in climbing are perpetuated by society, and in places where women are encouraged to overcome these hurdles, they continue to be underpinned by sexist attitudes and preconceptions.

Climbing however, is one of the few sports where women are almost able to level the playing field, their height to weight ratio is more favourable and although biologically men are taller than women, with ONS publishing that men average at 5’9” whilst women at 5’3”, they are able to bridge the gap in terms of technique where they may lack in reach.

Experienced climber Jasmin Newby has always been affected by the pressures of being a woman at the climbing wall, “I felt I had to be strong enough and ‘earn my place’ to be in there” with climbing having always been perceived as a very male dominated sport. “Since we were 15, we’ve been told we need to start running to keep our weight down and get a good ass” she says, because to lift weights and work on strength isn’t perceived as “ladylike” says Newby.

According to a study by Flash Foxy, an organisation created to empower women in climbing, found that women reported experiencing micro-aggressions two and a half times more often than men, with a total 65% feeling uncomfortable due to unwanted staring, unsolicited advice or feeling embarrassed. “I have felt very patronised whilst climbing with blokes, they refer to me as a ‘girl’ or presume I’m someone’s girlfriend,” says Newby.

The biological make-up of a man means that they have greater muscle mass and less body fat, “they start off in advantageous position and while we’ve been doing cardio, they’ve probably been lifting weights” says Newby, but there are many factors in climbing where muscle isn’t the main benefit: “As the grades get harder, strength isn’t enough and that’s where women begin to overtake the guys, we’ve always been working more on technique, so we turn our disadvantage into an advantage” she adds.

Having contacted Rock Over and Parthian, both climbing centres in Manchester to enquire about the gender of their route setters, Rock Over informed me that they have twice the amount of men route setting, whilst Parthian had no in-house female route setters as of November 2021. This makes it more likely that the holds on the routes will be further apart, therefore harder for women to reach. Men are able to go to the climbing wall knowing it's built for them, quite literally.

Adriana Brownlee, striving to be the youngest person to complete all fourteen 8,000 metre peaks by the age of 22, with 10 peaks already under her belt, says that although she isn't personally affected by gender stereotypes of women in high altitude climbing: "It's a mental barrier, I think we're underestimated by the male population and going through so many years of adversity in the world of sport, it gives women that extra drive to prove to others that they are capable. It's a subconscious thing" she says.

Tour company, High Adventure Expeditions, published that as of December 2021, a total of 687 women have reached the summit of Everest out of 6,014 people in total, and between 2006 and 2019, 14.6% more women are attempting the feat compared to 9.1% beginning in 1990 according to a recent study by the University of Washington. "From what I've seen in the mountains, I think women are mentally stronger than the guys. Our mental drive is way deeper. We may not be as physically strong, but we keep going and it sets us apart from the men," says Brownlee.

Despite the perceived gender barrier faced by women in the climbing community, they are indisputably some of the best climbers in the world. Austrian Climber, Angela Eicher, made history by becoming the third person ever to free climb 'La Planta De Shiva' graded at 9B,

Margo Hayes a climber from America was the first woman ever to complete a 9a+, and Hazel Findlay, a British climber recently topped out on 'Esclatamasters' in Spain graded at 9a. These are amazing achievements when we consider the hardest grade in the world is a 9c set by Adam Ondra, that is yet to be repeated.

In his paper: *Female excellence in rock climbing likely has an evolutionary origin*, Collin Carroll, author of 'Fitness by Darwin' and personal trainer hypothesised that there are multiple biological elements that allow women to climb equally as well as men, and even favour them. "There are certain adaptations that may help us climb, like large back muscles, grip strength relative to body weight that bridges the natural gap that exists between men and women," says Carroll. He refers to these as 'sex blind musculoskeletal adaptations' and "regardless of gender, the human body is well equipped to climb" he says.

In terms of the narrow performance gap in climbing, Carrol says that: "It all comes down to evolution.

If early humans had to be good at something to survive, both men and women had to be good at it.”

Therefore climbing, unlike any other sports, allows women to excel in ways that they may not be able to in other sports, “the expectation may be for men to be naturally have a greater advantage with certain movements but that’s not always the case” says Carroll.

He refers to sprinting versus endurance running as another example: “Sprinting is something that seems like it is built for men to excel at, they have longer strides, a higher proportion of fast twitch muscle fibres, less body fat percentages, and yet comparatively, women are better sprinters than they are endurance runners, which is very surprising, until you consider when a predator came chasing. It benefited both men and women to be able to sprint equally” says Carroll.

Women are quickly rising in the ranks in terms of their ability to climb with indisputable evidence that they will soon match men in equal measure, and although we may feel we don’t belong at times at the wall, or are outnumbered by the guys, climbing is in our DNA, and as Lynn Hill famously said after making the first free ascent of El Capitan, “It goes, boys!”

## The Way They Used To Do It



Potholers at  
Oxlow Caverns  
in Derbyshire

Prior to a meet the forecast is eagerly awaited. MWIS indicated that on the Thursday, the day on which most would be travelling, the wind on the hills would be typically 80 to 100 mph (and gusts up to 120 mph) but easing, slowly, to 50 to 70 with either snow or rain. So that'll be alright.

In practice, the weather was far more benign with patches of blue sky and fabulous views across Rannoch Moor later in the day. The worst of the weather was experienced in Callander, a sleety squall waited for my short dash between the Tesco supermarket door and the car. The glens were saturated, foaming burns ribboned the hillsides and many a tree by the lochside stood with its feet in the cold dark water.

The Alex Macintyre Hut is located in Onich, just west of North Ballachulish, with access via Mountaineering Scotland. The Hut had a number of occupants throughout the week some of whom would remain to the Sunday, so the accommodation was warm and welcoming. The ground floor accommodation of kitchen, drying room, bathroom, and a combined living room and dining area is a little awkwardly arranged around a central staircase. The living room and dining area would have been two separate rooms originally and both internal doors remain which put one in mind of a Brian Rix farce as people would suddenly appear at inopportune moments at the second door.

Twelve places were booked and no restrictions due to Covid regulations were placed on that number. The meet was fully subscribed however three people had to give back word. In addition, Matt Clark and his daughter, Aether, welcome guests of David Large had already booked B&B accommodation and wished to honour that booking but would eat in the Hut. Friday dawned; plans made for Dorsal Arête on Stob Coire an Lochan comprising the entire meet. A little fresh snow on the road rising up into Glencoe required some care. The Large party (AC, AP, DL & MC) was smaller than the Smith party which comprised the remainder of the meet. The Smith party set off for Coire nan Lochan with its head in the clouds and blanketed under fresh snow. Once in the Coire, the gentle wind increased and the spindrift obliterated the deep footprints. Conditions made for slow going however Tom and Richard both of whom sport a full head of hair battled on while the remaining number did a small survey of the depth of snow before descending.

Tom takes up the narrative:

‘As the rest of the group headed off to attempt other endeavours myself and Richard started across the snow slope up towards the arête. The snow was deep and hard work; eventually we reached the rock and ice where we donned our crampons. A friendly guided trio approached from below as we started to advance up the Dorsal Arête. The spin-drift was blowing but we pressed on making good progress. While we were roping up about halfway through the climb the guided trio passed us, this was unfortunate as they ended-up clogging

up the crux later on. After 15 minutes of waiting in the howling wind we made the collective decision to climb around the crux with Richard leading the way. The final segment after this was a wonderful ice pitch with a chimney finish. Mid way through this last segment David and co had managed to catch up and joined us at the top before walking down into the valley where the wind died enough to allow for lunch to be eaten before heading back to the cars'. It is worth noting that the augmented Large party while descending into the Coire ran across a chap who, without injury or alarm had fallen through a cornice and was quietly making his way back up to the shoulder of the mountain to console his distraught companions who at this stage could only imagine the worst.

A brief stop at the Clachaig Inn and then dinner at the Hut. CH arranged the catering and extends his gratitude to all who attended for their hard work helping with the cooking, washing up and leaving the Hut clean and tidy on departure.

Saturday morning dawned calm with a clear sky. The heightened risk of avalanche focused plans. Exhibiting once again a collective mindset, all but three of the assembled headed off for Sgurr an luhair in the Mamores. The Large party ascended from Kinlochleven and the remainder (CH, CT, SM & RT) set off from the Achriabhach car park in Glen Nevis. The deep soft snow once again afforded slow progress but this second party was rewarded with fine views of Stob Ban. Serendipitously both parties arrived at the top at the same time. The Large party set off west back to the col initially with a view to popping up Stob Ban but decided against this given the snow conditions. The second party set off north along the Devil's Ridge. A party of two in front had turned back at a step in the ridge. At the same point, it was apparent the unconsolidated snow offered no bite to the axe and it was decided to follow suit, returning a distance along the ridge and then dropping into the Glen.



Chris Hilton,  
Conrad  
Tetley and  
Steve McCain  
on the  
Mamores



The Smiths, MS, RS & TS decided to get some practice in before the imminent Norwegian ski touring meet next month by cross-country skiing, anti-clockwise around Buachaille Etive Beag. Such an enterprise best suits someone with one leg short than the other.

Assembling a group all with this exact same characteristic is almost impossible these days; as a result, the party spent the entire day listing to starboard.

**Conrad and Chris  
on the Mamores**  
(See *front cover*)

Michael takes up the narrative.

The already considerable depth of snow discouraged climbing. The chosen route was one often taken on poor-weather days on Glen Etive meets: through the Lairigs and using General Wade's Military Road.

Parking a little below Lagangarbh and getting kitted up, revealed the first problem. Equipment failure. A heel latch on Michael's binding snapped. Richard's multi-tool pliers forced the stub into the groove and father was clamped to that ski for the day.

Their first leg was along the 270-year-old Military Road, now showing considerable signs of wear and indistinguishable from a bog in places. Still, it gave a gentle downhill start. Turning south into Lairig Eilde, they kept to the east of the stalkers' path to avoid river crossings. The stream crossings they did encounter were challenging enough on account of the thin snow cover.

That leg went easily enough using skins but it did need a descent to the river bank to pass a rocky spur.

A lunch stop close to the col gave good views of the familiar scrambling route up Stob Coire Sgreamhach. Over the pass, the skins were retained to limit the speed of descent on the steeper ground. Halfway down the Alt Lairig Eilde, just above 300m, a contouring line across steep crag strewn hillside took them into the homeward Lairig Gartain.

The tricky 20+ narrow stream crossings on dodgy snow with 1.8m skis were balanced by the stretches of effortless gliding down a 1 in 20 gradient as snow and dusk fell.





Tom Spencer and Richard Smith crossing one of the 20 streams in Lairig Gartain

Skis were only removed for the last 300m as this was on the footpath.

Apart from when close to the road they encountered only one person. She had run up Lairig Eilde but found no footsteps continuing beyond so was heading back the way she came. Skis were a good choice.

For the third member of the party, Tom, it was a first outing on lifting-heel skis. This and borrowed new, stiff, NATO-standard ski boots resulted in the day making quite an impression on him – especially his feet. Stoic, he did not complain.

Sunday chores and away down the road. Michael reported on the way home a short stop was made at the overgrown viewpoint at the Falls of Leny. Disappointingly the tremendous volume of water raised the level to completely obscure the falls.

CH

Attending:

# Hillwalking in Northern Portugal

Mick Borroff

Some years ago, I was in Stanfords London bookshop browsing through the UK's largest selection of outdoor guidebooks and maps, musing over where to go for our next Spring holiday and chanced on their Portugal section. I came away clutching a copy of the Sunflower guide to Walking in Northern Portugal and read it cover-to-cover on the train going home. I was so enthused about going there, I booked our flights to Porto the next day.

The star attraction in the north is undoubtedly the predominantly granite landscape of the Peneda-Gerês, Portugal's only National Park (PNPG). We were really taken with the area and its four mountain groups: the Serras Peneda, Soajo, Amarela and Gerês. The PNPG is part of the Gerês-Xurés Interborder Park, and is joined with the Spanish Baixa-Limia - Serra do Xurés Natural Park.



View over the Lima valley towards the Serra do Soajo

We did a variety of walks, including a section of the Via Nova Roman road, lovely routes winding along rough-paved ancient cart tracks rutted by iron tyres through ancient hill villages, with their old maize stores (*espigueiros*) surrounded by irrigated terraces and up through pockets of oak woods in deep valleys into the rocky gorse and broom landscape that provided grazing for the distinctive *barrosã* long-horned cattle in the summer months. Higher still, this gives way to bare and sparsely vegetated hill tops often navigated by herders' cairns where you also find their beehive-shaped stone shelters (*abrigos*). Throw in a Celtic hill fort (Citania de Briteiros), a few mediaeval castles such as those at Lindoso and Castro Laboreiro, some pleasant and relaxed towns like Arcos de Valdevez and Ponte da Barca, the delicious Minho *vinho verde* and Duoro wines, and Porto city itself, it makes a great holiday destination.



Calçada in Ermelo



Working the fields traditionally



Overhead vines outside Arado



Terraced fields near Vilela de Lajes



Trail leading down to Ermida in the Serra Amarela

Wind the clock forward to 2018 and we began our planning for a fortnight's return visit. In addition to an updated Sunflower guidebook, Cicerone had published their new guide *Walking in Portugal* just in time for our trip, with 16 of the 40 hikes in the north, including some longer leg-stretchers. The local authorities had also published a series of pdf leaflets on their signposted walks, so a wider choice of routes was available.

Our trip in late April 2018 was rewarded with great weather, mostly sunny with just one rainy day and a couple of light showers on another two. It's hard to choose our favourites from the ten walks we did in and around the PNPG, the standard is so high.

We enjoyed the old coffin route, the *Caminho dos Mortos*. It was very varied, duly earning its placement as the first route in the Cicerone guide. Rough paved tracks link a couple of mountain villages along which the dead were taken by ox cart to their parish church. The route winds through lovely deciduous woodland and climbs to traverse the Serra da Anta passing a Neolithic barrow.

We would not have come across the *Minas dos Carris* walk without this new guidebook and although getting authorisation to visit the Protected Area in the Serra do Gerês was uneventful, arranging the weather on permit day was not, so it was under more typical British misty conditions that this hike was completed - more like visiting slate mines in Snowdonia! No views to speak of but plenty of Spring flowers such as the Solomon's Seals drooping in the damp oak woods at the *Portela do Homem* and the *Rio do Homem* lined with pink tree heath. Further on there were pale hoop-petticoat daffodils and higher up still, yellow *Angel's tears* miniature daffodils peering over the track, nodding in the breeze. The wet conditions provided chance encounters with four fire salamanders basking in the mist, their black-and-yellow colouring contrasting with the pink granite beneath their feet. The cemetery of the abandoned mine buildings at Carris was a bit spooky, but unfortunately the promised wide-ranging views from the summit (1507m) never materialised.



Rio do  
Homem

Minas dos  
Carris access  
track



Another long hike was a combination of Sunflower and Cicerone routes in the Serra do Soajo making a neat circuit of the summits of Pedrada (1416m) and the Cabeco dos Bicos (1190m). I used the old paved track from Branda de Travanca to gain the trackless ridge marked with herders' cairns leading towards the funnelling wolf trap walls and the Pedrada trig point above to pick up the Cicerone route west. My only company were the small herds of garrano wild horses and some barrosã cows. Another grand day out with fine views and highly recommended.

Geria Romana, the sinuous Via Nova Roman road, has to be mentioned. It was inaugurated around AD80 to provide a more direct route between Braga in Portugal and Astorga in Spain. Unlike many linear Roman roads in England, their engineers built a contouring track taking the line of least resistance as it ascended to the col crossing into Spain, at the present day Portela do Homem. A cluster of 2000 year-old granite pillars marks every Roman mile: the milestone and groups of carved pillars dedicated to the emperors of Rome - remarkably these are all still in place and the lettering still readable. There are various circuits taking in the best sections of this well-waymarked road - which is definitely worth a visit.



Via Nova Romana milestone and dedication pillars

We also enjoyed a hike over the Serra de Arga to the west of PNPG with views over the town of Ponta de Lima where a cartwheel-rutted track took us down to the well-preserved tandem water mills at Souteiro, complete with aqueduct-like millraces, millstones and side-shot wooden paddles. The architecture is subtly different here as the rock is composed of schists and quartzite, necessitating a different approach to constructing buildings and espigueiros.



The upper of a pair of schist-roofed water mills at Souteiro



The abandoned summer villages give a poignant reminder of a past lifestyle, when under the transhumance system, the cows were moved up from the winter villages to higher pastures and the families migrated to their houses in the summer villages from May to October.

A particularly good example is Bilhares Branda, a summer settlement visited in a circuit from Ermida, its winter village. Historical pictures in the Sunflower guide show a cluster of thatched dwellings, but these are now either roofed with rusty corrugated iron or just open to the sky.



Bilhares Branda abandoned summer village

The ancient time-warp mountain villages were very attractive and a testimony to the skills of the stone masons. Their narrow streets often retained their original paving with granite cobblestones (calçada) with dark alleys diving off to chicken pens, disused barns and fields that would have once grown maize, the walls lined with grape vines trained enforcado at a height around the edges. Each family needed a granary to keep its maize over the winter and every village thus has its espigueiros. The large villages of Soajo and Lindoso are famous for their large groups of these granite structures clustered around flat granite threshing floors (eira).



Neglected village espigueiro



Espigueiros at Soajo

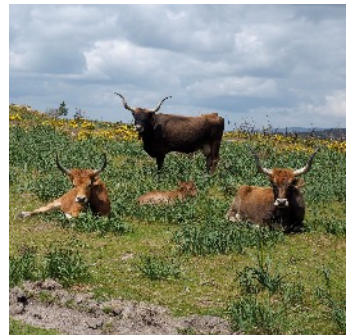
Barrosã cows and garrano wild horses were often seen grazing in the hills and a couple of golden eagles were seen soaring overhead. There were plenty of early season butterflies, lots of wall browns and brimstones as well as a few wood whites, red admirals, large tortoiseshells and Camberwell Beauties. Lizards were plentiful. We saw occasional wild boar diggings but found no traces of the elusive Iberian wolf or their roe deer prey. The cross-border Gerês-Xurés Park is one of the wolf's last strongholds with a stable population of over twelve family groups ranging between five and ten members which breed regularly.



Fire Salamander



Camberwell Beauty butterfly



Long-horned barrosã  
cattle

The National Park has a wide elevation range and being predominantly granite, lots of water run-off that has produced deep valleys lined with deciduous woodland. There are therefore lots of different habitats with their own microclimates which produces a wide variety of vegetation and wildflowers. These different habitats are crossed on most walks giving plenty of flora to look at on the way.



**Barrosã cows in Sobredo - note the hosepipe horn protectors!**

I hope this article has painted a generous picture of the many reasons why we very much enjoyed walking in northern Portugal. In April, the trails were virtually deserted, and we met only three parties of walkers on the hill in the whole two weeks. It would make a great area for a club meet and I am planning one in 2023.

We have yet to visit the Montesinho or the Alvaro areas covered by the Cicerone guide, nor the areas further south. These too look attractive but will have to await another visit, which hopefully won't be too long in the future.

#### Further Reading:

Landscapes of Northern Portugal 4th Ed. by Paul & Denise Burton, Sunflower Books, 2019.  
<https://sunflowerbooks.co.uk/product/walking-in-northern-portugal/>

Walking in Portugal by Andrew Mok and Simon Whitmarsh, Cicerone, 2018.  
<https://www.cicerone.co.uk/walking-in-portugal>

The PNPG website is very informative and lists some 40 waymarked routes in the park (and their current status for walking) - many with 1-25k mapping and GPX tracks; the park map PDF is very useful showing the start points of most walks:  
<http://adere-pg.pt/trilhos/uk/index.php>

The Portuguese Walking in Portugal website is another major resource which has an amazing national collection of hundreds of walks which are captured in downloadable PDF leaflets, usually with 1:25,000 scale mapping and images of things to see.:  
[http://www.walkingportugal.com/b\\_paginas\\_globais/WalkingPortugal\\_busca\\_regional.htm](http://www.walkingportugal.com/b_paginas_globais/WalkingPortugal_busca_regional.htm)



# Some of the abundant spring flowers seen in the Peneda-Gerês National Park



Blue broom  
*Psoralea sp.*



Spanish Bluebells  
*Hyacithoides hispamica*



Soloman's Seal  
*Polygonatum sp.*



Dog's-tooth violet  
*Erythronium dens-canis*



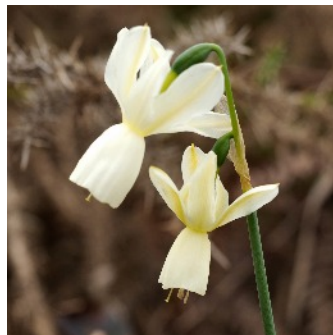
Common Asphodel  
*Asphodelus aestivus*



Starry Saxifrage  
*Micranthes stellaris*



Angel's Tears miniature daffodils  
*Narcissus bulbocodium*



Cyclamen-flowered daffodil  
*Narcissus cyclamineus*



Crocus sp.

The Covid situation had relaxed sufficiently for this meet to take place without restrictions. However a very dark new cloud has appeared on the horizon, the Putin invasion of Ukraine. It was therefore a welcome moment for your scribe as he arrived in Buckden to see blue sky appear at the head of Wharfedale.

The timing and location of this meet made it ideal to kick off the Club's 130<sup>3</sup> project, organised by Michael Smith. His early start on Friday saw the first 'ascent' of a 130 made before 9:15 - a 260m slippery stroll with 25m ascent up to Edge Mount a few miles from his home. By evening, ten ascents had been made across seven tops, six by those on the meet.

Helen and Michael Smith arrived via Wensleydale where they had splashed their way from Carlton to Harland Hill and the Heights of Hazely. Their thoughts of taking in the trig point of Pen Hill were thwarted by deeper bogs.

Mike Gregg arrived late morning on Friday then walked around 13 miles via Scar House to Yockenthwaite, Horse Head Moor ( one of the 130 tops), Buckden and Cray.



Yockenthwaite

Mick Borroff set off intent on bagging his first 130, Lindley Moor, an insignificant mossy hump hidden under dripping pine trees and sandwiched between a small, covered reservoir and a fenced comms tower. Mission accomplished, he collected John Sutcliffe and they climbed Sharp Haw by a wet and boggy route, sampled the extensive view over Airedale and returned, dodging forestry work in Crag Wood, before driving to Hubberholme.

Grange Farm Barn was warm and comfortable, the dining lounge area being particularly attractive. All round an excellent venue, with a great old-style pub, The George Inn, within walking distance. Landlord Ed had a marvellous capability to remember (and use) the first names of all his customers. Dog George added to the country atmosphere and the fish and chips were, “the best ever” according to Mike Godden; an opinion tested by many of our party in the evening.

It was great to see Robert Crowther back on the hills only a few months after being stricken by Covid-19 and rushed into hospital for critical care. He managed five tops over the weekend. On Saturday, Robert and son Michael, Helen and Michael Smith drove up to Kidhow Gate on the Cam High Road to head west then north from Jam Sike to Snaizeholme Fell then back and up Dodd Fell. They had clear views to a snowy Cross Fell, the snow-topped Lakes, Three Peaks and Pendle Hill. On the Pennine Bridleway, a little west of their parking spot, numerous large crinoid fossils (see later) were seen in the bedrock of the track.

A short drive along the Roman Road (they knew where to put their roads) allowed them to stroll up Drumaldrace. Driving back down into Langstrothdale, Michael S was dropped off at Yockenthwaite for a direct assault on Yockenthwaite Moor. He planned to follow the fence east heading for Cray but slow progress around peaty pools turned him south directly down to Hubberholme where he joined forces with Arthur and Barbara heading for The George.

Rod Smith joined Conrad and Bev for a delightful ascent of Buckden Beck, passing many attractive waterfalls en-route, to the old lead mine spoil heaps.



**Buckden Gill  
and its  
waterfalls**



Myriad fossils were quickly found, and most were misidentified. The summit was surrounded by ice covered puddles and some small snow drifts. A lazy curving descent, with superb views up to the head of Wharfedale, brought them back to Buckden over several patches of very wet ground. A refresher drink in the Buck Inn was taken in the company of a very large dog wearing a flat cap! Later, back at the barn, MS identified our fossil finds as crinoid stem rings. And later still we learned that crinoid sea lilies were found clinging to the well preserved wreck *Endurance* of Shackleton fame, just discovered under 3000m of the Weddell Sea.

Mick, John and Pete Bann set off from Grange Farm and took the riverside path up to Yockenthwaite bridge and then climbed Horse Head using the bridleway. Both the cairned likely high points were put underfoot and honour satisfied, they set off along the wet and boggy path beside the ridge wall to the modestly cairned Birks Fell, past Birks Tarn and down to Hubberholme. John couldn't be tempted, so Mick and Pete again walked up to where Strans Gill crossed the lower Yockenthwaite path and made a scrambling ascent of the streambed, which was flowing well. There was sufficient clean-washed rock to make the 100m ascent enjoyable and they managed to traverse all but two of the plunge pools. A couple of pitches were turned to complete one of the best gill scrambles in the Dales.



Pete & Mick scrambling in Strans Gill



Mike on his Saturday walk, saw just four people on the hill all day, pairs on Buckden Pike at the start and end of the day, and a barn owl just above Buckden. He went via Buckden Beck to the Pike, Naughtberry Hill and West Burton, returning by Harland Hill, Brown Haw, the fourth 130 top of his round and the Memorial Cross.

He was disturbed by the sighting of numerous spring traps in evidence on the moors.

John and Carole Whalley, Arthur and Barbara Salmon formed a team to climb Yockenthwaite Moor, eating lunch in an old peat cutters' hut just below the summit.

This was the fourth time Jim and Christine Harrison were designated meet leaders and taking on the responsibility for catering but the first time they managed to serve any food. Their three earlier meets had been cancelled for one reason or another. Saturday's was a super evening meal worth waiting for, ending with tasty bread and butter pudding, just like Grandma used to make.



Waiting

Despite their catering duties, Jim and Christine managed to find time for shortish walks on all three days. They reported seeing a stoat near Buckden Beck and various bird sightings, including a curlew.

Arthur demonstrated his octogenarian vigour by performing 60 plus press-ups in front of an admiring (and envious!) crowd, a feat unmatched by a much more youthful competitor.

Early on Sunday morning two early risers, having set out the breakfast table, were watching the dawn light on the hillside and noticed a hare sprint across the field below. On reaching the foot of the fell it squatted on its haunches then flipped over onto its back and wriggled about in the frosty dewy grass for some time, its white belly hairs showing clearly. Was this its morning bath?

After breakfast, complemented by bacon rolls, Michael and Robert Crowther with Helen and Michael Smith walked from Starbotton round Buckden Pike and Tor Mere Top (where one of them visited and rebuilt the five stones marking the official top) then down via the Starbotton Cam Road.

Mick, John and Pete set off for Buckden, for an ascent of the eponymous Pike by the lovely path beside the waterfalls in the beck which drains from the adit at Buckden lead mine. Then on past the Memorial Cross passing Tor Mere Top for another tick (the 130 guru M Smith queries the tick; because of a fence and wall making it difficult to access the actual top, like the priest and Levite, they “passed by on the other side.” Where will all this laxity end?) and down to cross Great Hunters Sleets via more lead mines where there was plenty of galena to be found in thin veins.



Hill-bagging

Pete Bann and John Sutcliffe at Buckden Pike summit.

Pete Bann at cairn on Horse Head Moor





Mick Borroff and  
John Sutcliffe on  
Birks Fell

A squelchy ascent of Great Whernside was made and the summit duly photographed, including a previously unnoticed brass survey nipple in the apex of the highest rock. They descended past Hagg Dyke to Kettlewell, where John opted for refreshments in the Blue Bell and the Racehorses, leaving Mick and Pete to return to the Barn via the Dales Way.

Bev and Conrad completed the Yockenthwaite circular route and ventured part-way up Strans Gill. The 'Green Wall' section was very slippery and tricky without the support of a rope.

This was a successful meet, held in good weather, in one of the most beautiful parts of the Dales. The food was excellent, the accommodation very comfortable and the company stimulating.

The meet saw the 130<sup>3</sup> project off to a flying start. Fourteen tops were ticked on the meet with a further three visited on the way to the meet. Honorary member Alan Hinkes walked Ingleborough and its satellite that weekend while further afield Peter and Jennifer Tennant, David Hick, Ian Hawkes and Rory Newman were adding a further eight.

A fine meet in the best traditions of the YRC.

RS

Attending:

Christine and Jim Harrison, Michael and Helen Smith, Rod Smith, Robert Crowther, Michael Crowther, Carole and John Whalley, Conrad Tetley, Beverley Eastwood (PM), Barbara Salmon, Arthur Salmon, Mick Borroff, Pete Bann (PM), Mike Gregg, John Sutcliffe, Mike Godden.

**Overseas  
Meet**

**Moraira  
Spain**

**March  
19-26**

Grey skies and a cold wind greeted arrivals at Alicante airport for the delayed and much anticipated week of sunshine and warm rock. We had been forewarned by local member David Hall and Rod and Yayoi Smith, who had arrived a day or two earlier, but what made it worse was the weather at home, shown by this screenshot from Helen Smith's phone.

Illness, Covid and otherwise, reduced numbers from the initial full house. One member cut her losses completely and stayed at home to climb in the sunshine; another two bailed out halfway through the week. The rest toughed it out and did their best to enjoy the week.

Luckily the villa turned out to be spacious and warm so we were able to enjoy comfortable and convivial social evenings. The location in Moraira, just north of Calpe was handy for local restaurants but did have the disadvantage that it took about 20 minutes to get to the main routes out into the mountains.

Sunday 20: Rain.

Things seemed to be starting well. Breakfast was taken in sunshine by the pool but then it all went downhill.

A party drove to Pego and made a very damp ascent of the fine limestone peak of Tossal

Grau, 688m, using two interesting barrancs for the ascent and descent. Rod and Yayoi spent the day climbing the Penon de Ifach, very slippery in the wet, enjoying the rain soaked views. Four climbers drove north to Salem only to shelter in a cave surveying the dripping crags. Climbing was out of the question.





They returned south where in clearing weather they managed three routes apiece at Toix before the rain returned.

Monday 21: Light showers and a cold wind.

A large party followed a varied route north of Denia at Les Rotes, starting along the coast path then up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century Torre del Gerro watch tower and a return via an abandoned village development, showcasing a variety of styles of paint-sprayed graffiti.



Tapas and the odd beer followed in the car park beach bar.

Another party of three visited the Penon whilst the Campions returned to Toix and managed to find some rock overhanging enough to provide shelter.

Tuesday 22: Wind and rain, cold.

The Campions, who had decided to return home the next day, found a ridiculously overhanging and even more ridiculously hard (8a) route to mess around on, doing well to reach the second bolt. They insisted they had fun.



A party of four walked along the coast to Calp, around Salinas lake with many flamingos then returning by taxi.

Another party of three traversed the Serra Gelada coastal cliffs, starting from the promenade at Benidorm. This provided a wet but very interesting and enjoyable roller coaster of a walk with 1000m of ascent.



Richard Taylor with Benidorm to rear



Rod and Yayoi spent the day shopping and cooking in preparation for a magnificent feast where we all celebrated their wedding anniversary.

Wednesday 23: Rain, wind, more rain.

A cultural visit was mounted to Valencia where a trig point was discovered at the top of St Michael's tower in the cathedral. It was over 200 steps up so was claimed as a summit. Two made a scenic train journey to Benidorm. Not much scenery in the rain and Benidorm was judged to be a rather dismal destination.

Four set off for the triple summited Olta massif but faced with low cloud and heavy rain remained in the pine forests for a lower level and rather uninteresting circuit.

Thursday 24: It's not raining!

Two headed to Calp to climb the Penon de Ifach with its fine views along the coast, and in the afternoon did a walk over the Tossal de Pinos ridge from the Ermita de Lleus using centuries-old Mozarabic paths.

Two climbers went back to Toix, being quick drying the only reasonable venue available. They managed five routes, even seeing their shadows cast by a watery sun around midday.

### Tim at Toix

A party of three walked a fine circuit of Puig Campagna. Although the top remained in cloud they enjoyed fine conditions lower down and also saw a little sun.

The final pair went to Cap d'Or near the villa and enjoyed a lovely walk with great views.

Local member David Hall joined us for a very sociable evening meal, catching up with friends old and new.

Friday 25: light rain, cloudy.

Four went to Xalo and climbed Cau, 725m, via the wet and slippery Barranc del Cau, returning via the 3km long NW ridge which gave excellent views according to the guidebook.

Three did the so-called '10,000 steps' walk from Fleix. This was a splendid round using stepped Mozarabic trails to access three 300m deep gorges involving four unbridged river crossings in wild scenery.

A wild Barbary sheep was seen – a light brown goat-like animal.



70m  
waterfall  
from the  
Mozarabic  
trail  
crossing the  
river in  
upper  
Barranc  
Inferno



Saturday 26. Whilst everyone else set off for home, Mick and John drove up to stay at the Hotel Rural Serella at Castell de Castells situated in the heart of the mountains. After not visiting the Castell de Guadalest nor its eponymous reservoir in the pouring rain, they arrived in time to enjoy a very late lunch - a fitting end to a very wet rest day.

Sunday 27. The forecast was better prompting Mick and John to climb *Penya Castellet* from Castell de Castells for the fine and extensive views over the Moorish castle ruins. However, they were deprived of these by the cloud which obstinately refused to lift from the summit ridge, and the walk was completed in mist and light drizzle.

Monday 28. John and Mick originally intended to climb the *Pic de Serella* but the cloud base over there was even lower than before, so instead, they walked north of the hotel to the *Clot de la Lacuna* basin (a *polje*?) and extended this to include the *Els Arcs* circuit on a dry day with some very welcome sunshine – this was the best weather all week!



Els Arcs



Bee, marsh and purple orchids were seen and a few green hairstreak, large tortoiseshell, painted lady and small white butterflies.

Tuesday 29. On their last day, the sun had retreated behind more low cloud, so Mick and John did another local hike west of Benichembla to a partially ruined finca replete with working bread oven and some intricate route finding on a partially cairned goat path to join two forestry tracks.

All in all this was a very disappointing meet. We had been made to wait so long for an overseas meet and when it finally came the weather was worse than a wet week in Bradford. Never mind, there's always next year.

TJ

Attending: Mick Borroff, John Schofield, Kjetil and Ann-Karin Tveranger, David and Christine Hick-Marriot, Rod and Yayoi Smith, Shaun Penny, Ged Campion, Imogen Campion, Richard Taylor, Michael and Helen Smith, Tim Josephy.

**Overseas  
Meet**

**Langsua  
Norway**

**March 30  
April 7**

Eight members went on a week's hut-to-hut ski tour around Norway's Langsua National Park, west of Lillehammer, encountering fewer than ten people but several hundred reindeer.

For members returning from the rather wet and grey Costa Blanca meet with only a few days to reorganise kit for this ski tour, it was discouraging to discover that our chosen area had unseasonably warm weather and there were reports of the snow becoming patchy. Other sources mentioned insufficient sound snow cover for snowmobiles, meaning that usually marked ski routes had not been re-marked, cabins had not been resupplied and a serviced hut we had intended to use was no longer planning to open for Easter. The forecast though was for colder conditions with some new snow. Thankfully, the decision to change the meet to a higher area was not made as the Langsua gave blue skies, good skiing conditions, plenty of snow and quiet cabins.

The Langsua protected area of moorland, tarns and mountains covers 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (that's about half of West Yorkshire) most of it above 1,000m. Several self-service DNT cabins provide accommodation and a few peripheral parking areas provide good access.

Kjetil and Kevin made reaching our starting point in the east of the area straightforward by collecting the remaining six members from Oslo airport. Packing the former's car with three more sets of kit greatly reduced the space available in the boot for Niko, the Giant Schnauzer. Even with a refreshment stop, it was only a couple of hours to an overnight cabin below Hafjell, near Lillehammer. A Thursday start to the skiing meant that we would be using the more popular accessible cabins midweek and the more remote ones during the busier weekends.

A snow-covered private toll road took us up to Synstgardsetra parking area which we left late in the morning, initially skiing along a summer road before branching off south towards a wooden bridge over the Revåa by one of the many frozen lakes. Continuing down to Liomseter (16.5km with 250m↑) as the light was fading, we encountered our first problem. We knew the serviced cabin-cum-café was closed but had expected the self-service cabin to be nearby. It was not. Search parties sent southeast and west failed to find it and eventually, it was found 500m to the northwest. One key fits all the DNT cabins so we were soon in, the log-burning stove lit and a meal being prepared. These are well-appointed huts with bunk beds, duvets, an equipped kitchen, fuel and a basic larder.

Friday dawned brighter and by 9:30 we were heading west initially along the remains of a trail before bearing left onto a ridge which we hoped would allow a drop into the valley with the next cabin, Haldorbu. Unfortunately, woodland there barred our way so it was along the ridge and into a shallow valley on the right to avoid repeated undulations. From a windswept plateau, we looked directly down towards the hut and each took our own wide sweeping turns to lose 160m of height (10.3km with 170m↑).



Taking a  
breathe  
on the  
ridge

Saturday saw a turn north back up onto the plateau, along and then round a mountain spur to follow a valley gently down to the Skriurusten cabin (16km with 390m↑). Approaching the spur, Niko suddenly started barking and raced off up a ridge with the small orange sled bouncing along behind – he had scented a herd of reindeer which we had just noticed in the distance. Kjetil shouted to no avail then set off after him. Thankfully, Niko had got into a tangle with his traces and ground to a frustrating halt so could be put on a leash and brought back. Meanwhile, three of us wondered how we'd manage without the kit we had on that sledge. The reindeer? They'd trotted across the mountainside and up a wide gully and had settled to graze a wind-cleared edge. We too had a pause to eat below the spur in a small private fishing cabin.



Sunday's breakfast was porridge mixed the previous evening and enhanced with chopped dried fruit packed as treats. This highest section of the round skirted round the northern end of Langsua Nordre mountain to Storkvolvbua cabin in a couple of hours (9km with 276m↑ in two hours). Skins (preventing sliding backwards) were required for the pull up the valley side but then it was plain sailing towards a subsidiary bump, Brennhøa, for a sharp right turn and a shallower rise to a pass and short drop to the cabin at 1205m. The secondary cabin was being reroofed by a couple who were undaunted by snow covering the roof and their makeshift wood scaffolding.

Dogs are not allowed in DNT cabins. Many cabins have a dog cage or two in a woodshed and there is a £10 charge for a dog to stay. Niko would not fit into the cage so was left loose in the Hunderom (dog room). Niko's paws soon had the door's lever handle pulled down and he was free. The solution was for Kjetil to take a mattress and sleeping bag and lock the two of them in there for the night.



Kevin, Richard S, Niko and Kjetil with the Rondane behind

The view from this cabin to the southeast is extensive including over to the Rondane, the scene of the Club's last ski tour a few years ago. Closer, undulating terrain was roamed by herds of reindeer feeding on the sparse exposed vegetation. These herds are not truly wild but are monitored every few days by herders on snowmobiles. Short fences help with gathering the herd for the summer slaughter for hides and autumn slaughter for meat. We passed close to a herd of hundreds of reindeer as we returned directly to Liomseter cabin then another herd as we crossed the col by Nonstjønnkampen. From that col, the route was a gentle descent (25km with 132m↑ in six hours). This was the only cabin we shared with others – two easy-going Norwegians who had taken a roundabout route in, and arrived after sunset.

Tuesday's route was cross country to a new cabin, Vestfjellhytta opened in 2015, chosen because of its easier route out to our cars. The first five kilometres to a bridge were the only part of the round on previously-skied ground. Then it was 'off-piste' across frozen marsh and Tverrlitjønnen lake, over a shallow col and down through sparse trees into a cold wind to reach Gryttjønnen. The remains of a marked trail took us down the Gryta valley to reach the hamlet of Nysetra and the new cabin just beyond (16km with 250m↑ in six hours)

The cabin was spacious with attic space for unbooked visitors and two bookable four-bed rooms. There were 12V (car cigarette-lighter type) sockets for charging phones, etc. and a water pump to save having to melt snow. The second or safety cabin doubled as a Hundrom and was luxurious with two beds, heating and comfortable seating.

Skins and lack of a headwind made for easy going up past deserted Nysetra towards the cars. Then the long smooth descent to the Synstgardsetra parking was a fast and easy finish to another grand week of ski touring (7km with 110m↑ in 1½ hours).

After a change and repack there it was off to Oslo's airport, stopping only for a coffee along the way so those from England were back home late that night.

Norway is often considered an expensive destination but that is not the case for this type of trip. DNT membership for seniors is £50, direct flights cost under £150, and under £300 for a full week's accommodation, food, fuel, tolls, etc. though we did take our own alcohol and some snacks.

Many thanks to Kjetil for his detailed planning and both his and Kevin's taxi service.

MS



Participants:

Kevin Brown, Becca Humphreys, Peter Chadwick, Malcolm Lynch, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Richard Taylor, Kjetil Tveranger

Sources:

The Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) [DNT.no](http://DNT.no)

[UT.no](http://UT.no) for online maps, accommodation and trip planning app

Paper map "Turkart Gausdal Vestfjell" from Vandreskoen in Lillehammer or [gausdal@fjellstyrene.no](mailto:gausdal@fjellstyrene.no)



# France's Limestone Playground

Roy  
Denney

Whether they want to go high or low, fast or slow there is something for everyone on the Vercors. This area of limestone in France is carved up by a few rivers which have cut deep valleys, separating the Vercors from the Dauphiné Alps; from the Chartreuse and the Belledonne ranges leaving this high plateau ringed by a rugged rim.

The views can be remarkable looking down into the river valleys or out to the nearby Ecrins and Oisans massifs and further afield Mont Blanc.

One of the sad things nowadays is that on what, in Grenoble, seems a lovely sunny day with clear blue skies, looks very different from above. Standing on top of the Moucherotte looking down on the city it is blurred through the haze of pollution in the air.



View, what view?  
I see no city

Surrounded by large cliffs and cut by countless gorges and caves, formed about 100 million years ago, the Vercors is a perfect example of a limestone massif. As such it was easily defended and there are poignant WW2 memorials to the French resistance at Vassieux-en-Vercors and Malleval-en-Vercors (see YRCJ2010 [13/9]:34)

The Vercors is designated a National Park and covers a total area of almost 350,000 acres as it extends beyond the massif with the southern extremity rich in wildlife.

The central part was the actual Vercors and is largely comprised of high wide plains bordered by forests and it is easy to forget how high you are. To the west forested hillside gives way to those very steep cliffs, with the daunting gorges being used for roads.

Just getting onto the plateau is thrill enough for some people as the tortuous roads, climbing over a thousand feet are not for the faint-hearted.

For those inclined to go up mountains, there are numerous attractive peaks and the highest is Grand Veymont at 2,341m.

Ascended from the plateau they don't seem all that high but looking off beyond when summited brings the height home.

There is technically challenging rock climbing; there is a Via Ferrata and zip wires and for the more modest thrill seekers wheeled luge.



Those Roads

Grand Veymont



Plants on Moucherotte

As many of our cavers know first-hand, over the centuries rainwater has eaten into the rock enlarging the many gorges; creating limestone pavements, caves and some of the world's largest potholes including the 1198m deep Gouffre Berger which some members have been down. Some of the caves and potholes have been turned into show caves which the less adventurous can visit and some have remarkable features.

If that is not bad enough, the eastern part of the range forms its most dramatic edge, with high cliffs running for nearly 40 miles before climbing up in an unbroken line to join the mountainous part of the massif above the valleys of the Drac and Isère.

The mountain chain here includes Bec de l'Orient 1554m, Moucherotte 1901m, Pic Saint-Michel 1966m, Grande Moucherolle 2284m, Pierre Blanch 2106m, Grand Veymont 2341m, Grandasse 2041m, Mont Barral 1908m and Le Jocou at 2051m. Some are a challenge but some, the Moucherotte for example, are just an uphill walk from the plateau side.

It is a hiker's paradise with mile upon mile of trails through magnificent countryside rich in wild flowers. Orienteering events are held regularly and there are permanent courses laid out for people to try at will.

If you want to get about a bit more quickly cycling is very popular and when descending from the plateau you will see cyclists being baulked by nervous drivers. I have even seen cyclists overtake cars.



Hang gliding and paragliding are popular in the Vercors and neighbouring areas for obvious reasons and a

few miles west of the Vercors and major international festival is held every year with thousands attending. Coupe Icare (Icarus Cup) sees hundreds of contestant flying in the weirdest costumes and contraptions.

Coupe Icare



In the wetter seasons there are great becking opportunities or canyoning as many now wish to call it. Hot air ballooning is available one season and ice skating the next.

In 1968 Grenoble hosted the Winter Olympics and for the ski slopes, all eyes were turned to the neighbouring Vercors region. Vercors took the opportunity to revamp the three sites picked to host the events: Autrans for cross-country skiing, the Nordic combined, the biathlon and a ski jump stage (230 feet), Saint-Nizier-du-Moucherotte for the ski jumps, and Villard-de-Lans for the luge.

In Saint-Nizier-du-Moucherotte, the ski jump spanning 300 feet in length became one of the most beautiful in the world. From the very top, the skiers could see the Belledonne Mountains where Jean-Claude Killy had become a legend by winning three gold medals, and after taking off at the end of the take-off track, the athletes felt like they were to fly over Grenoble laid out below them.

The plateau of Vercors was the perfect candidate for recreating an atmosphere as similar as possible to the typical Scandinavian aura that reflects the Nordic looks to those events. Its hilly topography, extensive coniferous forests, and heavy snow covering would certainly have made the Nordic champions feel at home.

In Villard-de-Lans, people had been bobsleighing down the little slopes set up alongside the roads and little-used paths for years, and the town had previously hosted an international competition making it an obvious choice. A new slope boasting a descent of 360 feet in 3,300 feet was created. It is probably fair to say that without the 1968 Winter Olympics advertising it to the world, Vercors may not have become the sporting destination it now is.

Biathlon is accommodated on the plateau and the locals have produced a number of world champions over the years and they have now built a roller-ski biathlon training facility.

Ice climbing is also popular during the winter months and another thrill seekers option is mountain karting. Something like a robust three-wheel typical kart these have no engine but they go down a dedicated twisting track through the forests dropping 1650 feet over three miles.

There are superb opportunities to take to snowshoes with a number of trails designated including one of just over five miles from Méaudre.

The major cave system of the Vercors is the Gouffre Berger over 1250 metres and 31,190 metres long, famous for being the first cave to be explored deeper than 1,000 metres and our members played a major part in its opening up as covered in earlier editions of the journal

It empties out into caves at Sassenage near where my daughter lives and where last year a cave rescuer died helping a party of school-children out in a flood

With all the infrastructure created for the games and the ensuing tourism there are ample facilities for the Frenches favourite sport; eating.

There are few actual spectator sports but sitting outside a licensed café in the winter sunshine watching people who have overestimated their skiing ability comes close.



The cliffs of the Vercors



Formations in the  
Grotte de Choranche,  
above, right and overleaf.



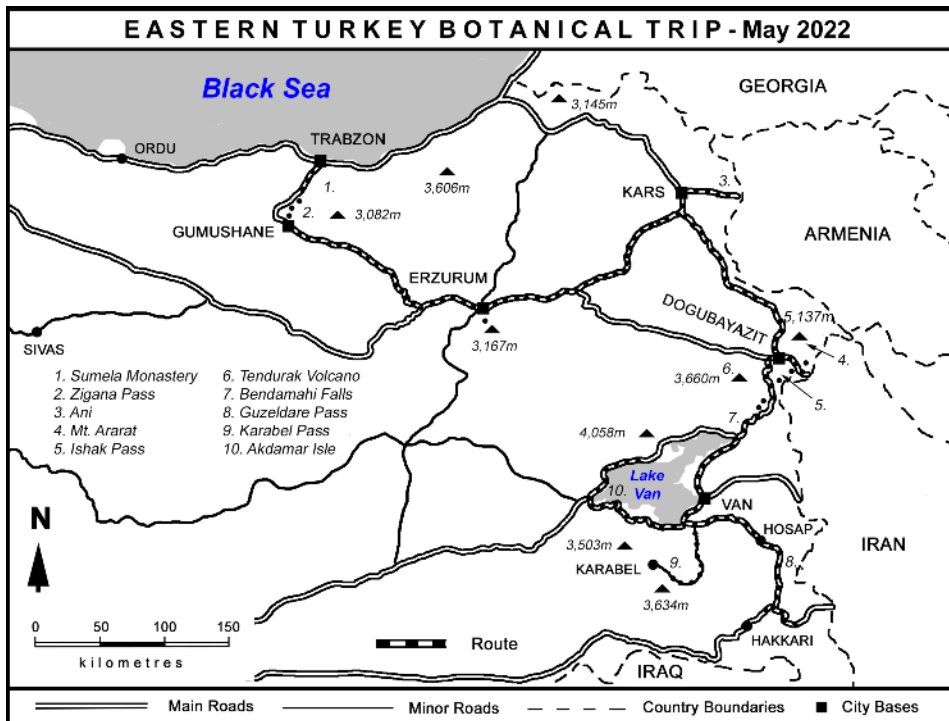
# Eastern Türkiye. A Botanical Adventure

John & Valerie  
Middleton

The far eastern region of Türkiye is a little populated, challenging wilderness of untamed, snow-capped mountains, great gorges, and ancient cities. It also has borders with Georgia, Armenia, Iran, and Iraq. Our interest was mainly botanical and, in particular, the bulbous flora for which the area is famous. To this end, on our trip in May 2022, we were privileged to have the expert company of Yasemin Konuralp, the author of a standard reference work on these kinds of plants.

Our first evening meal together was at a typical Turkish restaurant in the bustling city centre of Trabzon. Yasemin and her husband, Cemil, lived in Antalya. A place that we knew well having both caved\* and climbed\*\* in the region. A promising start! The conversation became even livelier when we mentioned that during 1966 and 1967, we had spent 10 weeks exploring the local, then unknown, caves. Our trips were joint ones with the Speleo Club de Paris under the invitation of a Dr Temucin Aygen of Ankara. Then, *in an amazing coincidence*, not only were Yasemin and Cemil lifelong friends of Temucin, but they also knew the majority of our fellow French caving friends including Claude Chabert. We could not fail to have a fantastic time after that meal, and we did, every single day!

\*YRC Journal 1968. \*\*YRC Journal 2012.



## TRAVELLING HIGHLIGHTS

**Trabzon and the Sumela Monastery.** Trabzon was our arrival city. It proved to be an exceptionally clean and friendly place with beautiful mini parks, ample seats, and even clean, free, public toilets! It was also the only city that we had ever seen that had a store whose sole product for sale was ‘Halva’! This is a mouth-watering delicacy much favoured by John. We really liked Trabzon!

The impregnable Sumela Greek Orthodox Monastery is a spellbinding site just a 30-minute drive from Trabzon. The buildings are situated on a great cliff face at an altitude of 1,200m in the Altindere Valley. The single entry is up a lengthy line of steps. It dates, in parts, to AD386 but did not reach its present form until the 13<sup>th</sup> century.



Religious frescoes were painted on almost all of the cave and building walls in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Restoration of the buildings and an easier access route is currently being undertaken. A ‘must see’ deviation! The multitude of woodland flowers and waterfalls were also impressive in May.

### **The Zigana Pass and Gumushane.**

This was our first botanising site situated at a rather exhausting 2,000m – exhausting, that is, after life at sea level and a heavy meal the previous evening! The spectacular road leaves Trabzon and meanders between great, bare, rounded mountains that reach up to 2,625m in altitude. We made a number of stops at around 2,000m and walked, or more usually, scrambled to just below the receding snow line. Here, we came across a stunning variety of dwarf flora that included amongst others, ajuga, bellevalia, colchicums, crocus, gagea, gentians, ornithogalums, and viola. Lower down were anemones, cyclamen, and hellebores.



The second area that we visited were the steeper, but probably even more beautiful Kostrean mountains. Not only did we find our first tulips and fritillarias here, but we also came across the interesting Karaca Cave.



This 105m long system is formed in massive limestone sandwiched between diverse types of extrusive, igneous rocks. The cave is well known for its large chambers. Within these there are a multitude of varied formations, both in colour and shape. A start worthy of celebrating.

We were now at Gumushane and comfortably ensconced in the areas first 'Hotel Ramada.' Normally this type of accommodation would have been way beyond our budget, but the opening offers sold it to us. It was so new in fact that we soon found out none of the bartenders knew how to make cocktails! Luckily, Cemil quickly donned one of his many hats, went behind the Bar, and demonstrated how our favoured Gin & Tonic and Vodka & Orange should generously be made!

**Kars and Ani.** The next three days were continuous botanical wonder after botanical wonder, all in amazing settings. Probably the highlight, at 2,470m above the Kop Pass were three new fritillarias and the stunning *Pulsatilla violaceae* (right)



We eventually reached Kars, an old city that was once part of Russia until 1917.

It still remains a rather 'grim' looking place sporting much Soviet architecture with its black basalt facades. Conversely, the main street proved to be a hive of assorted shops and activity.

Our main reason for stopping in Kars was to visit the ancient city of Ani situated on the Armenian border just 40km away. The crumbling walls of old Ani extend for 6km with parts of it being along the edge of the Arpacay river gorge.



The opposite side of the river is Armenia; again, previously Russian. The city was once known as 'The City of a thousand and one Churches.' Archaeologists have proved that this number may have been nearer to sixty at any one time.

Ani

The city was founded in the fifth century and reached its peak in the 10<sup>th</sup> when it had a population of over 100,000 people. It was then the capital of the Bagradit Armenian Kingdom with considerable control over the Silk Road. The site was abandoned by AD1735 after first being laid bare by Genghis Khan and then made uninhabitable following two major earthquakes.

On the photograph, the building in the centre is the partially renovated old Cathedral.

It is probably worth mentioning that from Kars onwards our meanderings were within 50km of an international border and sometimes as close as 100m. It was, therefore, no surprise that the heavily armed Police, Gendarmes and Military should regularly accost us. Thanks to Cemil, our nominated 'spokesperson,' all these incidents passed by very politely. As always, they were looking out for undocumented immigrants, terrorists, and spies.

**Dogubeyazit and nearby.** In 1971 I had previously passed through the dusty small town of Dogubeyazit whilst driving to the Zagros mountains of Iran (YRC Journal 1973). It is now a bustling, modern city and definitely part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century! Only the surrounding mountains remain untouched and as spectacular as I had remembered. The towering mountains here, of course, are Mount Ararat at 5,137m, and the perfect cone shaped Little Ararat at 3,925m.



The super-fit Yasemin and Cemil informed us that they had summited Ararat no less than five times, but, luckily for us, the mountains held little of floral interest!

There were two interesting sites that we wished to visit on the southern slopes of Little Ararat. The first was a permanent 100m long ice cave situated about 6km from the Iranian border. Unfortunately, close to a nearby village the rough track had been completely flooded after heavy rains making access impossible. The second site was a recent meteorite crater supposedly 60m deep. This track passed within 200m of the border crossing and here, the border guards would not allow us to pass.

We did, however, manage an interesting photograph at the limit of our cave attempt. It could be entitled *Murder most foul*, but in reality, it was only the local ladies doing their weekly clothes wash.

To the south of the valley there is a high-level alpine meadow region (2,000m-2,600m) known as Tahir.



It is accessed along one of the old 'Silk Road' routes which still has sections of original cobbles. It also has sections of glutinous mud, and it was whilst we were negotiating one of these that we became aware of a low circling military style helicopter. It eventually flew off and we then spotted an armoured 4x4 leaving a small village many metres below! Thirty minutes later the Gendarmes had caught up with us, just as we were investigating a particularly productive plant site. As always, they were very polite and never even asked for our passports. Instead, they had an extended conversation with Cemil about the deep mud and how did he get out of it when they, in their special military style 4x4, became so totally stuck!! We parted good friends!

An inevitable question at this point is, "did we see Noahs Ark?" Well, we did not see the Ark, but we did see the *Nub'un Gemisi* or Noahs Ark Museum which is situated opposite Little Ararat on the small road to Uzengili. This is to the south of the main E80 border road at almost 2,000m. It was closed!

**Dogubeyazit to Van City.** From Dogubeyazit, at 1,600m, the D975 road climbs dramatically to the Tendurek Pass at 2,644m. Dominating this route is the imposing 3,660m high Tendurek Volcano. At the level of the Pass, and under the watchful eyes of the nearby border guards, we investigated the jagged black edges of the massive lava flow. Surprisingly, to us, we found several interesting plants including the delightful dark purple-brown *Fritillaria pinardii* and pale-yellow *Iris pseudocaucasica*.

Continuing on towards Van and about 6km before reaching the village of Muradiye, the River Yaniklar tumbles dramatically over the cream travertine of the beautiful Bendamahi Falls. These are only 12-15m high, but they are around 70m wide. This is well worth a deviation, as the delicious local ice cream seller may also be there! Further downstream are more small cascades where, during May, it is possible to see literally thousands of Pearl Mullet attempting to jump up them, just as salmon do.



The mullet then lay their eggs in the shingle bed of the river before reaching the un-jumpable Bendamahi Falls. These mullet come from the slightly saline Lake Van and are the only fish species to be found in those waters.

Around 15km before reaching the city of Van, we passed an extensive, gently sloping meadow containing a considerable number of obvious purple-violet 'blobs'. On closer inspection these proved to be the lovely *Iris barnumae* subsp. *barnumae* with flowerheads some 10cm across.

Van is a dynamic city of almost half a million people, the majority of whom are Kurds. It spreads attractively along the edge of Lake Van with views directly across to the equally serene 4,050m high Suphan Dag volcano . The lake itself is endorheic and covers a surface area of 3,755km<sup>2</sup> with a maximum depth of 110m. Whilst there is little aquatic life the various marshy areas in the south-east are home to a considerable number of bird species. In our short visit we noted White Stork with young, Egrets, Rollers, Bee-eaters, Hoopoe, Grey and Yellow Wagtails as well as various waders and ducks.



Our luck for luxury hotels at extraordinary low prices remained with us. This time it was at the recently opened 5-star city centre 'Conforium'. Not only were we given a decent price and spacious rooms but upon leaving, the reception and bar staff all came to wish us well.

They also presented us with boxes of local Turkish Coffee. We will be back!

Akdamar Island is situated off the southside of the lake and can be reached by a twenty-minute boat ride. Apart from it being attractive haven away from the city, it is home to a ninth century Armenian Cathedral and Monastery. Both sites were in use until 1915 (a notable period for local massacres!).

There are well preserved murals within the small church.



Back at the mainland departure port it is possible to sample freshly caught Pearl Mullet in one of the attractive cafes. The fish is certainly tasty, but bone removal skills are definitely required!

**South of Van.** The wilderness region to the south of Lake Van is one of wild barren beauty that begs to be explored. It is also obvious that it has an ancient and probably violent history. Witness to this are the many castles dotting the hilltops. Of particular note is the strategically well sited Kurdish fort of Hosap along route 975.



This was built in 1643 at the time of the Ottoman Empire. Not far away the same road passes beneath the extensive Urartian citadel of Cavustepe dating back to BC735!

Between the two sites mentioned above is the long, but not particularly wide, Zerneq Reservoir. Above this, on the northern stoney slopes, we came across what was possibly the most stunning iris that we had ever seen, namely, *Iris paradoxa*. These plants varied between 20-40cm high with purple to violet flowers 8-10cm across.



Towards the end of each perianth segment there was an iridescent, mirror like patch.

Continuing even further along route 975 the road rises rapidly to the Guzeldare Pass at 2,710m. Just before this is a pull off and a mini mosque beneath a very steep hillside. This was where we had come to see the rare *Tulipa koyuncui*. Unfortunately, 'conservation' is a little understood term within Turkey. Apparently, the week before our arrival a minibus stopped at this site, where its passengers alighted and commenced digging up the plants, presumably to sell. We only managed to find one plant hidden partly by a crevice. Luckily, higher up the hillside, we came across a number of alpine plants including *Fritillaria crassifolia* subsp. *crassifolia*. These beautiful plants were probably saved from the 'diggers' by their diminutive size and camouflaged colouring.

The penultimate day proved to be one of the most exciting and rewarding days of our trip. We headed almost due south from Van on a minor road into the Kavussahap mountains. At a four-way junction we stopped to check the route and whilst doing so there came a great shout and waving from a cliff top 100m above us.

We took little notice and then, on a steep scree slope by the cliff, four very heavily armed, and rather wild looking men in full combat gear came sliding down to talk to us. Apparently, they were sweeping these mountains for unwanted persons, and they had orders to keep travellers from their search region (which was, of course, where we wished to go).

We then took the Karabit Valley turning and stopped just before a small but attractive village. Yasemin had not been to this suggested site previously, so she sought the assistance of several local school children by showing them a phone picture of the rather small and insignificant *Fritillaria minuta*.

They recognised this plant immediately and said that they would be pleased to show us.

Their route was, of course, through a small bog, across a stream and twenty minutes up a very steep hillside. For a thank-you, and a rest at the site, Yasemin gave them all a lecture on conservation which was avidly listened to.



With more flora stops we continued up to the Karabit Pass at 2,985m  
(see photograph, back cover of journal)

Once more, just below the snow line and amongst the gravel and pebbles, we came across one of the most amazing selections of uncommon plants that we had ever seen. These including two new fritillarias (including *Fritillaria minima*), a new tulip – the mauve-pink *Tulipa humilis*, colchicums, corydalis, and crocus. That night we slept well.

**The final day.** The last day of a holiday is often an anti-climax, particularly when there is an afternoon flight to catch.

Ours certainly was not!

We were off at first light to visit a place which boasted the undoubted ‘King’ of all Fritillarias; one that grows to over a metre in height; the stunning *Fritillaria imperialis*

Only a few sites remain for this species which has been over-picked by the locals and over-collected for international bulb sales.



Our site was on a steep, flower covered hillside above an interesting old graveyard.

This was situated to the south-west of Lake Van. The twenty to thirty remaining plants were, surprisingly, protected by the local villagers who insisted on keeping any driver’s license until they left (empty handed, of course!!). Several established flowering plants had, however, been ‘relocated’ amongst the graves.

So, an excellent trip where we traversed amazing mountains, met friendly local people, sampled endless tasty Turkish meals, became experts on ancient places, and found all our key plant species.

The latter being, eleven Fritillarias, ten Iris and five Tulips, together with a host of other alpins.

And, most importantly, we now have two new friends in Yasemin and Cemil.

Thank-you, we shall never forget this trip.

Stair Cottage is just outside the peaceful hamlet of Stair in one of the few quiet corners of the Lake District. It proved ideal for our purposes.

On Friday the rain having relented, the Harrisons ventured out on a short circular walk via Uzzicar to Swinside and then back to the Fylde MC Hut. Some fine views, the sight of black lambs gambolling and refreshment at the Swinside Inn were the highlights. A further stroll, after dinner, towards Little Town offered splendid views of late sunlight on the hills and sighting about 5 bats swooping back and forth over their heads. On their way in Helen S and Michael walked around the Studley Royal estate just west of Ripon

Saturday, a beautiful morning, saw them joining Rod and Yayoi Smith on their mines quest through Little Town past the Carlisle MC's climbing hut and the disused Goldscope Lead mine as far as the Castlenook mine workings. Progress was slowed by Jim Harrison's need for frequent short breaks (a likely lads sort of injury) and bird-watching (sightings of Wheatears, chaffinch and Stonechat). Also, the hills looked a picture in the sunshine with bushes such as gorse showing up well. At this juncture, Rod and Yayoi struck out for a path which led up through mine workings to Dalehead crags and tarn. Christine and Jim ventured higher to near Red Crag. Christine pushed on further towards Dale Head Tarn but returned before reaching it. After lunch, they retraced their steps to Stair Cottage with time for more bird-watching and deep reflection.

On Saturday Barbara and Arthur joined-up with Carol and John and took the car to Little Town and parked at the farm for five pounds for the day. They went up the track towards Hause Gate, heading north to a very crowded Catbells. Taking in the excellent views they retraced their step and went to Hause Gate and up to Bull Crag on Maiden Moor. After a lunch break, they went on to High Spy, where we met up with the Smith family coming the other way. Leaving them they dropped down to Dalehead Tarn and then down the fairly steep descent into the upper reaches of the Newlands valley. The path here descends alongside the beck which has a quite spectacular waterfall. Heading back to Little Town, passing on the way a well-located climbing hut, belonging to the Carlisle M.C. They called in at the pub at Swinside and enjoyed a pint in the beer garden in the late afternoon sunshine. Bev and Conrad set off with the Smith party to complete the Newlands Round. All was going well, and indeed too well for Beverley as she strode off in front as we approached Little Town and beyond. A little further on a decision had to be taken as to whether we followed the steady meandering path to the col or a steep angular traverse to the ridge. Helen commented that it wouldn't be in true YRC style to take the easy option! So, off the group went cutting a steady path through some well-established gorse. At this point, it was clear that Beverley was not comfortable so the decision was to split the group so that Michael, Helen, Richard and Felicity could complete the round. After a cup of tea, a few 'words' and twenty minutes of rest, Beverley was happy to attempt Robinson (at this point the ambition



was to reach the summit and return). With some trepidation, Bev scrambled up the exposed rock and then, punctuated by a few short breaks to the summit shelter. Convinced that Bev would not want to miss out on bagging her second Wainwright of the day, a strong argument was put forward along the lines of minimising the angle of ascent by using the diagonal path contouring the side of the fell. She must have been persuaded as a second wind kicked in and we were at the Hindscarth cairn in no time.

The descent down towards the Low Snab took considerably longer, however, the amazing panorama made up for any niggling scrambling worries that Bev may have had. After crossing the footbridge, we stopped for one more short tea break before meeting Jim and Christine Harrison at Little Town en route to the hut.

Also on Saturday Mick and Peter decided to do the classic Coledale Round including Grassmoor. After a sunny start, a chilly wind encouraged a brisk pace along the ridges and going clockwise had the advantage of passing the Coledale Inn for refreshments, but unfortunately, the path beside Newlands Beck to Stair was closed due to severe erosion, so they returned along the lane. That left the Newlands round and Hindscarth to be walked on Sunday giving them some great views across to the peaks traversed on the previous day's outing. Mick described them as a most enjoyable pair of walks



Pete heading for Catbells

Helen B and Tim made the long ascent to Grey Crag in Birkness Combe above Buttermere. It is a place well known for being quick drying and unfortunately, quite a few others had the same idea. They bypassed the first planned route to save time and embarked on the excellent crack of Fortiter (MVS). (Suaviter in modo, Fortiter in re. Gently in manner, firmly in action). Helen climbed it smoothly, Tim was neither gentle nor firm, more jerky and wobbly.



Helen on Fortiter

The next tier holds the wonderful Oxford and Cambridge Direct (S), the final pitch of which climbs the very edge of the buttress in splendid position and on perfect rock.

The descent of the Combe seemed unaccountably longer than it had on the way up but a pint in Buttermere was all the more welcome.

Ged and Norman climbed at Bram Crag Quarry in St John's in the Vale on Saturday



Ged leading on 'Blencathra Badger'

and

Norman on Whicker's 'World'

Both F5c on Bram Crag



They then walked up Birkness Combe on Sunday to do Oxford and Cambridge Direct which they agreed was well worth the effort.

Sunday was a lovely, sunny, if breezy, morning and the Harrison's walked through Little Town up to Hause Gate and then up to Catbells. All along the route the sunshine amplified the patchwork of colours on the hills with lovely views all round whether over Derwent Water or towards Skiddaw.

Returning they then took a path, recommended by Helen Smith, going near to Brunt Crag and tracking above old mine workings down to Skelgill and back to Stair Cottage.

They had barely started this track when we came upon a small crystal-clear pond teeming with tadpoles. One final challenge was to ease our way past Skelgill's imposing guardian.



The Guardian

All told, they found this a splendid short walk with much to commend it

Rod had a yen to revisit the popular 1950s Bentley Beetham route Corvus (D\*\*\*) on Raven Crag. So, five Smiths and a Roberts drove off for Seatoller only to become wedged in some of the 2,000 cyclists on the Fred Whitton Challenge intent on crossing all six of the Lakes' major passes in a 114-mile loop.

Thankfully, this was only for the last few miles before they parked. Rod, Michael and Richard branched off for the crag as Fliss, Yayoi and Helen headed up to Glaramara.

Perhaps the cycle event put others off Borrowdale as there was nobody else on the route as Richard set off up Corvus. Rod climbed the first pitch in 1950's gear (except for a modern harness), declared it more polished and, curiosity satisfied, left the rest to the others.

Their only criticism of the route was the stink from a rotting sheep, that wafted up the gully on a breeze, which encouraged speedy movement up the wall above to reach fresh air.

After getting the tent down and loading the car, Arthur and Barbara made a rather late start with Bev, Conrad and Helen Brewitt, crossing the bridge in Stair, to take the path to Rowling End, where they had lunch, before going on to Causey Pike and along Scar Craggs to just below the climb to Sail. With an early start for home in mind, they descended to the valley and then back to Stair.

In this descent, the path cuts across a scree slope, which has some sections which would still be quite runnable!

Another good, though short, day.

Back at the hut, more tea was made and Mick and Peter arrived back before most finally set off for our various journeys home.

Monday found Helen S and Michael after staying at the George Starkey Hut in Patterdale and making an early start to avoid forecast afternoon rain. From Brothers Water, they went up Dovedale to the Priest's Hole, over Dove Crag to a windy Little Hart Crag and down from the Scandale Pass. The rain amounted to nothing.

Newcomers to wild camping were mentioned earlier. In the Hole, someone had dumped half a pint of milk, a boxed drone flight controller with instructions and a spare battery.

Goodness knows who the pilot thought would need or remove these. Presumably, the pilot had crashed the drone and no longer needed the rest of the kit. The cave was tidied up.



Newlands Valley from Dale Head



Top of  
Grey Crag

Helen on  
Oxford and  
Cambridge  
Direct



Carol  
emerging  
From  
Priests Hole



Causey Pike and the Coledale summits

Beverley and Conrad provided the catering for the weekend and excellent it was too. Space in the common room was at a premium but despite a wobbly table, no disasters occurred and all enjoyed a convivial evening.

Attending:

Barbara Salmon,  
Arthur Salmon,  
Conrad Tetley,  
Beverley Eastwood,  
Mick Borroff, Tim Josephy,  
Helen Brewitt, Helen Smith,  
Michael Smith,  
Christine Harrison,  
Jim Harrison, Carol Whalley,  
John Whalley, Rod Smith,  
Yayoi Smith, Richard Smith,  
Felicity Roberts, Peter Elliott,  
Ged Campion,  
Norman Wilkinson (PM).



Some of the participants

Taking full advantage of the brilliant summer weather in the northwest this year, YRC members, aspiring members and past members have been busy putting up a selection of new routes in the Dales and Lakes. It's hard to find new crags these days and many of them will inevitably be "sport" developed rather than "traditional".

## **Yorkshire Dales**

### **Attermire Scar**

The Escarpment. This crag is located towards the east of the Attermire Crag cluster in a beautiful location

Start a couple of metres right of The Cleaver at an innocuous looking crack. A tricky start gains nice climbing trending right and up to the ledge. Climb the upper wall on the right of the bolts. 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Glyn Edwards, Norman Wilkinson, Colin Binks.

### **The Cleaver** 20m. 5c

This climbs the fine sharp rib just right of Chop Gully to a roomy grass ledge halfway. From here climb the upper wall to the left of the bolts. It's probably a good idea to put a lower off/belay on the ledge as there is a bit of rope drag on the top half. 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022. Glyn Edwards, Colin Binks, Norman Wilkinson.

### **Langcliffe Skyline**

The Skyline buttress is a continuation of Stainforth Scar and lies above and to the left of Langcliffe Quarry. The crag is hidden in the trees and approached from the new car park by the Hoffman Kiln.

### **Garlic Gully area**

### **Wild Garlic** 16m. 6b

Further up the gully, the steep wall left of Hostage sports a fine diagonal crack. Gain and follow this with some interest to the 5<sup>th</sup> bolt which is slightly out of line (on the left) and is best extended.

Continue upwards past a ledge and then more easily to the lower off. 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Glyn Edwards, Ged Campion, Norman Wilkinson.

## Main Wall area

### **Directly Unavailable 24m. 6b**

A long and varied route with a distinct crux. Start just right of “W.P.C. Lovely” below the tree stump. Climb pleasantly to the stump and ledge, then take the crack or wall on the right to reach a more incipient crack further up in superb rock. Follow this with a hard move at the bulge to gain good holds and the halfway ledge. Continue directly up the wall above pleasantly. 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Glyn Edwards, Ged Campion, Norman Wilkinson.

Glyn Edwards starting up 'Directly Unavailable' and Norman Wilkinson belaying.



## **The Lake District**

Runestone Quarry originally known as Betsy Crag Quarry is a series of elongated open pit workings which follow a silver-grey slate seam up the fellside. It's said that the quarry, is one of the earliest in the area has been worked since the 1700s. The quarry closed just before the first WW.

The entrance to the middle quarry is gained by passing under an arch formed by a huge single slab of slate. This was a bridge to allow quarrymen to easily walk from Tunnel Hole Quarry to Betsy Crag Quarry.

The quarry is just up from LHG, following track past HHG to the fell gate then left steeply to join main track from Fell Foot Bridge to Tilberthwaite. The spoil heaps can be clearly seen above. Head in direction of Tilberthwaite to where track branches right to quarry. Over stone stile and up ramp to Lower Quarry.

For years YRC members used quarry for top roping / bouldering activities and teams added a few bolted routes from the 1990s but in 2020 just before the pandemic, prompted by the publication of the new guidebook “Lakes Sport and Slate” the quarry saw a burst of activity from an invasion of climber's re-bolting old routes and developing new ones.



It's been agreed with Cumbria Bolt Fund that glue in bolts should be used in slate owing to its tendency to fracture more easily as a soft rock. Therefore, many of the existing routes have been re-bolted and lower off's improved.

### Runestone. Lower Quarry

#### **Omicron** 12m. 6b

Start 3m right of Evergreen. Climb the small groove in the blunt arete making interesting moves over the overhang to an easier slab above. 23.11.2021. Ged & Imogen Campion.

#### **Runescape** 13m. 6a

10m right of Caspian. Move left from large, detached block to a small spike to gain the wall above, then follow the bolt line direct. Lower back to the spike to avoid dubious blocks in the pit below the roof. 5.5.22. Ged & Imogen Campion.

#### **Ron's Ramble** 15m. 5c+

Start as for Caspian and make a rising traverse rightwards to the lower off on Runescape. Lower down to the spike on Runescape to avoid the pit below the overhang. 7.6.22. Ged Campion & Glyn Edwards.

#### **'Send it like Beccs** 12m. 6a+

The steep slab just right of Omicron. Climb directly using a few dubious flakes. Some brittle rock! 23.5.22. Ged & Imogen Campion.



Left:  
Tom  
leading  
Omicron



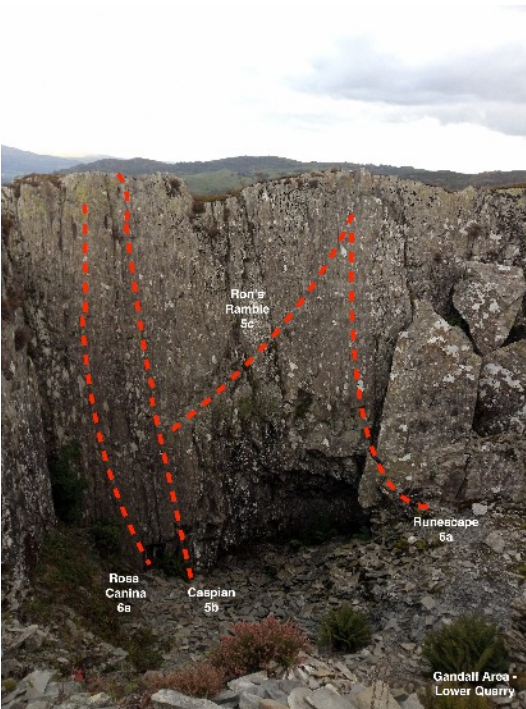
Right:  
Ged  
leading  
Omicron



Tom leading Runescape



Imogen on Rosa Canina



Ron's Ramble, Rosa Canina, Caspian and Runescape.



Kobes Cucumber, Omicron and Send it like Beccs.

*An active meet in a relatively quiet and attractive part of the Cairngorms which provided a variety of activities in a week of showery and windy weather with sunny spells.*

Six of those signed up for this meet arrived at the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club's Milehouse early on Friday evening. Both Mick and Mike had already had a week or so out in Scotland. Mick arrived on Saturday having climbed Ben Loyal. Paul and Tamsin arrived from the north a couple of days later.

Scottish Covid-related restrictions on hut use having been lifted, we were allowed the full week and without segregated use of facilities by dormitory. Milehouse has two each of dorms, toilets and showers with a large combined kitchen, dining and sitting area, plus a drying room and larder.



The weather was mixed; generally windy with scattered showers and prolonged rain on a couple of days. There were sunny spells and the rivers were not too high – indeed Paul finding a bridge over the Feshie had been swept away, waded across only to find a sign informing him of an alternative bridge 2½km away. Further dismay followed as Tamsin was waiting to pick him up back on his original side of the river.

The wind and rain did not discourage birding. Ospreys were watched on neighbouring Loch Insh and at the Loch Garten centre. A snow bunting sang on Ben Macdui and crested tits were heard.

Capercaillie were not seen though in Anagach Woods beside the River Spey.

The few deer seen were by the Speyside woods and the absence of herds on the mountainsides was perhaps a consequence of culling for habitat restoration.

Adjacent Glen Feshie unsurprisingly had several visits. Rounds were made from Auchlean to; Munro Sgòr Gaoith with its four outliers, the newly renovated five-star Ruigh Aiteachain bothy and further up, Munro Mullach Clach a' Bhlair with Mick taking one party via Coire Garbhlach's scramble by the upper waterfall. Above the Milehouse, the Inishriach Forest's lochans had a couple of visits with Mike spotting a red squirrel.



Glen Feshie

Suffering a painful foot, Tim hired an electric hard-tail mountain bike and cycled the 50km of the west side of Glen Feshie and back to Milehouse. The bike made quite an impression on him. Despite this he was out again on the eMTB from Milehouse to Loch Morlich, up Glen More to Ryvoan then Bynack Stable returning via the Cairngorm Club footbridge and the Speyside Way. He later tried walking above the Bridge of Brown and then in the Rothiemurchus Forest but regretted it and headed home.

When on Sgòr Gaoith, low cloud limited the view down east to Loch Eanaich, so Helen and Michael walked to that Loch from Loch an Eilein. Water spouts whipped up from its surface rose a couple of hundred metres before being blown towards the crags.

The higher mountains attracted a few visits including Ben Macdui, Derry Cairngorm and Cairngorm. Regarding the last of those, Helen regretted including it once the afternoon's heavy rain started as she had not packed her overtrousers. Descending near the funicular allowed inspection of the £16m (public funds) extensive track repairs in progress. Nearby, the Corbett west of Glen More, Meall a' Bhuachaille, was traversed onto Creagan Gorm and Craiggowrie with a return around Loch Morlich.

Chris and Mike took a two-day route from the Northern Corries through the Lairaig Ghru to overnight in the busy Corroul bothy. Rain and wind scotched their plan for Angels' Ridge so Coire Odhar was taken to Devil's Point. Going west took them over Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mor to drop into Glen Feshie.

Further afield, Chris walked up Munro Meall Chuaich near Dalwhinnie. The bridges and rivers of Sluggan, Carrbridge, and Grantown-on-Spey were examined, and near Tomintoul Mick walked from Bridge of Brown up Carn na Farraidh returning northeast via Fae.



Carrbridge Old Bridge

Michael fought his way directly up through fallen trees to the Dun da Iamh hill fort west of Newtonmore, then found a path on the far side. Mike went up Creag Bheag above Kingussie.

Away from the hills, some spent part of a day at the Highland Wildlife Park, the Highland Folk Museum, the Frank Bruce Sculpture Trail, Ruthven Barracks or, of course, shopping for their turn to prepare the communal evening meal.



The thick walls of the hilltop fort Dun-da-lamh



Roseroot (*Rhodiola rosea*)



Snow Bunting on Ben Macdui

The meals followed a similar trend to those on another recent meet – a general increase in complexity through the week. Starting with Smiths’ beef stew with baked potatoes then cheese through the addition of Chris’ pea & ham soup and on to Martyn’s cottage pie with seasonal vegetables followed by home-grown rhubarb crumble. Tim provided Mediterranean chicken cacciatore, a choice of crumbles, and Lairig Ghru and blue Mull cheeses. Tamsin and Paul upped the culinary stakes with crudités, spaghetti a la Bolognese with avocado salad, then sticky toffee pudding and cheeses. Follow that Mick! He rose to the occasion with chicken coriander pie with cider, mustard and apple then a fresh fruit salad and cheese board. None went hungry.

Thanks go to the Ladies of the LSCC for the use of Milehouse and Tim for organising the meet.

- Attended by:  
 Mick Borroff  
 Mike Gregg  
 Chris Hilton  
 Tim Josephy  
 Paul Magson (PM)  
 Helen Smith  
 Michael Smith  
 Tamsin Spain (PM)  
 Martyn Trasler



Overseas  
Meet

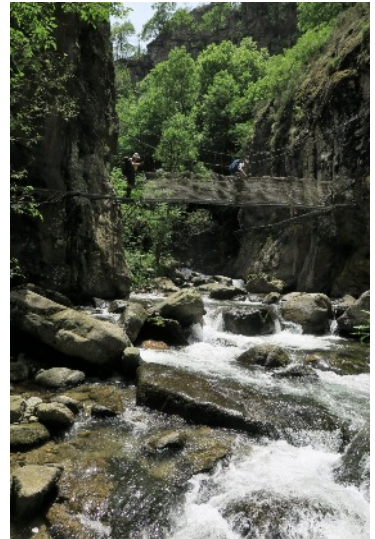
# Massif du Canigou France

June  
14-22

At last, this meet, originally scheduled for 2020 and organised by Kjetil Tveranger, actually got underway but not without hiccoughs. Our original flight from Stansted to Perpignan was cancelled and everyone had to rebook which involved rescheduling the whole trip. Also a threat of rail strikes caused a change of travel plans to Birmingham Airport with all electing to drive or travel by coach (two members had an interesting overnight stay in a less salubrious part of the Black Country). Warnings of long queues at security meant that all were at the airport very early, but apart from a slight delay to take-off all went well. By mid afternoon we were met by Kjetil and Ann Karin with their two cars at the airport and driven to their house in Tuchan - our base for the meet. Mick also rented a car as there were eleven of us to transport. Four stayed at the house and the remainder at a cabin on a nearby campsite. Our hosts had prepared an evening meal and it was very pleasant sitting outside in the warm after a dip in their pool.

Thursday 16th

There was some repacking for our 5-day trek next morning but by 8.50 the three cars in convoy made the 1½ hour drive to Thules-Entre Valls. This was followed by some car shuffling to ensure one car was at the foot of Canigou for our return. By 12.30 we set off for the 11 km walk with 1000m of ascent up the Gorges de la Caranca. This was exciting with ladders, walkways and at least 10 passerelles (bridges) to cross - some of them swaying wildly. It was also quite busy - clearly a tourist attraction. After a long, hot day all were pleased to arrive at the Refuge du Ras de la Caranca.



Several of the team were quite tired - one member's stamina improved in subsequent days once someone else took over responsibility for carrying the whisky!

The hut had simple facilities (washing in the river) but was comfortable although they were struggling to find blankets for everyone.

The meal of steak and potato pie was welcome and the dessert of chocolate

covered cornflakes reminded us of children's parties of old. We turned in at about 9.30.

Friday 17th

Following a simple breakfast and a wait for our packed lunches, we were underway by 8.30.

The flowers (pink azaleas and yellow broom), as we climbed to the Coll del Pal (2294m), were stunning.



A welcome stop at the Col and we were rewarded with a fly-past by a bearded vulture, the highlight of the trip for one member.

At this point Richard S and Fliss headed south to go over a couple of additional tops, the rest of us followed the GR10 to drop into a valley below the small restored village of Mantet. It was very hot as we climbed up to the village.



Our accommodation for the night, the Casenove, was more "gite" than hut with very tasty food and wonderful views from the terrace where the birders were kept busy spotting redstarts, honey buzzards and possibly a roosting vulture.

We were made very welcome by the owner and his mother, who prided herself on the beautiful garden.

**Relaxing on the terrace  
of the Casenove**



Saturday 18th

After a 7.00am breakfast we were off to the Col de Mantet where a decision had to be made. We had assumed most would head down to the small village of Py and take the shorter route to the next hut. However, the prospect of heading downhill so early in the morning having just reached the col spurred eight of us to take the higher but considerably longer route.



We climbed steadily to join a ridge close to the Spanish border. It had rocky sections and towers but the path skirted round these and we had about 12km of good views from the top. A moderate breeze kept us cool. All in all about a 25km walk with a final steep descent where we met the other three at the Refuge de Mariailles. They had experienced a very warm and steep climb up to the refuge. The refuge was comfortable but had a lot of rules - we could only check-in once we had all arrived and rucksacks had to be left in the sack room and belongings to be taken to the dorm transferred into a small box. The local beer at 8% was very welcome on arrival after a long hot day but your scribe decided after one that she was struggling to stand up straight so moved on to something less strong!



The high route



The low route

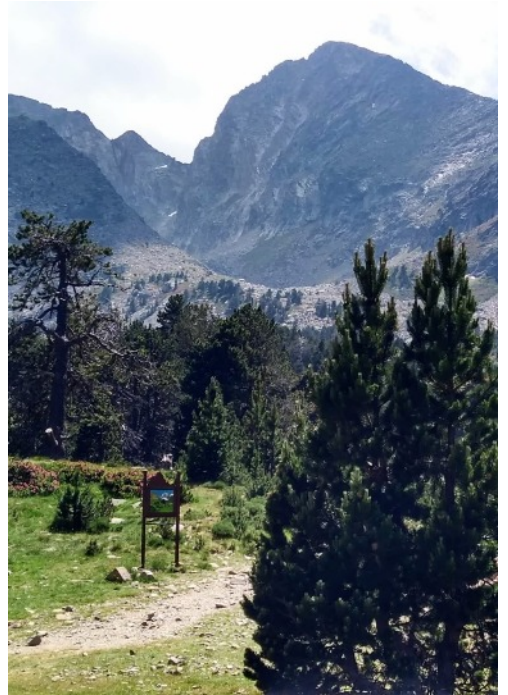
Sunday 19th

There was a warning of high and increasing winds for our day on Canigou. There was certainly some doubt whether we would be able to make the summit but reports from those coming down were encouraging so we decided to go for it and not take the traversing path round the west of the mountain.

We walked northeast through azalea-strewn alps with marmots and up rockier slopes to a col (Portella de Vallmanya) and a rising rough traverse to a steep rock gully ending in an exciting clamber up a chimney (La Cheminée).



Canigou





Strong gusty winds were blowing upwards and it was less windy on the summit (2784m) with its iron cross surrounded by sticks and Catalan flags all ready to be lit for the Fête de la St Jean - a celebration of friendship and midsummer where each local village takes a bundle of sticks to be lit on the 22nd June.

The descent to the north was down steep zigzags and the wind increased as we descended, blowing one member off her feet and into a rock. From Pic Joffre we saw a helicopter and Richard S saw it pick up someone who had been blown off the Crête du Barbet ridge. We continued slowly down to the Refuge de Cortalets chatting to locals and reading about Noah mooring his Ark on top of Canigou!

Once at the hut, a young camper asked if we had seen his friends - sadly it is likely that they were the ones attended to by the helicopter.



It was an excellent evening meal of chorizo sausage and rice in a rich tomato sauce. We were all in one dorm at the top of the refuge - the extra flight of stairs to the top floor was an effort after a strenuous day.

### Monday 20th

Off at 8.15 down the old Piste de Balaig path through forests and crags and an old iron ore mine to the campsite at Coll de Milleres. The drivers headed off to pick up cars from the start while the rest of us had a drink, ice-cream and a game of table tennis though it was rather hot at 843m. On the way back we stopped at Villefranche-de-Conflent - had lunch and wandered around the old fortified town. All had a light meal at Kjetil and Ann-Karin's in the evening and those who had been on the ski trip earlier in the year were reunited with Nico, the Tveranger's giant Schnauzer who had been staying with friends whilst we were on the trek.

### Tuesday 21st

Not an early start today! Once the others arrived from the campsite and had breakfast we went for a stroll around Tuchan's narrow streets, had a coffee and beer at the Globe Kafe, light lunch at the Tverangers and then all piled into the cars to visit the local castle Chateau D'Aguilar perched impressively on a hill. In the evening we gathered at the campsite restaurant for a final meal before the main party returned home. A nightingale was heard and spotted near the cabin.



Wednesday 22nd

Richard T and Peter C extended their stay in France and went off to explore Carcassonne for a couple of days. The remainder visited the impressive ridge-top castle of Peyrepertuse before Mick, Becca and Pete B headed off to the airport and three Smiths and a Roberts headed back to Tuchan to spend a few more days with Kjetil and Ann-Karin. They had a super time including a couple of half days sport climbing, local walks and swimming in a gorge.



Colourful growth



Peyrepertuse



Carcassonne

The gorges

Thank you Kjetil for organising this splendid trip in a most attractive area. Not only were the mountains impressive but there was so much else to appreciate including the flowers, beautiful butterflies, insects, birds and pretty villages.

Also, thanks to Mick for organising the car rental and driving. Special thanks though to Kjetil and Ann Karin for their warm hospitality - you made us all very welcome.

Attending: Pete Bann (PM), Mick Borroff, Peter Chadwick, Becca Humphreys, Felicity Roberts, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Richard Taylor, Kjetil Tveranger, Ann Karin Tveranger (G),



12 members came to the Star Bunkhouse in Bwlch in South Wales to walk part of the Beacons Way. The weather was really good although it did get hotter during the weekend. Michael and Helen arrived at Bwlch early on Friday and decided to make life easier for themselves on Saturday by completing the final third of the walk a day early.

They parked the car near the small village of Llanbedr and set off via Table Mountain back towards the bunkhouse at Bwlch. Walking conditions were pleasant although a fresh breeze made it quite cool on the higher, more exposed tops. The views were superb. With 6 km of the Beacons Way to go they treated themselves to a full Welsh breakfast at a cafe in Cwmdru. Thus, fortified, they did a 'bit extra' and added the top of Pen Tir on their way back to the bunkhouse.

On account of several members not arriving until nearly 11.00pm on Friday evening there was not too much enthusiasm for a crack of dawn start. But by 6.35 am eight members had been dropped off at the Skirrid car park by Tim and John. That was the last Michael and Helen saw of several who set off at a cracking pace.

By clambering down off the steep end of the Skirrid, they did catch up with Barbara and Fliss who had been joined by Martyn and Dan – who had been dropped off a bit later and nearer by Tim. All six walked together until reaching the priory at Llanthony - a beautiful spot - where Michael, Helen and Fliss managed to lose the others whilst visiting the tea rooms.

It became very hot during the afternoon and the climb out of the village to Bal Bach was taxing. The final climb up to Crug Mawr seemed endless in the increasing heat.

However, it was all downhill from there and the prospect of reaching the Red Lion at Llanbedr provided some incentive - a total of 33 km and 10½ hours.



After a quick drink in the pub, Michael and Helen collected the car and drove down to Crickhowell to pick up Fiona and Dave. Helen, after a refreshing cup of tea at the bunkhouse, went back to the Red Lion to pick up Martyn, Barbara and Dan. Mike Gregg had made his way into Crickhowell and managed to catch the bus back to Bwlch, and the bunkhouse.

John was dropped in Crickhowell from where he walked the 20km back to Bwlch, taking in Table Mountain where he walked up with 2 Americans who had only just arrived in the country. They hoped to be travelling here for the next 3 months and were grateful for the company and the navigation! The walk was great with some impressive views of the Brecon Beacons and with lots of stonechats singing in the bracken.

Tim assumed the responsibilities of dog sitter. He and Bailey completed a 5 mile circuit around the local area, much enlivened by a convenient swimming hole half way round. (for Bailey, not her minder).

Hats off to Richard Smith though who walked the whole distance. In the hot conditions this was no mean feat.

Tim provided a good meal for all the tired walkers on Saturday night and we were all in bed early after our long day.

On Sunday Michael, Helen, Richard, Fliss, Fiona and Dave did a circular 4 km walk along the Usk where Fiona and Bailey went for a swim - some had a paddle. Then Michael and Helen drove along the old Ross Road from Abergavenny stopping for coffee, cake and castle viewing at Skenfrith.

Tim and John walked down to the river, this was really busy with swimmers cooling off in the shallows. After a cup of coffee in the café John walked further along the Usk and Tim made his way back to the Bunkhouse.

It was a great weekend and everyone achieved what they set out to do in really warm and dry conditions.

JB

Present:

Tim Josephy, Mike Smith, Helen Smith, Barbara Salmon, Richard Smith, Fliss Roberts, Martyn Trasler, Dan Curtiss, Fiona Booker-Smith, David Booker-Smith, Mike Gregg, John Brown.



Mile upon mile

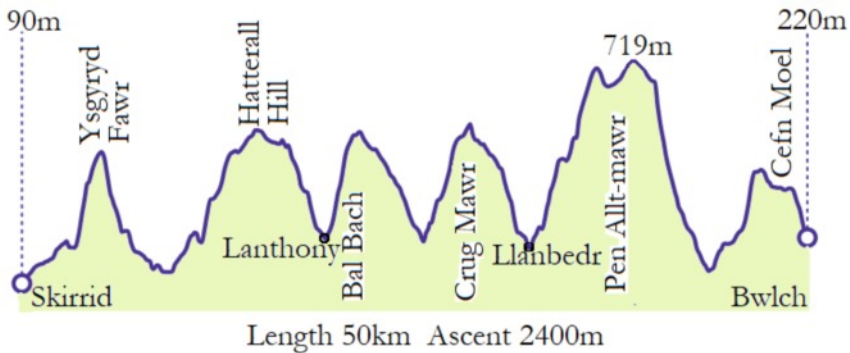


Some of the crew





The highest point, route and climb



With several members living nearby who were able to ‘pop in’ for varying periods of time, German cavers/photographers in the vicinity (more later) and unfortunate last-minute withdrawals owing to injury or Covid infection, it became increasingly difficult to keep track of the comings and goings at Lowstern. By Saturday evening it was a case of, “Guess who’s coming to dinner?” which John Brown with Ros, our weekend caterers and meet organisers, bore with remarkable stoicism and bemusement!

On Thursday evening the first “in person” committee meeting since the onset of Covid took place at Lowstern so by Friday morning a number of members were already ensconced at the cottage. Michael S, Helen and Conrad set out for Twistleton Scar to recce Michael’s proposed routes for climbing over the weekend. Satisfied with the results they continued walking and completed a good round of Ellerbeck, Scales Moor to Kingsdale and checked out climbing possibilities on Tow Scar (unanimously declared not worth it for the purposes of the weekend). John and Ros took the opportunity before a busy catering weekend to go for a walk towards Ingleborough. Richard Sealey, our hut warden, spent some of the day with his head under the work-top trying to fathom out the leak from the water heater and later was showing off his table tennis skills as he patiently entertained our youngest junior prospective member, Grace Crowther.

Michael Crowther had elected to camp and for daughter Grace and guest Kaylagh it was their first experience of a night under canvas.

When Grace’s air mattress deflated during the night Michael did the honourable thing and gave up his own.

In addition, on Saturday night the old tent borrowed from Granddad Robert leaked during the heavy rain.

Despite all of this, Grace enjoyed the experience.



Conrad Tetley on  
Twistleton Scar

Saturday morning saw the Crowthers head off to Ingleborough Cave for Grace's first caving experience. Helen joined PMs Steve and Wendy Richards for a trip up Ingleborough returning via Gaping Gill where the CPC were dismantling the winch.

Michael S, Conrad and Lucy headed off to the Alum Pot area. A quick trip in Wilson's cave whilst waiting for another group to clear Lower Long Churn's entrance and then they were down to Dollytubs.



Lucy in Wilson's Cave

Water levels were low, nevertheless only one of the three managed to keep their underwear dry at Double Shuffle Pool! Leaving the last cave they encountered two German cave photographers looking for Diccan Pot. Conversation followed - the two were on a long UK visit documenting selected English and Welsh caves - and an invitation was made to join us at Lowstern for dinner that evening. Paul Dover, meanwhile, who had walked up to Alum Pot was kept busy going back to Lowstern for Lucy's forgotten dry clothes.

After a late lunch, seven headed off to Giggleswick Scar for a visit to Buckhaw Brow crag. Conditions, though sunny and warm, were very windy which did not help confidence for relative beginners. Nevertheless, the following climbs were completed: Cloud Walking (VD), Boundary Crack (VD) and Consolation (S). For one PM - a first "go" at climbing for many years.

Eighteen sat down to a tasty meal of pie, potatoes and vegetables, dessert of crumble and custard followed by cheese and biscuits. All hit the spot after a busy day. It was an entertaining evening of flowing conversation. Also "flowing" was the redcurrant gin offered by our dinner guests Georg and Michaela from Würzburg.

Conditions were gorgeous on Sunday as members chatted outside Lowstern before departing for their various activities. Becca was off for Search and Rescue dog training at Norber. Helen and Fiona set out with Bailey for a good round of Crummock Dale.

JPM Lucy got her wish of going to the climbing wall in Ingleton. Trying to book had been problematic on the Saturday but many thanks to Ged and Aaron who were able to sort this and supervise her session on Sunday.

John and Ros spent the day at Leighton Moss RSPB reserve on Morecambe Bay. Paul spent a lot of time just taking in the greenery of the Dales, such a contrast to the parched landscape at home in Cambridge following one of the driest summers on record.

A party of eight went to Twistleton Scar and spent all day climbing in the Candle and Main areas including: Waxwork (D), Game Reserve (VD), Dr Banda (D) and Clinker (D). Meanwhile, Arthur Tallon popped into a deserted Lowstern where he found a card celebrating his 70 years membership of the club signed by committee members and those attending the meet.

Thanks to John and Ros for organising the catering, Conrad for supporting the caving and outdoor climbing and Michael S for supervising on the day and also for the time spent preparing appropriate climbing and caving activities. Everyone seemed to have a good time. It must be fairly unusual for any club to have a meet where the age spans 6 to 90+.

HS

#### Attending

Conrad Tetley, John Brown, Ros Brown (G), Michael Smith, Helen Smith, Michael Crowther, Kaylagh Tucker (G), Grace Crowther (JPM), Robert Crowther, Steve Richards (PM), Wendy Richards (PM), Paul Dover, Lucy Dover-Sarakun (JPM), Richard Sealey.

#### Visitors

Becca Humphreys, Arthur Tallon, Alan Hinkes, Ged Champion, Aaron Champion, Bev Eastwood, Zara Eastwood (G) Harvey Lomas, Fiona Booker-Smith, Georg Scheuring (G) Michaela Lutz (G).



Wendy on Twistleton Scar

By Friday evening most of the meet had arrived at Lowstern. A populous tented village had sprung up outside and the kitchen was busy with people cooking their evening meals.

During the afternoon several parties were out. Mick Borroff climbed Ingleborough from Newby Cote, descending via Gaping Gill and a bone dry Fell Beck. He noted that the valley below Trow Gill looked bare after extensive felling to control Ash Dieback.

Steve and Wendy Richards with Michael Smith spent the afternoon climbing at Hutton Roof; Conrad and Beverley set off to join them but foiled by a road closure, retired to the Lake House (formerly the Reading Room) in Clapham for a pre dinner drink.

Tim Josephy cycled up Long Lane to Thieve's Moss, descending to Austwick and back to Clapham. Passing the Lake House he was waylaid and found a large contingent of Wayfarers and YRC in residence.



Ingleborough and Thieves Moss

Saturday saw just about everyone out on or under the fells. Martyn Trasler potted around the hut and prepared the evening repast. Alan Clare, who is waiting for a new hip next month and currently is not very mobile, along with John Lloyd went to inspect the Archimedes screw in the River Ribble at Settle. This machine, using 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC technology was installed in 2010 to generate electricity but owing to the extremely low water flow rate was not operating.

Two Wayfarers, Mark and Will, went to Kingsdale. Rain, possibly heavy, was forecast and anticipating rapid run off should that occur they were reluctant to commit to any serious caving. They went to Yordas Cave and descended all the entrances including Yordas Pot. They then went to the Valley Entrance and spent an entertaining hour or two rigging the roof traverse above the master cave. They were rather disappointed that no rain arrived so their caution was unnecessary. Still, better safe than sorry.

A party of five Wayfarers climbed Ingleborough from Newby Cote, descending past Gaping Gill and the Ingleborough estate.

Bruce Hassell, having had little walking following an operation and wanting an easy day went with Michael Smith on a tour around Oxenber, Wharfewood, Moughton, Whetstone, Sulber Gate then back via Norber and the New Inn. Bruce's easy day at over 22km left him rather dazed and in need of restoration.

Steve Crossley met a local friend and the pair enjoyed an excellent cycle from Malham Tarn along the bridleway to Litton Cote, down the road to Kilnsey Crag then back along Mastiles Lane to the Tarn.

Mick, Wendy, Steve, Conrad and Beverley followed the "5 mile wall" from Scar End up to the summit of Whernside which was thronged with 3 peakers. They picked their way down to the Kingsdale-Dentdale col to pick up the Occupation Road round to the disused quarry, where an unmarked narrow trod leads up the southern edge of Great Combe to its eponymous summit. The County Stone was examined on the descent and the ridge followed almost to Gragareth before cutting down to the Turbary Road for some pothole entrance spotting. After passing Kail Pot they descended through the tiers of limestone pavement back to the car to conclude an excellent walk.



Weary going towards Whernside

Tim followed a mountain bike route called the Ingleborough Round. Up Long Lane to Thieves' Moss, Sulber, Borrins and down to Horton which was overrun with 3 peak support parties. From there a tricky climb was negotiated up the eroded track to Sell Gill Holes then on via High Birkwith, Ling Gill, Gearstone and a welcome tea and bacon roll at Ribblehead.

The final off road section took him under the viaduct and along the lane past Gunnerfleet and Ivescar farms, the surface slowly deteriorating to grass and mud with occasional exposed limestone. Quite testing for a novice rider. Eventually a steep and sometimes rocky descent reached tarmac at Ged Campion's house and all that was left was a cruise along the back road to Newby and Lowstern. At 50 km it sounds impressive until you learn that he had the assistance of a little electric motor.

With the arrival of Arthur Salmon, Frank Wilkinson and Wayfarer Peri Stracchino, 22 sat down to Martyn's three course dinner. Utilising fruit and vegetables from his allotment he gave us cucumber soup, spaghetti Bolognese and fruit crumble which, judging by the speed at which it disappeared was enjoyed by all.

On Sunday Mick, Conrad and Martyn headed over to Hutton Roof for a relaxed circuit of the Craggs through the lovely wooded limestone pavements over to the more open calcareous grassland at Farleton Knott and Holmepark Fell.

They even saw some Speckled Wood butterflies enjoying a late summer fling.



A considerable party of Wayfarers headed off to make a tour of Norber Erratics, Moughton and Crummackdale.

Steve Crossley and Peri went to Giggleswick North to climb whilst Tim repeated Steve's previous day's cycle circuit from Malham Tarn. He dropped in at Giggleswick North on the way back but the climbers were just wrapping up.

Michael Smith, having been away from home for several days set off back but found time to stop near Skipton and traverse Sharp Haw and Rough Haw.

Despite an unpromising forecast, rain didn't appear and mild temperatures apart from on the tops made for very pleasant conditions. We had a very successful and sociable meet enjoyed by all.



Wendy,  
West Coast,  
Hutton Roof



Wendy, Steve,  
Beverley, Mick  
and Conrad

Attending:

Wayfarers: Bruce Hassell, Lynn Thompson, Peri Stracchino, Martin Tomlinson, Clair Wilson, Ian Wilson, Mark Hyde, Steve Crossley, Gary Mellor, Sue Mellor.

YRC: Martyn Trasler, Mick Borroff, Michael Smith, Steve Richards (PM) Wendy Richards (PM), Beverley Eastwood, Conrad Tetley, Tim Josephy, Alan Clare, John Lloyd, Arthur Salmon, Frank Wilkinson.

TJ



Arran was last visited by the club in 2018 and so this meet was very much looked forward to having been postponed twice due to Covid in 2020 and 2021. Nine members and a guest enjoyed the facilities of the Lochranza SYHA at the northern end of the island, with several making their first visit.

### Pre-meet Activities

Mick and Hilary arrived early on Arran on Wednesday evening and warmed up with visits to the Glenashdale Falls and the Giants Graves chambered burial cairns. The Machrie Moor stone circles and standing stones are in a moorland setting with the northern Arran peaks ranged behind and were well worth a visit. This was followed by walk along part of the Arran Coastal Way past a series of caves including the King's Cave in the sandstone cliff of the raised beach and a columnar basalt cliff of the Doon.

Pete and Anne arrived on Thursday ascended Goatfell during the afternoon via the tourist path in fine weather. The views from the summit were amazing.

John and Bob arrived on Thursday, and on Friday they enjoyed a cycle trip around the Northern half of the Island passing south by Sannox, Corrie and the outskirts of Brodick before climbing up "The String" and then descending across to the western coast. On the climb up The String they were intrigued to hear the sounds of distant bagpipes, and this spurred them on to find the source of the music. A lone piper was found to be practicing in a layby near the top of the pass! Cycling up the North West coast in beautiful weather they had sightings of various seabirds, seals perched on rocks close to the shore, and dramatically contorted Dalradian aged rocks. Altogether a recommendable circuit for the diversity of scenery and views on quiet roads.

The rest of the party arrived on Friday evening.

### Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September

Mick, Jamie, Bob and John set off to traverse the North Sannox Horseshoe on a lovely morning in as fine weather as you could wish for. Blue skies, little wind and fantastic views accompanied us for the entire round via Sail an Im, Creag Dubh and Carn Mor topping out after a short scramble on Caisteal Abhail.

Caisteal Abhail



The lunchtime views across to Cir Mhor, Goat Fell and Cioch na h'Oighe were superb. Most of the party were entertained by crossing the deep notch of Ceum na Caillich (the Witch's Step) for the first time before following the ridge over Suidhe Fhearghas and back down to the car park, and on to the Corrie Hotel for a welcome pint after an excellent day.

Chris and Ian opted for a visit to the less frequented Pirnmill Hills and did a round of Beinn Bharrain via the interesting scramble up its north ridge and on to Mullach Buide, Beinn Bhreac and Coire-Fhionn Lochan, then down to Thundergay and along the coast road to Pirnmill.

Harvey caught the bus to Brodick planning a walk into Glen Rosa but couldn't resist the temptation to ascend Goat Fell in the fantastic weather.

Pete and Anne enjoyed a rest day exploring Lochranza and surroundings, spotting red squirrels and deer, and taking in the distillery! Hilary cycled part of the coast path from Lochranza.

Everyone had built up a good appetite, so Hilary's delicious dinner of pate, stuffed chicken breast wrapped in smoked bacon, local Arran and other cheeses followed by apple crumble and vanilla custard was much appreciated.

### **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September**

The forecasted weather brought the prospect of low cloud, rain and gale force winds, so we stuck to low level alternatives.

Chris and Ian decided to visit the Kings Cave on the west coast and also saw the fossilised footprints of a giant reptile that roamed Arran 200 million years ago.

Mick, Jamie, Bob and John walked the Arran Coastal Way from Sannox to Lochranza, past Laggan Cottage and around the Cock of Arran pausing at a number of interesting geological features including the notable Hutton's Unconformity, where brown Carboniferous sandstone overlays much older grey Dalradian schists. A dark red squirrel was seen on the way back.

Pete and Anne also did a coastal walk along the northern shore of the 'Cock of Arran'.

Hilary served us quiche followed by her boeuf bourguignon with garlic bread and veg, more cheese, then tiramisu to finish and was warmly thanked by Chris for her culinary efforts on our behalf.

### **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September**

Most headed for one of the early morning ferries. Mick had an afternoon sailing, so he had time to do a round of the hills above Coire-Fhionn Lochan from Thundergay with good views across Kilbrannan Sound to Kintyre in between some brief rain squalls.

Pete and Anne did some off-road biking in the southern woods via Sliderry, Lamlash, and finishing at Kilmory and the famous Velo Cafe for refreshments.



Caves between  
Machrie and  
Blackwaterfoot



Glenashdale  
Falls



Coire-Fhionn Lochan



Granite tors  
on Caisteal  
Abhail



Fingal's Cauldron Seat  
Machrie Moor

Monolithic  
standing stones  
Machrie Moor



View to Beinn Tarsuinn  
and Ailsa Craig



Seals and cormorants



### Attendees

Mick Borroff, Ian Hawkes, Chris Hilton, Anne Latham, Pete Latham, Harvey Lomas, Jamie Parker, Bob Peckham, John Sutcliffe and Hilary Tearle (G).

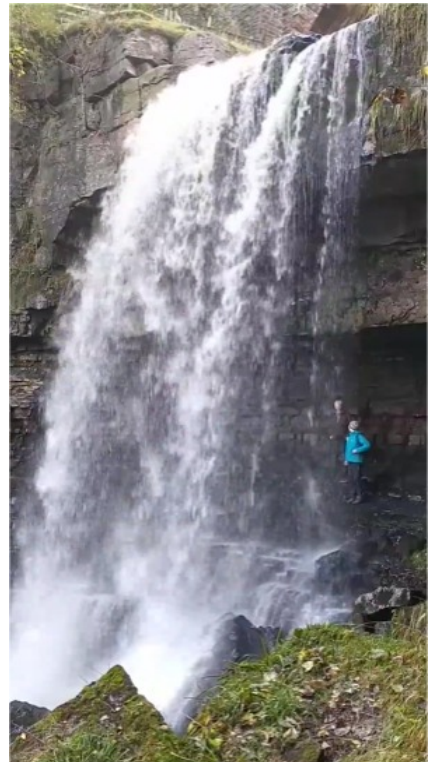
**Pre-meet activities 7th October**

Helen and Michael timed their arrival at Forest-in Teesdale for the start of the dry weather and followed the southern side of the swollen Tees upstream to near Falcon Clints. After crossing Cronkley Fell they used the Pennine Way back to re-cross the Tees. On the way to Hags Bank Bunkhouse, Nenthead, they had a good view of a male black grouse standing on a roadside wall.



Paul and Tamsin visited Ashgill Force where the river, which was in full spate, plunges 55ft from a rock shelf beneath the road bridge. For a bit of extra excitement you can approach through a short cave and walk behind the waterfall - there was too much water to go behind the waterfall and it would have been best to wear full waterproof clothing. Next they visited the Epiacum Roman Fort which has some impressive defensive ditches.

Dining opportunities in the Nenthead area are fairly limited so almost all of us independently ended up at the fish and chip shop in Alston. There were 13 people at the meet; if there had been any more we would have been sitting on each other's laps in the sitting room. Four people from Craven Pothole Club took the small bunk room downstairs.

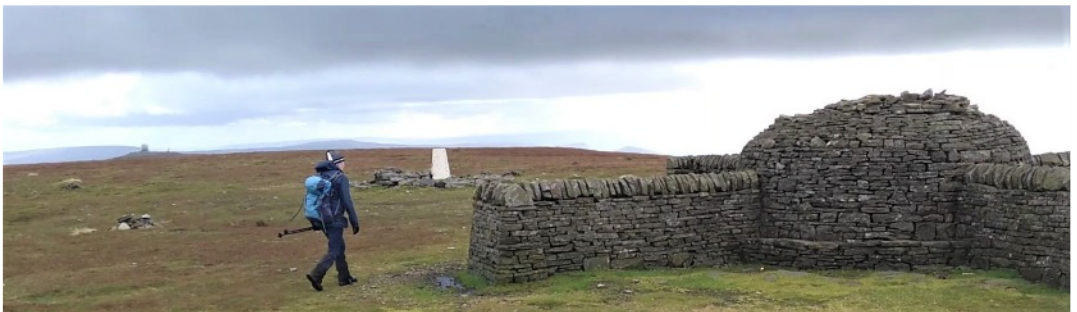


## Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October

Harvey very kindly offered to take Carol, John, Helen B, Conrad, Rory, Tamsin & Paul for a look round Smallcleugh Mine (promising not only to take us in, but to return with a similar number). We geared up in the mines car park at Nenthead, then Harvey, being an active member of the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society led us on a guided tour of some surface features before leading us nonchalantly through a rather ominous low stone arch, under a swinging grating and into passageway which was ankle-deep with water. Silver and zinc were mined as well as lead; unusually (perhaps because the volcanic intrusions which carry the ore flowed between flat limestone strata) the local ore veins run horizontally at different levels. We passed a number of open shafts disappearing down into darkness, with old stopes and ore shafts in the roof at times, eventually reaching a much more open area of levels where small pieces of galena (lead ore) could still be found). Harvey was pleased to find “Hetherington’s crawl” – a long low tunnel cut by the old miners to look for (and find) another big area of ore. On our way back to the entrance we had various diversions to explore side-passages and what seemed to have been a winching area. It was clear that the whole hillside was a maze of shafts and tunnels, but Harvey, as promised, emerged into daylight with all seven followers. The whole expedition was fascinating, and we were fortunate to have such an experienced and knowledgeable guide.

Peter, Michael and Helen made a 25km round of Cross Fell from Garrigill passing Greg’s Hut which was closed for re-roofing. Views from the top were clear in all directions allowing identification of several Lake District hills.

A sloschy return was made from Tees Head. A later “short-cut” east of Black Band was indistinct though leavened by spotting the walls of shooting butts topped with artificial grass.



Tim combined two circular bike trails on his electric mountain bike. Starting on the Alston circuit he passed the miners gearing up in the Nenthead car park and climbed up to cross the moors SW to Garrigill in the South Tyne valley. Reaching the Penrith road soon after he turned NW and made a tough 3 mile ascent to Hartside Top, all into a strong headwind.

The Hartside Loop was almost all off road, boggy at first but with some exhilarating descents. If he'd bothered to use the right glasses when planning the route he wouldn't have been quite so surprised by the steepness of the return to the start. The 5 mile descent back to Alston was completed without turning a pedal!

After a restorative sausage roll from the excellent deli in the Spar in Alston, another very steep climb led to the finishing stretch along a delightful series of lanes high above the Nent Valley: 36 miles and over 5000ft of ascent. Both battery and legs were exhausted by the end.

There were a number of short post-mine walks; Rory had a short walk over the tops above Hags Bank for views and a look at another disused mine.

Tamsin and Paul patrolled a section of Hadrian's Wall above Haltwhistle.



The Wall

The evening meal was cooked by Rory. Earlier in the day, sounds of approval could be heard coming from the kitchen... "*Bangers and Mash!! Oh great!!!*". It was well worth the wait.

Michael gave us a pre-dinner performance describing, with actions, how we should collect our food, emphasising how many sausages we should help ourselves to. The bangers, which Rory had bought from his local bakery (not butchers) and were deliciously spicy and cooked to perfection, were served with mash, carrots, cabbage and gravy.

Pudding was apple pie (bought from the local co-op in Alston) with cream, and there was enough left over to feed the four Craven Pothole Club members.



## Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October

Harvey conducted Tim and Conrad around part of the Rampgill mine, the entrance of which is conveniently located right in the car park.

After plenty of wading, some just above welly height in a beautifully walled horse level they found the old horse gin, a horizontal winding drum built to service a nearby shaft.



On the return, Whisky Junction with its collection of old bottles was visited before a slow exit was made admiring the calcite formations.

Helen S & B with Peter and Michael first visited Ashgill Force then walked from Alston, along the Pennine Way to the aforementioned Roman Fort and back alongside the South Tynedale narrow-gauge railway.

Tamsin & Paul did a circular walk over the summit of Cross Fell from Kirkland on the western side. Rory had a short walk in Weardale on the way home.



Gildersdale  
Burn





### Tees Head

Thank you to Rory for providing the Saturday evening meal and to Harvey for the Nenthead Mine guided tours. TS



Attendees:  
Rory Newman, Tim Josephy,  
Helen Smith, Michael Smith,  
Conrad Tetley, Harvey Lomas,  
Pete Bann (PM), Helen  
Brewitt, Carol Whalley, John  
Whalley, Paul Magson, Tamsin  
Spain.

Home on Sunday evening, after a few reviving cups of tea, a meal and a good soak in a hot bath your scribe considered this a good weekend's walking. There were times though on Saturday and Sunday when, soaked, rain-lashed and sliding about on sodden slopes, my evaluation would have been less rosy.

Early arrivers at The Smithy by the north end of Thirlmere on Friday got the best of the weekend's weather. Helen and Michael walked north from The Smithy for an afternoon on Wren Crag and High Rigg, returning just above St John's Beck. Wendy and Steve headed off in the same direction for some intensive close navigation practice ahead of a hillwalking group leadership assessment. They remained on the hill long after dark, not on account of being lost but to try some night navigation.

After SRT practice on the YSS's Helwith Bridge wall, Tamsin and Paul walked out to about half way down the west side of Thirlmere, and back.

Beverley and Conrad decided a leisurely trip to Keswick would be a good way to start the trip. Indeed, 'leisurely' was the operative word when it came to the speed of service at the fish and chip shop and reminiscent of the one visited in Alston on the last meet. Nevermind, the tasty Cumberland beer made up for the wait.

Meanwhile, Tim was delayed by long tailbacks on the M6.

After eating our various meals, conversation, tea and beer all flowed as the nine sat around the wood-burning stove. Other members would have liked to join the meet but nine is a sensible limit given the size of this once water board engineering workshop.

Helvellyn was the main attraction on Saturday. The dry start perhaps led some to hope the forecast rain and strong winds had headed elsewhere but they had not. Tim's taxi service dropped the Smiths off at Dunmail Raise for a traverse from Grisedale Tarn north to Raise and a descent via Sticks Pass.

Tim skirted Thirlmere, succumbed to the lure of the fells and headed up Brown Cove to take the ridge north with the wind now largely from behind him, He too descend Sticks Pass. Paul and Tamsin worked the other way round, up Sticks Pass encountering the Smiths just north of Helvellyn then Tim a few minutes later. They descended Brown Cove to return alongside Thirlmere.

The Richards with Conrad and Beverley, heeded the bad weather warning and circumnavigated Thirlmere clockwise. Their challenge was dealing with road and path closures necessitating abandonment of the normal route to improvise a way through fallen trees.



Much needed water flowing into Thirlmere and below

At one point, two had to lift a barrier to allow the others to squirm through the 40cm gap created. Whilst the walk couldn't be described as epic in terms of altitude and risk, there were nevertheless some wonderful sights to be had, including a peregrine and some well-proportioned fungi.

Wendy's navigation skills were first class, and all arrived back at the hut in good spirits.

After all these exertions, the log fire, mugs of tea and a slice of Steve's home-made fruitcake were most welcome. Later Helen's baked potatoes with beef stew and peas were followed by fruit pies and custard. Cheese and biscuits capped off the meal.

A sign that the various governmental restrictions and self-imposed cautionary approach to travel arising from the Covid pandemic are lifting was the evening's discussion of potential trips to Bavaria and Bolivia.



Overnight, the small but effective drying room did a good job despite being packed with soaked gear. At least three litres of water were removed from our kit and even boots substantially dried.

Sunday's forecast was no better though. Their hopes were pinned on the mention that the northeast of the Lakes would have the best of the conditions.

Best is not necessarily that good.



Skirting Scales Fell



Pausing below Scales Fell

HS, MS, PM, TS, WR

Smiths, Richards, Paul and Tamsin parked by Scales and headed for Blencathra's Sharp Edge. Buffeted by strong gusts and steadily sprinkled with increasingly heavy rain, all but Paul retreated to Scales Tarn and headed up to Hall's Fell Top.

No sooner had they reached the level ground and caught their breath than Paul emerged from the cloud. He couldn't recall a time when there was so little friction as this day despite having ascended Sharp Edge several times in both verglas and ice conditions. Lacking the technology enjoyed by earlier generations (plimsoles beneath thick socks) he'd resorted to the old Reverse Posterior Shuffle technique to avoid sliding into the awaiting abyss.

At this point he encountered a stray and slightly distressed walker who had deployed a similar technique in descent. Paul accompanied him to within sight of the path before re-ascending.

Beyond the top of Blencathra the stronger wind increased their wetting and all haste was made southwest along the ridge pausing only to answer a few groups' navigation queries.

Heading back east along the foot of the fells was thankfully easier in calmer conditions and even a short spell of sunshine.

The descent of the rock step above Doddick Gill required care.

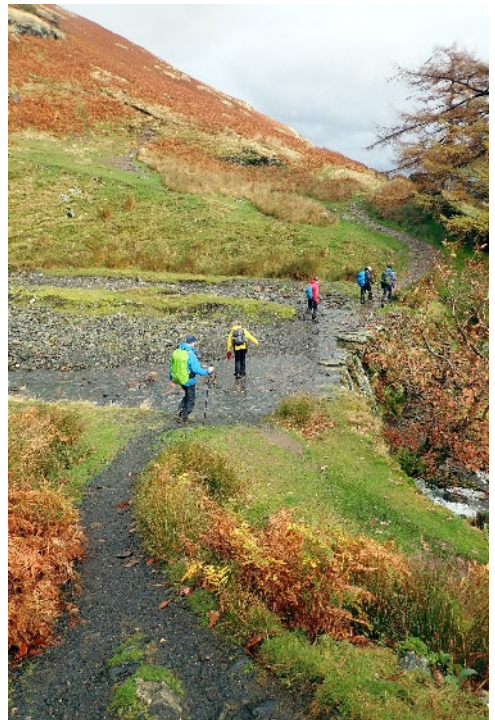
Tim headed off to Whinlatter with his electric mountain bike and spent a pleasant hour or two on the forest roads. Having reached the end of half-term break, Conrad and Beverley headed home to prepare for the rest of term.

So, despite the weather the meet saw plenty of activity. Thanks go to the Gritstone Club for the use of their hut and to Helen for the catering.

MS

Attendees:

Beverley Eastwood  
Tim Josephy  
Paul Magson  
Steve Richards (PM)  
Wendy Richards (PM)  
Helen Smith  
Michael Smith  
Tamsin Spain  
Conrad Tetley



Splashing back east above Threlkeld

# Deadly Climbs and Dangerous Summits

Imogen  
Campion

## Why Mountaineers and Climbers Deem it Worth the Risk

At 8,000 metres, you will begin to die.

The lack of oxygen means your brain may swell impairing your ability to make informed decisions while reducing your level of consciousness. The vessels in your eyes are likely to burst, which is preferable to 'snow blindness', described as feeling like serrated needles piercing the eyes. At such altitudes your lungs may fill with liquid, putting you at risk of drowning in your own bodily fluids, and finally your blood will thicken, increasing the risk of a stroke, heart attack and cardiac arrest.

Aside from other external objective dangers such as falling seracs, avalanches and crevasses, these are just some of the ways the mountains will try to kill you if you subject yourself to the rigours of conquering one that lies within the death zone.



Nirmal Purja

The element of risk and danger that pervades the mountains, doesn't faze Nirmal, "Giving up is not in the blood" he says.

K2

Despite all these factors, Nepalese mountaineer Nirmal Purja, summited K2 in winter without supplementary oxygen. He and his team stood triumphant on the summit at 16:45 local time on January 16th 2021.

'The savage mountain' which claims one life in every four attempts, was the last of the 14 peaks left unconquered in winter; it was the ultimate mountaineering prize.





As an ex-Ghurkha and retired member of the SBS, Nirmal applies the same philosophies he felt during his time on the battlefield to being in the mountains: "I don't care what happens to me, I care about the mission. Your vision must be bigger than you, don't let anyone tell you you're impossible" says Nirmal.

Initially all 14 8,000 metre peaks were summited in the summer months beginning in 1950, with the race taking a total of 14 years to complete. In comparison it has taken almost 41 years to match this feat in winter.

In the mountaineering world, there is a very fine line between insanity and bravery and this momentous win for the all-Nepalese team, blurred those boundaries. Understanding why climbers and mountaineers risk their lives in pursuit of such feats, remains an elusive question. Nirmal has defied what was initially thought humanly impossible in the world of mountaineering.

He currently holds the title for summiting all 14 peaks in six months and six days flooring the previous record of nearly eight years. The tantalising documentary following his incredible feat was released on Netflix on the 29th of November 2021, since then he has gained over a million followers on Instagram and been awarded an MBE.

Experienced climbers and fabled friends, Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders have arguably the most admirable inventory of first ascents of all British Mountaineers. They feature in the newly released film *The Second Summit* which premiered in November 2021, it charts the climbers' journey of taking on a new mountain, Chombu, in Sikkim Himalaya, despite not having climbed together for 29 years.

A study conducted on OnePoll, surveyed 2,000 adults revealing that once people reach their mid-thirties, they generally lose their sense of adventure with more of an awareness of danger. 36% of people find risk taking less appealing with age and have different priorities such as their careers and starting a family.

Saunders however, president of the Alpine Club reflects on how with age his views have changed to be polar opposite, "logically, the older you get the less you have to risk in terms of what's remaining in your life. So, as you get older you should be less risk averse" he says.

Having summited Everest six times his perception of risk is a straightforward one: "If you compare being a mountaineer and keeping going as you get older, it's probably no riskier than staying at home, having a beer, getting fat and putting your feet up."

Fowler however, voted 'mountaineers' mountaineer' by the Observer has slightly different views and said: "There's a lot of judgement involved in terms of risk. Whether a slope will avalanche or whether a serac will collapse is out of your control, but where you are on the mountain is not."

As an experienced climber, Fowler acknowledges that personal insight has been pivotal in his experiences: "When I got married and had children, I became more aware of the risks and tried harder to avoid them.

When I was younger, I spent a lot of time under ice cliffs and seracs, and now I make an effort not to" he adds.

Eric Brymer has studied Extreme Sports from a phenomenological perspective, through the structure of experience and consciousness. Current professor at Leeds Beckett University, consultant and researcher, Brymer believes that those who partake in extreme sports have "extraordinary, transcendent experiences, and most people look at mountaineers from a perspective that 'they are different to us', research shows that we are judging these people already as risk takers" says Brymer, before we know anything about them or the sport.

A study by Frontiers found that idea of risk is more prevalent amongst less experienced climbers than it is amongst experienced personnel, allowing for people to "make judgements on things they don't necessarily know a great deal about," says Brymer and "if you didn't know a lot about mountaineering, you may be surprised to know that mountaineers are very safety conscious"

He adds, and "[as a society], we've done a very good job at designing our environments to minimise risks, but as a result, we've lost the aspect of what it means to be human" he says.

Brymer believes that as a mountaineer or climber, you're more likely to be connected to nature and when climbing Everest, "you may be perceived to be conquering the mountain, but most people who climb Everest would say you can't conquer a mountain, you have to work with it. The aim is not to get to the top but to get back down safely" he says.

The concept that all mountaineers and climbers are of a certain type is an inaccurate one, "characteristics don't dictate why you start, they don't even dictate why you continue, but they might influence what you do whilst you're there and the decisions you make" says Brymer.

Extreme sports offer much more to an individual in terms of mental health and fulfilling experiences and an article published in Sage journals on Humanistic Psychology found that the participation in extreme sports allows individuals to develop courage, self-awareness and humility.

"Traditional sport is governed by rules and regulations, so you know when you've achieved because you've scored a goal or won a match. Success is measured very differently [in extreme sports]" says Brymer. "For some people its fundamental to who they are and what it means to be human" he adds.

# A Night Out To Remember

David  
Stembridge

## 60 Years Ago In The Alps

Just recently I came across a collection of diaries that I had kept in my lifetime, one of which included a holiday I had spent in 1962, exactly 60 years ago, climbing in the Alps with fellow YRC members F. David Smith, C. Roger Allen and John Varney. My diary reminded me of the desperate circumstances in which we were forced to spend the night twenty feet below the summit during a traverse of the Aiguille du Grepon that extended over 40 hours, an expedition that I have never forgotten. Much of my story comes almost word for word from the diary I wrote at the time.

It was Friday 13 July so we might have known that our plan to reach the Refuge du Couvercle, the best-placed hut from which to tackle the Aiguille du Grepon the following day, would founder. It did. According to my diary, we spent longer than intended replenishing supplies in Chamonix that afternoon and, not realising that my watch was running half an hour slow, missed the 4.20 pm railway up to Montanvers before starting the three-hour trek up the Mer de Glace as intended. Catching the next and last train at 5.00 pm meant that by the time we reached Montanvers it was too late for us to reach the Couvercle before darkness so feeling somewhat disgruntled we settled in at the Montanvers 'Hut' - a scruffy little annexe next to the hotel. Some French lads joined us and we were in bed by 9.00 pm.

Up at 2.00 am on Saturday 14 July with the summits of both the Grands Charmoz and the Grepon clear against the night sky. We were away from the hut by 2.50 am - a good start, and before the French party, although some confusion in the dark over the best path to the moraine leading to the foot of the Nantillons Glacier let them overtake us. We found the glacier to be heavily crevassed and after scaling its 'Rognon' reached the foot of the couloir which divides the Grands Charmoz from the Grepon at 6.30 am. Here we left all our crampons and two ice axes. By then it was quite a fine dawn with the summits still clear but some dubious cloud about.

The climb up the couloir to the Charmoz-Grepon col was fairly easy with one or two tricky bits. I climbed with Smith, and Allen and Varney were on the other rope. Reached the col at about 9.15 am, ready for a brief third breakfast which we enjoyed at a point where we had a glorious view across the Mer de Glace below, despite more cloud, starting to develop. At that point we thought we must be well within reach of the summit of the Grepon, but how wrong we were!

An easy traverse took us across to the notoriously difficult 'Mummery Crack' but in a strengthening wind, we had a very cold wait while the French party negotiated that, taking a long time. Following on, Allen made numerous unsuccessful attempts before belaying and allowing Smith to lead through and eventually succeeding. Varney and I followed and found it to be a very awkward crack indeed - a very high Grade IV - and I don't know how Allen or Smith managed to lead it. The whole exercise must have taken us a couple of hours at least.

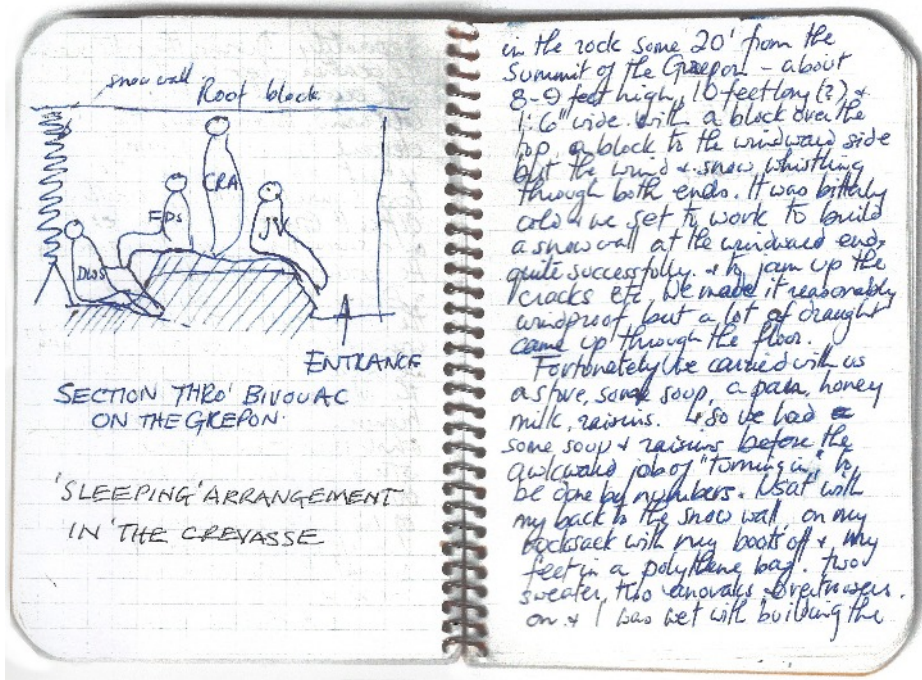
Unfortunately, our troubles were not over as we proceeded via a series of similarly strenuous cracks, grooves and traverses before being delayed yet again by a rappel rope that had stuck and took ages to release. Allen and Smith did some magnificent leading on pitches I found very difficult going second on the rope. Often, we had to haul our sacks up separately. It was all slow going.

During the afternoon the weather closed in, to thick cloud with occasional breaks and a bitterly cold wind. By then retreat was no longer an option since our easiest descent lay by going over the summit. The final crack was another difficult Grade IV and Allen led it very courageously in a snowstorm and reached the four-foot metal Madonna. It was 6.00 pm when Smith set out to follow him.

At that moment the storm broke - thunder, lightning, wind and snow - and from the summit, it was decided we must bivouac immediately. The Madonna on the summit was humming, and so was the whole mountain. First Smith and then Allen were struck by lightning during the rapid descent, feeling they had been kicked in the small of the back, but saved from further harm by the Vibram-soled boots they were wearing as they roped down very quickly to what was known as 'The Crevasse', having left a double rope attached to the summit for an ascent in the morning.

The Crevasse was a tunnel in the rock between either side of the summit of the Grepon with its entrance some 20 feet below the latter. It was about 8-9 feet high, 10 feet long and 18-24 inches wide with a slab forming a roof and a block to the windward side but not enough to prevent the wind and snow whistling through both ends. It was bitterly cold and Smith and I set to work to build a snow wall and jam up cracks at the windward end quite successfully. We made it as windproof as we could in cramped conditions but a lot of draughts still came up through the floor.

Fortunately, and as a result of us having been benighted without food previously, we carried with us a camping stove, some packet soup, a pan, honey, dried milk and raisins. So we each had a cup of warming soup and some raisins before the awkward job of 'turning in' for the night which had to be done by numbers. I sat on my rucksack with my back to the snow wall, with my boots off and feet in a polythene bag, wearing two sweaters, two anoraks and overtrousers. I was wet from building the wall and still cold. Smith sat facing me, our legs entangled. Varney sat facing the entrance, while poor Allen had no room to sit down and unselfishly stood throughout our ordeal. Below is the diagram in my diary showing how we spent our 'night out to remember'. It was terribly cramped and the wall on one side was running with water, but it was still a good shelter against the terrific storm that besieged us during the night.



### Sleeping' arrangements in 'The Crevasse'

We 'slept' intermittently and stirred at about 4.00 am and managed to brew up some milk and honey; very cheering to our cold souls. Nodded off again until about 6.00 am when we had another brew and agonisingly got dressed one by one. My boots had ice on the inside walls and had to be melted over the stove. Eventually, we left 'The Crevasse' feeling cold and stiff at about 7.30 am, to a dawn of mixed sun and cloud, a biting wind, heavily frozen rock and fairish cover of new snow. Tackled the last pitch to the summit immediately, a difficult start on frozen holds. Allen eventually reached the Madonna while the remainder of us tied overhand knots in the fixed rope we had left to help us. Even then it was very demanding.

From the summit, we were able to abseil down the sheer face on the Mer de Glace side of the mountain and the infamous 'Knobel Crack' (Grade V when ascending from that side) to arrive on a comparatively warm ledge where we ate the remains of our milk and honey. The descent was still very awkward due to snow and ice on what should have been easy gullies, and it took us until 3.30 pm to reach the Col de Nantillon. The views were wonderful with clouds below and mixed weather on the mountain, but it remained bitterly cold.

As we had left 2 ice-axes and crampons at the bottom of the couloir we had climbed, we slushed down to collect them and then wearily slipped and slithered down to the path to Montanvers and eventually reached the hut around 6.30 pm, having been out for a total of nearly forty hours. Decided to stay there overnight. Enjoyed a good meal and early bed. My fingers were terribly sore with cuts and bruises and my knees and legs the same. Otherwise, I felt fine. At least no one could accuse the YRC of being fair-weather climbers! Certainly, 'a night out to remember'.

Members filled all the rooms at the Hotel, a couple of nearby houses and over half the beds at Lowstern.

Walking activities over the weekend were varied. Short rounds were completed near Keasden, Norber from Clapham, Hornby and Wray, Ribbleshead and the Ingleton waterfalls.

Then twenty on Sunday started the official walk at 10 am from Austwick, led by Becca.

The route took in Norber and Sulber Gate to Thieves Moss, went east along the scar top followed by a descent to Moughton Whetstone Hole and Wharfe.

From there some returned via Wood Lane, others via Feizor.



Walking along the scar top



Crummack Dale



Michael Smith over Washtub

Fourteen finished off the weekend with tea and Ye Old Naked Man scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam back at Lowstern, making plans for future meets in Austria, Bolivia and Scotland.

Similar discussions have probably concluded the 107 previous Dinners and have certainly littered all the Club's 130 years.

Long may they continue to do so.

# Club Proceedings

During the last twelve months we have welcomed ten new Members. With six resignations, in most cases owing to increasing age or ill-health, and sadly four deaths, we end the year with 161 Members.

The nature of the Club has changed. We used to join in our most active years and build friendships such that most members stayed in the Club until they passed away, reading the exploits of others in the Journal and attending the occasional dinner. Now that many members join later in life there is an increase in the number resigning when no longer active.

The plus side is that the Club has to pay less to the BMC for insurance. The way things are structured even when completely inactive the BMC requires that all members are insured through them. Inactive older members often contact me saying how much they value the journal as a way of feeling still involved but they can have their subscriptions reduced by 50% which no longer covers the cost of producing the journal and this insurance. They have though over the years, contributed to the reserves we have and with members joining later in life the number of life members is dropping away.

Editor

## Annual General Meeting

Held before the dinner again, and, due to limited space at the Falcon Manor Hotel, at the Settle Social Club. Dry mild weather over the weekend made moving to and fro easier than it might have been.

Officers reports had been circulated and the Treasurer presented the accounts which were showing a loss at LHG largely down to repairs which presumably will not need to be done again for some time. However, electricity jumped substantially and the hut fees would have to be increased to reflect this.

It was thought this hut should at least cover its costs as it nears the end of its lease and we will face a hike in the rental twice before the lease ends.

It was said that now that the track had been repaired more members needed to use the hut more often.

The situation regarding the lease with NT was discussed and a suggestion made that it should be renewed early. The present lease expired in September 2031 and there was concern that if a new lease was taken out before the current one expired, the most likely outcome would simply be an uplift in our rent. In the year before expiry the Committee of the day will need to prepare thoroughly a negotiating position in an attempt to renew our lease under similar terms and cost.



It was noted that the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the YRC's use of LHG will come up in 2025 and a suitable celebration should be organised.

Elections to the various roles in the Club were held with the following elected

<b>President</b>	Rebecca Humphreys
<b>Vice President</b>	Conrad Tetley
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	John Brown
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Martyn Trasler
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Mick Borroff
<b>Huts Booking Secretary</b>	Richard Josephy
<b>Joint-Wardens Low Hall Garth</b>	Alister Renton and Ged Campion
<b>Warden Lowstern</b>	Richard Sealey

**Other members of the Committee**

Robert Crowther, Chris Hilton, Harvey Lomas, Rory Newman

**Other roles:**

<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Helen Smith
<b>Meets Secretary</b>	Tim Josephy
<b>Editor</b>	Roy Denney
<b>Librarian</b>	Arthur Salmon
<b>Archivist</b>	Alan Linford
<b>Hon. Auditor</b>	Richard Taylor
<b>Tacklemaster</b>	Ged Campion
<b>Webmaster</b>	Andy Syme

Members also represent the Club with various outside bodies.

After the AGM, Chief Guest to the Dinner, Adele Pennington gave an entertaining account of her 'Operation Scottish Classic Rock' – cycling to climb all 26 Scottish routes in Ken Wilson's Classic Rock book, in a single journey during the summer of 2021. Thanks to copious 'bum butter' (best not to ask), eight friends as climbing partners and campervan and portering support by Jim Hall, Adele managed it in just 45 days including seven rest days. That's 1150km and 12,400m of ascent cycled, 4,830m pitched climbing, just one leader fall, and 336km walking including traversing the Cullin Ridge.

Thankfully, there were no injuries only two rockfall-trashed ropes and three ripped jackets.

## **The Retiring President - John Brown**

Coming to the end of my final year, I can look back with interest of the turbulence in the world, Covid restrictions, war, increasing costs for us all, but through all this the club has weathered these storms with little disturbance apart for some need to increase our hut fees. The club managed an active year, especially the 130 tops that we successfully completed in the early part of the year. I enjoyed my walks across the tops in Swaledale. This was a good effort and well done to all those that managed to take part and to Michael Smith for the organisation of the task, and the recording the activity.

We have had another good year for membership, and thanks go to Helen Smith who has managed the membership successes. The strength of any club is its members.

This year we had attendance at the MAM Dinner, the Gritstone Club Centenary Dinner and Bradford Pothole Club Dinner.

Our huts are the jewel in the crown and my thanks go to Richard Sealey, Ged Campion and Alistair Renton who look after Lowstern and LHG. We now have a contractor in place to start the renovations in the washrooms at Lowstern and my thanks go to all those that have taken part in the designs and the management of this. It is going to be a great asset for the future.

I hope members are pleased with the outcome, with a start date early in the spring of 2023.

My thanks go to Tim Josephy for the booking of the meets and providing a list for us to consider. This task is becoming more onerous as we must book so far in advance to ensure we can go to the places we all love.

Another important element of the meets is those members that are willing to organise the catering for the meets. So, if you can please do support this as it makes the meet run smoothly and helps to get people on the hill quickly in the morning.

I would like to thank Roy Denney for the many years that he has provided the journal, Roy feels this is probably his last year so going forward we will need to find another person to take this on. I hope those that contribute now will continue to do so for whoever takes this task on in the future.

It is a lifeline for those less-active members giving them an update to what is achieved.

Many members give up their time to aid the smooth running of the Club and I wish to thank them all on your behalf, with a special mention to Michael Smith for organising this year's dinner and all those previous years he has taken this on.

Martyn Trasler for the work he does on our behalf keeping the accounts in order and to Mick Borroff for all the help and guidance he has given me in this role. I would also like to thank Richard Josephy for all his efforts in managing our hut bookings and liaising with all the other clubs making reservations – this is a role he first took on in 1998!

It has been busy year for the Committee, so just in case I have not mentioned people by name, I would like to thank the whole Committee for their support over the last two years.

It has been a challenging time but we got there in the end.

# The Dinner

The 108<sup>th</sup> Annual dinner in our 130<sup>th</sup> year was back at the Falcon Manor again with the weekend a blend of the traditional and the new. Kindred Clubs were again invited to send representatives and the event ended with the singing of Yorkshire, first heard in 1909. Becca our new president is a third-generation member of the Club and was accompanied by fourth-generation, Suki. Incidentally, there were three generations of Salmons present and the three generations of Crowthers attending who were all members of the Club.

The Dinner was attended by 47 members and 16 guests including Andrew Hinde representing the Gritstone Club who is also secretary of the Council of Northern Caving Clubs.

David Large as MC kept the evening running smoothly to Michael Smith's schedule.

Attending the dinner:

Adele Pennington (Chief Guest)  
Andrew Hinde (Gritstone Club)

David Booker-Smith  
Fiona Booker-Smith  
Mick Borroff  
John Brown  
Derek Bush  
Ged Campion  
Peter Chadwick  
Ian Crowther  
Michael Crowther  
Robert Crowther  
Anne Dover (G, pianist)  
Paul Dover  
Karen Dyer (G)  
Beverley Eastwood  
Iain Gilmour  
Sarah Gilmour (G)  
Jim Hall (G)  
David Handley  
David Hick  
Alan Hinkes O.B.E.  
Jason Humphreys  
Rebecca Humphreys  
Suki Humphreys (JPM)  
Fiona Humphreys (G)  
Judy Humphreys (G)

John Jenkin  
Tim Josephy  
Geraldine Lally (G)  
David Large  
Alan Linford  
Angela Linford (G)  
Anne Lofthouse  
Harvey Lomas  
Malcolm Lynch  
Christine Marriott  
John Middleton  
Valerie Middleton (G)  
Conrad Murphy (G)  
Rory Newman  
Aaron Oakes  
Jamie Parker  
Steve Richards  
Wendy Richards

Felicity Roberts  
Ann Salmon  
Arthur Salmon  
Barbara Salmon  
Trevor Salmon  
Helen Smith  
Michael Smith  
Richard Smith  
Rod Smith  
Yayoi Smith  
Simon Snowden (G)  
Richard Taylor  
Conrad Tetley  
Martyn Trasler  
Carol Whalley  
John Whalley  
Charles Wilkinson (G)  
Frank Wilkinson



## The Way Ahead - The New President

Timings on the plans to upgrade the washroom facilities at Lowstern have stalled at the moment. We are hoping for a revised timetable in the New Year. We have received some great feedback on the layouts which we will be incorporating into the plans. Once we have a revised timetable we will provide a more detailed update on the project overall.

As part of my tenure as President, I also want to investigate how we might increase the resilience of Lowstern given the changes in the energy market we have witnessed recently. I intend to outline these concepts in the New Year.



Becca Humphreys

Members of the Committee have represented the Club at our kindred clubs annual dinners including the Craven Pothole Club and the Wayfarers. We have also extended the hand of friendship to the Gritstone Club with a joint meet planned for the North Yorks Moors meet in October 2023. I for one hope that this might become a fixture for future meets calendars.

That rather neatly brings me to our own meets calendar. The programme for 2023 has been published and is available from the website so it is time to turn our attention to 2024. Where would you like to see the club organising meets in 2024? Michael Smith is working on plans for a trip to Bolivia but the scope for other destinations remains wide open. We (the Meets Committee) are always keen to hear from members about locations that are of interest but rarely get much of a response. So, let me try to get the ball rolling with some of my ideas:

- \* Knoydart - perhaps a pre-midge season camping expedition? or a multiday backpacking?
- \* Sweden - all options from skiing to trekking
- \* Himalayas - perhaps with a view to both climbing and trekking

My challenge to you all is to contribute at least one location in the UK, mainland Europe and elsewhere to the meets committee to give us some ideas of meets going forward. This does not mean you are committing to organising anything but gives us a steer as to what is of interest to club members. All suggestions to Tim Josephy please.

Naturally, without meet leaders we can make all the plans in the world, that will come to naught.

If you have thought that perhaps you would like to take the helm of one of our meets, please drop me a line. It does not have to be an onerous task and there are plenty of experienced hands that can advise.

BH

## The Journal

I have every edition of the Club's journal and this is the 91<sup>st</sup> edition, in our 131<sup>st</sup> year. Some journals covered several years when things interfered like world wars. For most of the time it was annual as it is now, but for a period there were two a year. In all those years we have only had eight editors and I have now done thirty editions. I will do 2023 making it twenty years doing so, to allow somebody to shadow me and prepare to take over after that.

It is fascinating to see how they have evolved starting as a staid, bald list of what they had done with no meet reports; just articles, through to today's full colour booklet. For a period as the Bulletin and for a few years afterwards, it was part newsletter as well.

As it goes into a large number of libraries including the British Library it is not only a permanent record of our activities but a useful research tool both for historians including TV documentary makers but also for people planning expeditions to remote places we have been to as a club or as members. Without considerable thought or detailed research, I am not sure what countries we have not got some record of.

As a Club we have a long tradition underground and exploring distant parts and climbing anything we can get to but the one thing absolutely essential is some remaining natural wild places to go to. As they come under increasing threat our records can play a small part in showing how things were, and highlighting how they are changing.

We have botanists, geologists and ornithologists amongst us but most of us have a better-than-average knowledge of such things and can help record them for posterity.

I am frequently described as a conservationist as I suspect many other members are, but I do not consider that enough.

In my youth people talked of the three Rs (Reading Riting and Rithmetic). I now think Research, Record, Repair, Restore, Replace, Re-wild. I am a campaigner for the environment and the ecology of the places we like to spend our time but conservation is not enough we need to undo the damage already done. Most of our articles are partly a record of what we have seen on our travels and we do also carry articles purely on the environment or ecosystems.

We can demonstrate shrinking glaciers, fading cultures etc., without taking away any of the enjoyment of our sporting endeavours.

The aim of the Club is to organise walking, skiing and mountaineering excursions, to encourage the exploration of caves and pot-holes and the pursuit of other similar outdoor activities. We not only enjoy these endeavours but also conduct expeditions to remote parts of the planet gathering and promotion knowledge of natural history, archaeology, geology, folklore and other kindred subjects and recording such findings in articles published in the journal. They also appear on our website where photographs look more dramatic but the journals are and enduring record.

*Roy Denney*

# Chippings

## Geo and Bio and Geomorphodiversity

The UNESCO General Assembly in Paris unanimously approved a proposal to make October 6th of every year International Geodiversity Day. It is intended that the day will be used to promote the importance of geomorphodiversity, geoeducation, geodiversity and sustainable development, and general geoscience public & policy engagement.

Geodiversity is the variety of the non-living parts of nature, and as such includes rocks, fossils, soils, rivers, landscapes, and all the processes that make, evolve, and destroy these features. Geodiversity has for some time lived in the shadow of its relative – biodiversity – but it is hoped that IGD will raise the profile so that it is more widely recognised that nature is formed of two interconnected parts (bio and geo) and that conservation cannot be achieved without addressing both.

It is important to note that geodiversity is broad, and not just strictly about rocks and fossils. It is inextricably linked to many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in ways that are often overlooked: e.g. walking in natural landscapes (geo-morpho-diversity) is proven to benefit people's mental health.

## Turdus torquatus

Would you know a ringed ouzel if you saw one. I know some members would but these birds are not widely known or widely distributed. This blackbird with a bib on is slightly smaller than its cousin the blackbird and is mainly a bird of the uplands, where it breeds mainly in steep sided-valleys, crags and gullies.



There are only thought to be about 7000 breeding pairs in Britain but they can be found along the Pennine spine and Scotland with some in Cumbria and North Wales. Two men have been studying them on an area of the North York Moors for over 20 years and have just been awarded then prestigious Marsh Award by the British Trust for Ornithology for their efforts.

## Alpine Club Library

We recently mentioned our member John Colton and his art exhibition put on by the Alpine Club. (YRCJ 2013; 13(15): 22)

The Alpine Club have a wonderful collection and these are examples from a display of works by John Richardson Auldjo 1805 -1886), FRS, FRGS, who was a Canadian-British traveller, geologist, writer and artist. He was British Consul at Geneva.

Since its foundation in 1857, there have always been members of the Alpine Club who have carried sketchbooks into the mountains, keeping a record of their endeavours and the peaks they climbed.

Following its move to Seville Row, the Alpine Club began to hold exhibitions, and an art collection was formed.

With the subsequent move to South Audley Street, members' exhibitions continued, alongside shows of mountain paintings by other dealers and galleries. Since 1991, the Alpine Club has been based at Charlotte Road in Shoreditch, and the collection now numbers around 600 paintings, many of them gifts or donations to the club. These images are taken from their catalogue and as such the captions unfortunately indistinct but they give a flavour of the material on display.

The Ascent of Mont Blanc by John Auldjo's Party in 1827: Sheltering During a Storm.



Auldjo's Party Passing a Crevasse

John Auldjo (1805-1886)

The Alpine Club Collection



The Alpine Club's collection is of considerable artistic and historical importance; it includes work by E. T. Compton, Albert Gos, Gabriel Loppé, Colin Bent Phillip, T. Howard Somervell, John Ruskin and Elijah Walton.

There is also a growing collection of work by contemporary artists, including Julian Cooper and Neil Pittaway.

Everest pioneer Dr Charles Warren donated four watercolours by John Ruskin and left a further three to the Club in his Will.

There is also a substantial holding of watercolours and pastels of Everest made by the surgeon and mountaineer Dr Howard Somervell (1880-1975).

Works from the collection have travelled widely to UK galleries and museums, including Tate Britain and Abbot Hall Gallery, Kendal, and to venues in Berlin, Madrid, Grenoble and Turin.



Monte Viso  
or Monviso



Sunset from Mont Blanc

It would be well worth a visit

## Looking Back

Roy Partington whose poem we published in the last journal accompanied by a couple of photographs of old boots has been remembering old times with the Club. A member of the Grampians he points out that the YRC and the Grampian Club, have been kindred clubs exchanging Journals and Bulletins for very many years.

The Journal makes for me interesting reading and kindles old memories. The link between the Grampian club and the YRC was establish early in the 1960s through the friendship of Cliff Downham and the late hut custodian Donald Green whose old boots featured in the photos.



Our hut in Glen Etive was acquired in 1960 and by chance my wife and I bought our house next to Donald in 1967. I had moved from Manchester to new job and have remained here ever since, and by now long since retired.

Getting to know my neighbour and sharing our mutual interest in the hills soon led to my involvement with Inbhirfhaolain, and to succeed Don in 1980 for a few years.

It was early in the 1970s that I met the YRC on one of their February meets in Glen Etive. We had gone over to hut ( 100 miles from Dundee) for a short weekend stay to attend to a few repairs and see to the restocking of the calor gas from Tyndrum.

I recall a very convivial and lively evening with stove glowing hot beneath drying socks and great company. I met Derek Bush at that time and later had correspondence with him when I was custodian.

A further connection with YRC was through the late Roger Allen a friend of mine here in Dundee, a lecturer in Chemistry and a fine mountaineer, who was killed climbing in Norway. Apart from the hills we shared an interest and enthusiasm for old Volvos.

Your Journal triggered teenage memories from my school day walks from Greenfield, Glossop, and Hayfield on to Bleaklow and Kinderscout. Living in Sale these were my hills of home easily reached by bus and steam train. School excursions took us to Ingleborough and it was interesting to read the record of West Face routes on Ingleborough and Pen-y-Ghent.

It is all a very long time ago, but it spawned a lifelong love of the hills and mountains which my wife and I share still, albeit on lower hills, in weather of our own choosing, and less gruelling ascents. We temper our days to the ageing muscles and creaking bones!

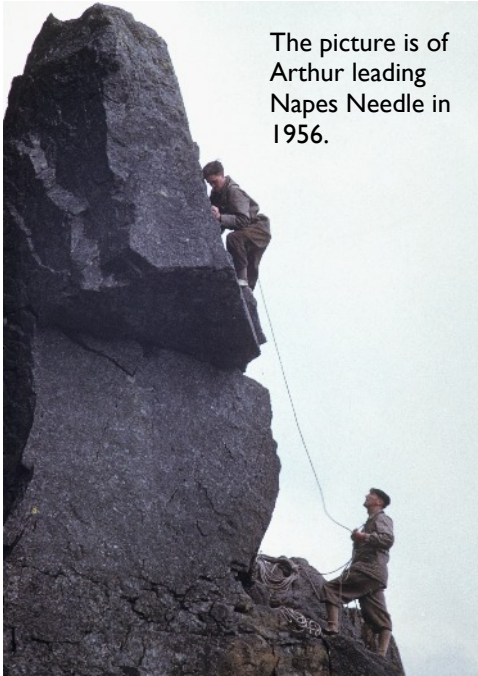
Our club Veterans group, all eight Octogenarians, will be out in March if we're spared as one old member says. Thank you for producing such a fine and interesting Journal.

## **Of Longevity**

Roy Denney met his wife Doreen three years after his first meet with the Club and they celebrated their golden wedding this year planning on visiting Harris but ill health has deferred it to April.

Ken Aldred celebrated 70 years of marriage and we were reporting that unfortunately he and Sheila were by then both in a care home. A few short months later both passed away.

An even longer-serving member, Arthur Tallon, reached his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday this year. Arthur joined the club in 1952 and still pops into meets from time to time.



The picture is of Arthur leading Napes Needle in 1956.

## Whither Shall We Wander ?

We have all visited wilder parts of the globe and marvelled at the diverse flora and fauna. We decry the deforestation and lament the shrinking of glaciers and extinction of species but change closer to home creeps up on us. Boggy moorlands have been drained, wet woodlands and water meadows lost and ponds almost disappeared since the last great war and along with this, many local species.

We marvel at Alpine meadows with their abundance of flowers but when did we last enjoy walking through wildflower meadows here in Britain. Where are the song birds? Farming practices have decimated some populations and other cling on reliant on our suburban gardens.

I recall driving to meets and arriving with my windscreen splattered with insect corpses. No longer! Clean windcreens are all very well but the lack of insects is a major reason birds are suffering but worse than that we need pollinators to secure our food supplies.

We welcome the achievements of completing long distance walks, climbing mountains and seeing what is over that hill but where is the wildlife on every hand in this once green and pleasant land.

There is much talk about the problems bees are having which is of very real concern but butterfly numbers are also down. I have this year also heard it said 'isn't it good that there are few wasps about'. They may at times be a nuisance but they are now one of our main pollinators.

It is a fact that the extreme weather this year was a disaster for them but despite their reputation they are a very necessary part of the eco-system and hopefully they will stage something of a recovery next year. The wasps actually quite like such hot summers as we have just experienced but unfortunately for them a lot of the things they rely on for food, do not. Wasps would rather stay away from people but when hungry they are enticed by what we eat and drink. They are vegetarian but crave sugar hence their raids on cakes when we are eating outdoors and their attraction to alcohols or fruit juices.

Despite what many people think late summer is the safest time to be out amongst these creatures as at that time if the year they stop seeking sugar and hunt insects. They need meat to feed their larvae and get all the sugar they need from the larvae as a bye-product. Autumn they are back on the hunt for sugar but you can keep them away from you by offering counter attractions. Put half an inch of beer or cider in an ashtray a few yards away and they will go for that.

There are certain creatures we love to hate and we tend to create words based on them. We wolf our food; fox other people and some people are described as waspish.

## New National Trail

Wainright's Coast to Coast is being upgraded. Stiles are being removed and replaced by gaps where in arable land but by gates more usually where grazing takes place. Once these works are complete it will be designated our 17<sup>th</sup> National Trail

## Completion of the Munros - Mick Borroff

In September, I finally joined the ranks of the SMC recorded Munro 'compleators' at number 7305. Hilary joined me for the ascent of Ben Na Lap, my final summit and in benign weather we ascended from the usual start at Corrou station and had the mountain to ourselves. While enjoying both the expansive view and a glass of champagne at the summit cairn we were joined by a couple of mountaineering instructors on their day off who recorded the event for posterity.



It has been a lengthy journey taking me some 45 years. It began in March 1977 when as a student attending an Avon Mountaineering Club meet in Glencoe, I completed a traverse of the Aonach Eagach which held a number of firsts for me: first use of axe and crampons, first Scottish winter route and first two Munros! I did not set out to become a hill-bagger, in fact I had climbed 70-odd summits as a mountaineer before I even counted them, but after a while I decided 'completion would be something good to aim for and retirement in 2014 provided the impetus to finish my round. I have enjoyed the experience and the company of numerous people over the years, who I'd like to thank.

## English Coast Path

Progress on this path was slowed during COVID-19 but Natural England now hopes to have all stretches approved and work underway shortly

The current situation is that from Berwick to Hull is all agreed and most already open. as is London to Harwich but the East Anglian coast is patchy so far. The Cumbrian coast, Liverpool to Blackpool and Minehead to Lyme Regis are agreed and largely open but stretches of the channel coast are not yet resolved with other gaps being worked on before this can become an actual continuous path. The Government is still saying it is to be finished this parliament. The latest situation can be found at

[England Coast Path: overview of progress - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/england-coast-path-overview-of-progress)

There are already stretches which could be used for a Club long walk and would be pretty challenging as there is a lot of ups and downs in most stretches.

# England Coast Path - Stretch Progress

11th November 2022

- 1 Aust to Breen Down
- 2 Breen Down to Minehead
- 3 Minehead to Combe Martin
- 4 Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth
- 5 Marsland Mouth to Newquay
- 6 Newquay to Penzance
- 7 Penzance to St Mawes
- 8 St Mawes to Cremyll
- 9 Cremyll to Kingswear
- 10 Kingswear to Lyme Regis
- 11 Lyme Regis to Rufus Castle
- 12 Rufus Castle to Lulworth Cove
- 13 Lulworth Cove to Kimmeridge Bay
- 14 Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe
- 15 Highcliffe to Calshot
- 16 Calshot to Gosport
- 17 Isle of Wight - East Cowes to Wootton Bridge
- 18 Isle of Wight - Wootton Bridge to the Medina
- 19 Gosport to Portsmouth
- 20 Portsmouth to South Hayling Island
- 21 South Hayling Island to East Head
- 22 East Head to Shoreham-by-Sea
- 23 Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne
- 24 Eastbourne to Camber
- 25 Camber to Folkestone
- 26 Folkestone to Ramsgate
- 27 Ramsgate to Whitstable
- 28 Isle of Sheppey
- 29 Whitstable to Iwade
- 30 Iwade to Grain
- 31 Grain to Woolwich
- 32 Tilbury to Southend-on-Sea
- 33 Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island
- 34 Wallasea Island to Burnham-on-Crouch
- 35 Burnham-on-Crouch to Maldon
- 36 Maldon to Salcott
- 37 Mersea Island
- 38 Salcott to Jaywick
- 39 Jaywick to Harwich
- 40 Harwich to Shotley Gate
- 41 Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry
- 42 Felixstowe Ferry to Rawsey
- 43 Bawdsey to Aldeburgh
- 44 Aldeburgh to Hopton On Sea
- 45 Hopton On Sea to Sea Palling
- 46 Sea Palling to Weybourne
- 47 Weybourne to Hunstanton
- 48 Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge
- 49 Sutton Bridge to Skegness
- 50 Skegness to Mablethorpe
- 51 Mablethorpe to Humber Bridge
- 52 Humber Bridge to Easington
- 53 Easington to Filey Brigg
- 54 Filey Brigg to Newport Bridge

- 55 Newport Bridge to North Gare
- 56 North Gare to South Bents
- 57 South Bents to Amble
- 58 Amble to Barnburgh
- 59 Barnburgh to the Scottish Border (including Holy Island)
- 60 Cretna to Allonby
- 61 Allonby to Whitehaven
- 62 Whitehaven to Silcroft
- 63 Silcroft to S Iverdale
- 64 Walney Island
- 65 S Iverdale to Cleveleys
- 66 Cleveleys to Pier Head, Liverpool
- 67 Birkenhead to Welsh Border

England Coast Path and associated access rights now open

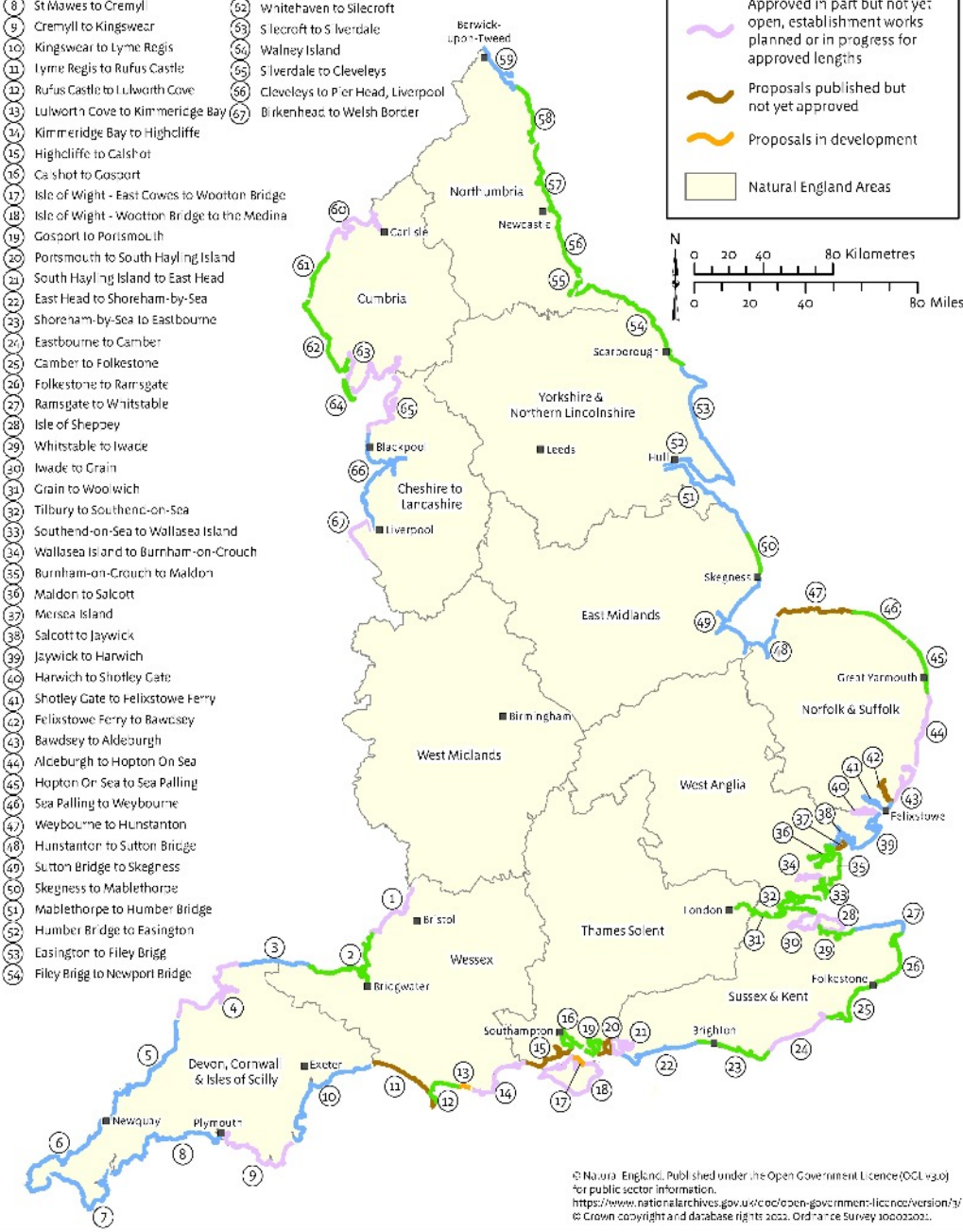
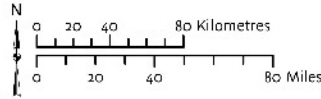
Approved in whole but not yet open, establishment works planned or in progress

Approved in part but not yet open, establishment works planned or in progress for approved lengths

Proposals published but not yet approved

Proposals in development

Natural England Areas



## Barbed Barriers

The use of barbed wire seems to come in spells for no obvious reason.

When I started walking in the countryside it was largely through paths in farmland and barbed wire was everywhere. It then seemed to slowly be replaced by more natural barriers increasingly so when set-aside grants came in.

When the CRoW act came in creating open access land this evil stuff made a comeback to keep people out of areas where they did not have access to, as it was a cheap and quick solution.

Many farmers then realised that by fencing off field edge paths they could no longer get to the hedge the other side which they legally had to keep from blocking the footway so again these fences slowly vanished.

The environmental consciousness of recent years has added to this but the present financial crises and the pressure to grow our own food puts hedgerows once again under threat and we may see more wire again..

There has been a recent dispute in our local press about barbed wire constraining a narrow path so I read up on the legislation which is quite clear if little known.

If there is an actual obstruction across a right of way you have the absolute right to remove it or go round it at the nearest practical point. Having said that there are caveats. If wire has been strung across the path and you happen to have secateurs with you, you can use it to cut the wire. You must not however knowingly take a tool with you to remove a known obstruction.

Where barbed wire is strung alongside a path, the law says that on any land adjoining a public path or road where there is a fence made with barbed wire or having barbed wire in it or on it, and where the wire is likely to injure persons or animals using the path or road, the Highways Authority (HA) can secure its removal. Section 164 of the Highways Act 1980 allows them to give notice to the occupier of the land requiring its removal. If the occupier defaults the HA can obtain an order from the Magistrates Court and recover their costs.

Then answer therefore is to complain to the HA.

This legislation originated in a provision of the Barbed Wire Act of 1893 ‘an act to prevent the use of barbed wire for fences in roads, streets, lanes, and other thoroughfares’

At the end of the day it would be a matter for the courts to decide whether a fence was a nuisance or a danger.

## May The Spirits Be With You

Rory Newman recalls that those YRC members who came to the Cochabamba area of Bolivia in 1999 may remember passing below a rather Tryfan-like peak - a narrow ridge with four distinct tops, the two at the East end highest – called Cerro Poma Apacheta, or Cerro Pomapacheta. The “apacheta” suffix suggests that the mountain is associated with the Apus, an apu being a local mountain spirit..

One day towards the end of the trip, with nothing better to do, I went to explore.

Getting onto the ends of the ridge looked a bit serious, so I had a look at a flank. There were two gullies leading to gaps in the ridge between the tops, with steep scree covering the slopes beneath them, and rock buttresses on each side of them. The gullies looked the best bet, so I worked up the unpleasant scree to the base of the more inviting one (the left one as you faced the ridge), rather disconcertingly in a snowstorm.

The gully proved not too difficult, with a grass/scree rake leading to a col between the West tops. The snowstorm passed, and I was able to scramble out to the two West tops – the lowest was already cairned, so I added a rock (which I was told the apus and Pachamama the Earth Mother like you to do).

I tried to continue along the ridge to the main summits but soon reached an impasse – an overhung gap which would need a rope and some serious rock climbing.

I was now facing the prospect of an unpleasant descent/ascent a long way down then back up big loose scree with a sprinkling of new wet snow – I needed to lose (and then regain) a lot of height to get round the big central rock buttress.

As I cursed and grumbled to myself, a little brown bird a bit like a British dunnock flew up onto the gully wall above me and said “cheep, cheep, cheep”. I looked up and saw what seemed to be a ledge leading away out of sight round the face of the central buttress. The bird continued to cheep and hop about going off round the corner out of sight, then reappearing. So, thinking it would do no harm to have a look, I climbed up onto the ledge. This was flat, about 18 inches wide, and led off across the face. The bird hopped cheerfully along it, cheeping, and (somewhat against my better judgement) I followed.

After 50 feet or so the ledge ran out, but another started a few feet higher, easy to reach, and my guide flew up onto this and hopped on – I followed. Eventually this ledge also ran out, but it was again easy to get down to another starting a few feet below, and again I followed my guide along this.

By now I was starting to get scared – I was out on a near vertical face, with rock above and a big drop below – but the ledge system continued, the rock seemed solid, retreat would be easy, and my friend the bird kept hopping along in front encouraging me on.

Eventually, and to my astonishment, the ledge system led me into the other gully. Going up the gully bed looked dodgy – steep with big loose boulders – but it looked possible to scramble up each gully wall. The West side looked easier, though there was an unstable-looking rock tower that would need care.

I was about to attempt this when the little bird – now perched on the rock tower – became very agitated, flapping and cheeping. I said to it “Have you got a nest up there or something?” Agitation continued so I said “OK I’ll try the other side”, moved over to the right of the gully, and got one move up the side.

The bird gave one final extra-loud CHEEP and flew off. Then the rock tower collapsed, sweeping where I would have been with a shower of boulders.

I never saw my friend the bird again, but boy was I grateful to it...

To conclude briefly, it wasn’t too difficult to reach the ridge and each of the un-cairned main tops and put cairns on them.

I returned to camp but I didn’t tell this story at the time – it seemed too weird and I wanted to think about it.

It still seems weird – one of the oddest things I have experienced in the hills. Did I meet an apu? I will never know...

## Caving Journals

### Grampian Speleological Group

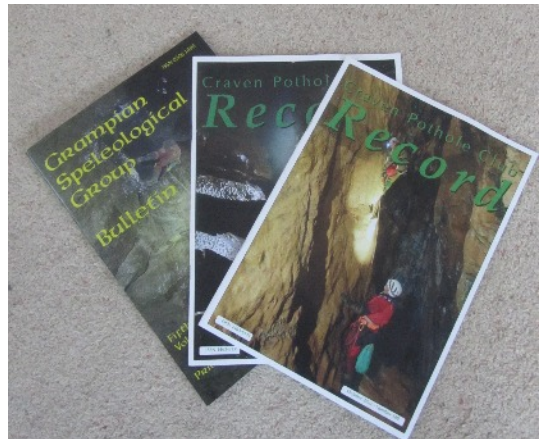
Their latest journal which will eventually be in our library, as usual contains much of interest for our cavers and some excellent photography.

This edition in particular covers work in the Durness area and Kings Cave amongst others on Arran

### Craven Pothole Club

Their recent editions include a look back at an early trip to New Guinea which included Andy Eaves and Sid Perou; exploring the extensive lava tubes on Lanzerote and the pushing of Austwick Beck Head and exploring Otter Hole in the Forest of Dean.

Both clubs’ give details of very active caving with useful plans and excellent photographs.



## Social Meet

The unfortunately dwindling number of couples who traditionally have had a social meet, this year stayed at the Izaak Walton Hotel, Ilam village. This was a select gathering of just four couples, Paul and Ann Dover, Richard and Anne Dover, Peter and Ann Chadwick and Tim and Elaine Josephy with Helen and Michael Smith joining them for Tuesday and Wednesday. Monday 12th September saw a select gathering of just four couples with Helen and Michael Smith joining them for Tuesday and Wednesday. Monday was wet and miserable making for difficult travelling conditions but then normal service was resumed and they enjoyed blues skies and warm sunshine for the rest of the week.

The hotel is beautifully situated at the foot of Dovedale, overlooked by the shapely summit of Thorpe Cloud. The rooms were good and the staff friendly but unfortunately it soon became apparent that the kitchen was under pressure owing to lack of staff. Dinners were rather protracted affairs, with waits of an hour for dessert being the norm. Nevertheless when the food did arrive it was well presented and generally very good. Conversation flowed to fill the gaps and the social nature of the meet was well maintained.

On Tuesday four Dovers and two Josephys walked up the Dovedale valley to Milldale where an early lunch was obtained from Poppy's Cottage, a little take away serving various drinks and pasties. The party became split somewhat on the return, with some lingering beside the crystal clear stream and others pressing on. Richard Dover took in the summit of Thorpe Cloud before returning to the hotel.



Crossing the Dove  
water levels low

The Smiths arrived just after breakfast and joined the Chadwicks for the day. They walked up Dovedale on the eastern side exiting at Milldale up an initially narrow path to Alstonefield where they visited St Peter's church, finding plenty of architectural interest. In its graveyard is what is thought to be England's oldest legible memorial stone dated 1518. The return was via Stanshope, down Hall Dale, up by Ilam Rock, over Bunster Hill (pausing for the panoramic views) and down to Ilam Hall for tea and cakes before sauntering back to the Izaak Walton.

On Wednesday the Smiths and Chadwicks again joined forces. They drove north to Earl Sterndale a little south of Buxton to find that one of Roy Denney's favourites there, The Quiet Woman pub, is now closed following the covid restrictions. From there a descent was made to Glutton Bridge where sheep were being selected for market. The steep ascent of Parkhouse Hill was followed by its steeper western descent to cross the foot of Dowel Dale to traverse the dragon's back of Chrome Hill.



Ascending Parkhouse and then Chrome hills, known locally from their side-on profile as the Dragonsback



Turning south after Stoop Farm, Hollins Hill provided a lunch stop with a view and was traversed to Hollinsclough.

The return to Glutton Bridge was made more interesting by inadvertently avoiding the obvious bridleway then straying from the indistinct footpath and the Smiths repeating an error made some years ago by searching for a footbridge which exists only in the mapmaker's imagination. A hop over a stream got them back on track for the final haul up Hitter hill to the cars. The Chadwicks headed for Buxton and the Smiths homeward.

The rest, in two separate groups visited Chatsworth to walk around the Radical Horizons sculpture exhibition, twelve compositions built mostly with discarded and recycled materials. The exhibition is based on and created in collaboration with the Burning Man event which takes place annually in the Nevada Desert.

The rest of the day was spent touring the area. The Josephys revisited old haunts in Bakewell and walked down the river towards Haddon Hall.

Although this was only a small meet it was enjoyed by all. We hope that there will be more interest in this meet next year.

## Other Journals

The 2021 and 2022 journals of the Scottish Mountaineering Club are now in our library both packed with interesting articles.

We have also received the 2022 Bulletin of the Grampian Club. It includes a report on Inbhirfhaolain and the works on the nearby hydro electric project.



## More threats to wild places

Protection of the wilder and more natural corners of the country is dropping away. Planning 'reform' keeps raising its head and always it seems about allowing more green space to be built on rather than encouraging use of more costly brown field sites. More locally in many areas planners seem less likely to protect traditional buildings which are part of the landscape to permit what most would consider inappropriate replacements, incongruous in their location. Country pubs are being converted into homes or flats and the world we know is slowly being lost

Progress is one thing but a sense of balance is needed to protect some areas as escape holes from the rat race.

It is not just a case of using planning to protect our National and regional parks etc but despite the natural attraction of such places there are maintenance needs and funding for our protected landscapes is not keeping pace with inflation and some figures suggest that it has halved in real terms over the last ten years.

This is false economy as many such areas are wealth creators. Places like the Lake District and other national parks attract tourism and are major drivers of local economies. There were plans to introduce environmental support for farmers rather than production support but that looks under threat as are laws which protect our most vulnerable ecosystems

The scheme envisaged would have supported and encouraged land managers to use their land to the benefit of the environment, the protection of wildlife, provision of facilities for walkers and along the way to absorb carbon. It seems the latest government is cooling on this.

Another way our wilder places are spoiled is by making it easier to get into. The sort of visitor who drives around and parks up for a picnic and rarely walks far from his vehicle is little help to anybody and invariably causes more litter and stop-start traffic is a bad negative in the carbon stakes

Plans have been rejected for a large car park near to Catbells where we enjoyed a recent meet. The new car park was to be in woodland at Ullock Moss, near Portinscale, but fresh similar applications keep cropping up and these scars on the landscape will change the nature of such areas

The omens are not good so we must enjoy what we have before it is gone.

## On the other hand

While shortage of funds and political will seems to threaten places we love to roam public money is going into 'wilding' schemes.

Many upland areas are being managed to contain water to reduce flooding down stream, flood relief water meadows and balancing ponds are being created, streams are being made to curve where they had previously been straightened and coniferous woodland are being progressively returned to a mix of native trees.

There is a project underway in Hardknott Forest, restoring native woodland in one of the largest conifer plantations in Cumbria and the earlier efforts at doing the in Ennerdale has led to it just being designated a National Nature Reserve.

There is £5,000,000 going into protecting and preserving the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and yet another major project is to link up two forests in the Wye Valley. The Wyre Forest is the largest such nature reserve in the country and the Forest of Deane not much smaller, the gap between them at present stops wildlife migration and is to be re-wilded. This 60 mile link is to have new woodland and hedgerows planted to create a wildlife corridor and the public are being encouraged to plant a tree in memory of the late Queen so that the area progressively 'greens' up.

## Phreatomagmatic explosions

Our diving and sailing members will be cautioned to learn that underwater volcanoes can cause a tsunami; waves may be generated by the sudden displacement of water caused by a volcanic explosion, by a volcano's slope failure, or more likely by a phreatomagmatic explosion and collapse/engulfment of the volcanic magmatic chambers. It is thought that such a deep-seated tsunami destroyed an outer island of Tonga this year.

Apparently and not realised until recently, major ice falls from the glaciers and polar ice caps can have a similar effect and they are happening around Antarctica regularly given the thousands of calving glaciers there. Other places with glaciers are likely affected are Greenland and other Arctic areas

## From the Archives

Your Editor.

Contemplating the future?

Long before the present  
Lowstern was built.



Thursday saw the early arrival of four members amid wall to wall sunshine. Mike G went for a walk on Dalton Fell where the view across Morecambe Bay was stunning. The Hut Warden as ever got on with hut jobs.

On Friday Mike G, Ian C, and John J, joined the monthly luncheon team in the Tempest Arms at Elslack. Members and guests arrived during the day and after pitching their tent, Mike and Helen Smith headed for Langcliffe to follow the by-way to Malhamdale passing Jubilee cave and returning via Stockdale Farm and Attermire.

Saturday morning dawned with the hut residents surprised to discover it had snowed during the night.

Mike G and Alan L had planned to go bird watching at Leighton Moss and duly set off in dubious road conditions. Due diligence was the order of the day. Eventually they arrived at the Leighton Moss Visitor Centre where coffee was enjoyed, but not the sheet ice that covered the car park and the walks to the hides.

They met some other birders who had actually seen the resident Bittern and Otters enjoying the frozen water conditions. Alan and Mike finally admitted that the walking conditions were too difficult and returned to the visitor centre for more refreshment.

However, Ingleborough seemed to be the preferred destination for others and Mike and Helen Smith, Helen B, Peter C, Robert C, and David H, walked from Lowstern to Clapdale Farm, and on via Trow Gill, and Fell Beck to the Horton track before turning left and on to Ingleborough for lunch.

While there, they experienced the rare sighting of a Broken Spectre. Snow Buntings were seen and distant views off the Lakes enjoyed.

The return was made via Little Ingleborough, Long Lane and the Lakeside Bar. All on snow covered ground.

Mick B, Conrad T, John S, and Beverley E, parked in the snowy car park at Leck Church and did a very enjoyable round of Great Coum and Gregareth.

Following the path beside Lech Beck they startled a deer in the mist visiting Ease Gill Kirk and Cow Dub before continuing up the Gill to the bridge just below County Pot.

Climbing out of the mist and on to the trig point on Crag Hill to Great Coum in bright sunshine. Then turning south enjoying great views passing the County Stone to reach Gregareth's trig.

Finally they descended to the Three Men Cairns and joined Leck Fell Lane back to the Church to finish an excellent walk of 22km.

**Mick and John by the Trig**



**Conrad and John above a temperature inversion**

Our Meet organiser managed to spend some of his time on Norber and our President took advantage of the snow on her ski's.

John and Carol W explored the local lanes and Tim J found his way to Feizor.

Rod and Yayoi traversed Thwaite Lane to Austwick enjoying the new snow but arrived at the Game Cock before opening time. This enabled Austwick church to be visited with great interest and a drink in front of the welcome fire in the pub.

Members eventually found their way back to Lowstern and the warmth of the log fire.

Seven day visitors made up the entourage.

Expressions of appreciation were duly made to the Josephy team for their efforts in preparing a very enjoyable Christmas Dinner.

Tim and Richard preparing the starters



All in attendance were easily persuaded to sing “The twelve days of Christmas” in good heart and voice – particularly the FIVE GOLDEN RINGS.



Snow, low visibility, bright sunshine, clear skies; it was a weekend of contrasts.





Setting off from Lowstern



Returning from the pub



Ingleborough cave is here somewhere



Clapdale

All in all the meet was a great success with members and guests renewing acquaintances with their friends.

MG

Attendees:-  
 Mick Borroff  
 Mike Godden  
 Steve Richards  
 Richard Taylor  
 Helen Brewitt  
 David Hick  
 Wendy Richards

Conrad Tetley  
 Ged Campion  
 Becca Humphreys  
 Richard Sealey  
 Carol Whalley  
 Peter Chadwick  
 John Jenkin  
 Helen Smith

Ian Crowther  
 Richard Josephy  
 Michael Smith  
 Frank Wilkinson  
 Robert Crowther  
 Rod Smith  
 Tim Josephy  
 Roy Denney

Alan Linford,  
 Yayoi Smith,  
 Beverley Eastwood,  
 Harvey Lomas,  
 John Whalley,  
 Philip Wilkinson(G)  
 John Sutcliffe.

# Of Moulay Ali Reflections On The Ascent

Derek Bush

Moulay Ali is an impressive cone-shaped peak in Morocco, whose southern face, when viewed from the northern rim of the Tichka Plateau looks almost vertical.



On the Club's 2001 meet we were led by Hamish Brown and for the ascent our base was a bivouac half way down a steep pass (tizi) which linked several Berber villages around the plateau. One of these villages was the birthplace of our head guide Ali.

The walk to the bivouac site, carrying full gear, was a good hard day in itself, but it had been made into a minor epic for Arthur Salmon and the writer by a deliberately circuitous traverse of the hills at the top of the pass.

We had reached the top of the tizi well before midday and then all it required was a fairly straightforward descent to the campsite. However, as members will know the YRC members like to make things difficult for themselves and Arthur and I decided to add a few more tops before we went down.



The President at the time, Albert Chapman, accompanied us up the first top to assess the progress of the climbing party who were attempting the unclimbed west ridge. Having reassured himself that all was well with the climbing party he wisely returned to the col.

Our afternoon's adventure is another story and suffice to say by the time we arrived back at the tizi it was 5.00 pm. We had walked through the heat of the afternoon, run out of water, traversed some horrible ground and to say the least, tempers were a little frayed.

After Mohammed and Ali had replenished our water supply, we set off down from the col. Arthur very sensibly took the well-graded path down. I decided to follow the guides on the more direct route (Will I never learn!) I ended up in terrible trouble over a dried-up waterfall, trying to follow instructions from the main party below. Eventually, Hussain one of our porters, came up to help and took my rucksack from me. It was all rather ignominious but I was extremely grateful to him. Arthur was waiting for me with the rest of the party at the bivouac site. Hamish made no comment, which was probably just as well.

The one redeeming feature was that whilst this was going on a group of young Berber girls were coming over the pass in the late evening sunshine carrying huge bales of hay on their heads and singing at the same time with great clarity and sweetness. They were answered by the calls of two shepherd boys on the opposite side of the valley who were rounding up their flocks for the night.

The scene was part biblical and part a truly memorable mountain experience and made my self-inflicted sufferings all worthwhile.

The bivi site was in reality an old sheep pen. We all opted to clear the ground outside the pen area and after one of Hamish's Spartan meals we retired for the evening as darkness set in about 8.00pm.

I was too tired to sleep immediately but lay on the top of my bag watching the satellites pass overhead and the late evening flights into Marrakech. The clear sky itself was memorable and our sojourn passed quickly.

We were awake by 5.20 am and by ten past six our party, consisting of the President, Hamish, Arthur and myself accompanied by our two Berber companions Ali and Mohammed were away.

The route took an interesting line with some good scrambling sections and was perhaps no more difficult than a typical rock peak on Skye. The two Berbers left us at the col some 500ft below the summit to go exploring on their own. We were on top by 9.30 am. Hamish said this was about standard time which was praise indeed!

He had also told us prior to the climb that it would be about the fifth or sixth European ascent. We were quite impressed with this fact until on reaching the summit a casual glance around revealed that the locals must have been dragging their unfortunate animals to the summit for sacrificial purposes for centuries!

We stopped half an hour on the top in the pleasant morning sunshine and then Hamish took us on a slightly easier route down to the col. We then had some very interesting slabs to negotiate on the way down.

It's funny how you don't notice the difficulties on the way up but we were back in camp by 12.30 just as it was getting really hot. We drank pints of tea and spent the afternoon under a huge rock in the shade reminiscing about previous treks boring only ourselves because there was no one else to listen.

Hamish took himself off out of earshot. A very wise man!

We again listened to the girls singing as they came down the pass. This time I was in a more relaxed mood and it was even more enchanting. I can only make comparison with the sound of Sherpanis singing in the high Nepalese settlements. Two mountain races making divine music.

Later that evening Roger Dix and Richard Kirby, not of the climbing party, met the girls as they ascended to the camp site from the Berber village, after an afternoon of genuine Berber hospitality. But that is another story! (*see Roger's obituary*)



# Drawing On Memories

A number of us have to admit we are over the hill but as your Editor, I am at least still here to write the obituaries of the many friends in the Club no longer with us.

John Coltan has however taken things further than most; he is mounting another display of his paintings at the Alpine Club (until the end of April) under the heading of '**Over The Hill**', the essence of the show is a revisit of images from the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when he was quite active in the Alps, particularly the Mt Blanc region.

John says:

"These small paintings were produced in the winter of 2022 using assorted available references, mostly drawings done during ascents; usually A5 sketchbook drawings. They are supported by a written piece, and excerpts from my accounts.

They are of, or from, classic routes of that era. Some are from the relative safety of the valley, or at least below crevasses, avalanches, stone-fall and the big drops of higher up.

Most are painted in watercolour on grey paper with the addition of white gouache. This combination is for me, a departure from the traditional watercolour technique of light to dark, leaving the white paper as white. The gouache enables the intensity of Alpine light to be used to advantage whereas it can otherwise create difficulties. Using Artistic license to defeat the conformity that depth of field can impose on photographers enables a focus on certain features that is otherwise technically difficult. This is an aspect discussed by Ben Tibbets and I in our AC Clubcast, Artists of the Alpine Club, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2020. Forays into the heights specifically to draw were rare, though I did a few solo trips whereby a break to sit and draw caused no impatient asides from nearby. Sometimes I used binoculars to compress distance or see detail.

In poor weather, clouds became the subject matter and for a while, a French collector whose Restaurant garden wall in Chamonix became my temporary gallery, had me colouring his rare and precious 18<sup>th</sup> C lithographs of the region. This kind man, Charlie Gugglimetti, owner of The Pitz was very supportive and took me and my work to the upmarket Galleries of Old Geneva. They said I would be famous after I died, to which my reply was that I couldn't wait. I learned a lot about the Chamonix valley from Charlie; his wife Ada was a brilliant cook, an added attraction.

The family of Maurice Simond at the Nash bought drawings as did the Desmaison and Hertzog clan. However, sometimes the Gendarmerie moved me on from the other street pitches I occasionally sold from; a Society of French of Mountain Painters invited me into their summer show. The Dauphine newspaper printed complimentary words.

Our little group had grown out of Chamonix by the mid 80's. It was becoming more regulated, bigger and more commercial; English climbers were not always flavour of the month. Our summer base moved from the woods near the helicopter pad or Pierre d'Orthaz 'basic' camping to, Camping Monte Bianco at Peutery in the Val Veni. John Barker knew the Pellin family who owned the site and they became and remain close friends, resulting in two shows at the Courmayeur Guides HQ /museum and three shows across the Alps during the 150th anniversary of the Matterhorn ascent.

After the Millennium three of us made quite a few visits to Regalia, enjoying the quiet unspoiled beauty of the area from a rock climbing, mountaineering, social and drawing perspective. In 2010 a meeting with John Temple AC, at Bondo campsite resulted in the sale of a recent drawing of the Baddiel; he had just got up the North Ridge as his last big Alpine route. A huge rockfall from the Cengalo in 2017 obliterated the site, ending our idylls there.

It was John, alongside earlier encouragement from Ken Wilson, that precipitated my membership of the AC in 2013, followed by a first show at Charlotte road in the October.

Drawing the hills has added another dimension to my mountaineering life, enriching it considerably by extending dialogue, contact and friendship with a diverse collection of people.

'My most interesting experience was a traverse from the Aiguille du Midi to the Col des Nantillons with a bivouac at the Col du Fou, 1980.

We climbed throughout in big Alpine boots, the North side was pretty icy, requiring crampons on the descent from the Crocodile. (one of the abseil points had to be hacked out of the middle of a huge 80-degree ice slope with the majority of the North Face of the Plan below).

We did it as two teams, a three and a two, which made for plenty of banter and speedy abseils. A Brocken Spectre at the bivouac heralded a weather change that encouraged our descent of the Nantillons Glacier after descending the Bregault ridge alongside the notorious Spencer Couloir after the Blatiere.

The route is complex, requiring a lot of intuition but very fine with lots of superb rock and a brilliant way of becoming familiar with the Aiguilles"

Adjacent routes John did –

- Peigne. Nth ridge x2, Vaucher, Chamonix Face.
- Blatiere. West Face, Pilier Rouge.
- Aiguille de Roc. Cordier Pillar, Children of the Moon.
- Grepon. Original route, East Face.
- Midi . Rebuffat, Frenedo Spur, SW arete.
- Requin. East Face direct.
- Plan. Ryan- Lochmatter

This climb involved overnight care of and subsequent rescue of a badly injured French climber 150 metres below the summit.

# Escapades Hivernale More Snowshoeing In The Jura

Mick  
Borroff

One benefit of a snowshoeing trip is that if there is no snow, you can just go winter walking instead. After weeks of anxiously reviewing snow-free images from the Jura webcams, that's exactly what we thought we would be doing.

Fortunately, the weather gods intervened and decided to deposit about half a metre of new snow just before we arrived and followed it up with a fortnight of sub-zero temperatures. We had mostly cloudy days with not much sun, so the fabled views of the Alpine Chain were rarely seen, but plenty of atmospheric misty conditions to enjoy.



Misty conditions  
on the  
Monts des Cerfs

The monochrome  
landscape of  
Mont d'Amin



We stayed in a gite in Les Hôpitaux-Neufs, a small village near Mont d'Or about an hour's drive NE from Les Rousses, our base for the 2017 snowshoe meet. This gave us access to a wide choice of snowshoe routes in both France and Switzerland, including a lot of summits and ridges in areas new to us.



Alpine pas-  
tures  
leading to  
Les Roches  
Sarrazine

The cliffs of  
Mont d'Or  
with  
Mont Blanc  
behind



Twelve varied snowshoe routes were completed on both sides of the border and few people were seen mid-week apart from the odd cross-country skier. A fuller report will follow.

# Obituaries and Appreciations

## **H. Robinson**

**1927-2022**

**Member 1978-2022**

Harry was a modest man and it was a long time before he could be persuaded to join the YRC. He always felt that he did not have enough climbing and mountaineering experience.

He was wrong. He had not taken into account the rock climbing he had done with David Smith in Glencoe, on Ben Nevis and Skye not forgetting the climbs he had done with David and his fellow Wednesday night walking group on Yorkshire and Lancashire gritstone.



Furthermore he had attended many Whitsuntide meets in Scotland which were a not to be missed event at the time. Thus, when he joined, he was fully acquainted with the ways and foibles of the Club and its membership as it was in those days.

Harry was born in Harle Syke near Burnley in 1927. There was another brother in the family but he was twelve years older than Harry. After school he got a job in local government at the Weights and Measures office in Burnley.

He was called up to join the army at 18 in 1945, which was before National Service was introduced and he was in for three years. He had, he felt in retrospect, an interesting time. First of all he did his basic training with the Black Watch the famous Scottish infantry regiment. That in itself would be interesting!

After that he got himself seconded as a clerk/orderly on hospital /troop ships travelling all over the world. Basically they were returning troops and prisoners of war home and so he visited places such as Japan twice, Rangoon, Lagos and Hamburg. He saw the aftermath of the 'bomb' on Hiroshima and also the aftermath of the bombing on Hamburg which he said was flattened.

After the army he went back into Local Government in Burnley. He qualified in all his Local Government examinations plus at the same he qualified in what is now known as the Chartered Institute of Public and Finance Accountants. A quite remarkable achievement.

In 1954 he married Margaret and, following his career, they lived in several parts of the country, and during this time his two daughters Jane and Gill were born. They finally settled back home in Fence near Burnley.

Later in the late 1960s/early 1970s he changed careers and did a part time external degree and went to teach Business Studies at Burnley College.

As mentioned his early climbs were with David Smith and although some of their recorded exploits were derided by their disbelieving (obviously envious) friends, including the writer, they were out there particularly in Scotland climbing the classics of the day. We have to remember hemp ropes were still in use. Very early nylon ropes came in if you could afford them. You very often climbed in clinker/tricouni shod boots. Vibram shod boots were frowned upon by the older prewar climber. Crampons were only just being introduced for snow and ice climbing. You had very little protection, two or three slings and karabiners, at the most, and the rule was the leader did not fall.

Once Harry joined the Club he came with us regularly particularly the Scottish winter meets held mainly at Inbhirfhaolain the Grampian Club hut down Glen Etive. We climbed all the hills of Glen Etive and Glen Coe in winter conditions including, several times the traverse of the Aonach Eagach. Occasionally we ventured to the Ben which meant a four am start from the hut. One such time saw a group of us of standing shivering under the Douglas Boulder in fairly damp inhospitable conditions intending to try Tower Ridge, Avalanche debris was all around and Harry took one look upwards and decided he didn't fancy the route so Adrian, our leader, launched himself up Observatory Gully and we all followed like lemmings. High up we traversed into Tower Gully and onto the plateau. We then traversed over the other side around the top of Corrie Leis onto Carn More Dearg and found ourselves glissading down its slopes into the Allt a Mhuilinn in glorious sunshine. The pint in the Clachaig at the end of the day tasted delicious that night.

I can remember many other days out with Harry. Once on the 'Munroe' meet of 1983 Harry and I were caught in a violent thunderstorm on the Grey Corries which resulted in us staggering through the Nevis Gorge after midnight and arriving back at the cottage around 2.00 am. Our party was much relieved to see us although a few words were spoken.

There were many others times with Harry especially on our Long Walks- Shap to Wasdale, Traverse of the Welsh '3s' and Peebles to Moffatt.



In his domestic life Harry was extremely practical. If you wanted a shelf putting up or a cupboard making Harry was your man. He converted a van into a campervan and drove it with Margaret all over Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Later in life after Margaret had died, he bought a small car converted it into a van in which he could just about sleep. He would park up anywhere, curl up in his sleeping bag and he was away. Unfortunately this habit had to stop when a kindly policeman banged on his window and told him he was breaking the law spending the night on Morecambe promenade.

Soon after retirement Harry took up painting seriously. He held several exhibitions locally and many members have his paintings. I am particularly proud of one he gave me on my 70th birthday, of the Grampian Club hut at Inbhirfhaolain. The paintings he had left were given away at his funeral service.

During this time three grandsons were born Alexander, Harry and George of whom he was particularly proud. He taught them all to paint even taking them to his painting group and he shared his love of the mountains with them. He also introduced his son in law Michael who is still in the Club

He also formed what came to be known as the '27 Club of Harry, John Hemingway and Bill Lofthouse along with their respective wives Margaret, Janet and Brenda who went on holiday together in Europe and beyond.

Margaret died some years ago which hit Harry very hard. However he could look after himself, carried on with his paintings and through a friend he was introduced to a fellowship at Arnside where he could stay and socialise. He said that he particularly liked dancing with the old ladies. I am sure he was very popular.

Eventually, after a series of mini strokes he moved into Heather Grange care home in Burnley where he was well looked after. He was one of the few residents who could go out and he and John Hemingway would go over to visit Bill Lofthouse who was in a Home in Bury.

Eventually John and Bill died then came Covid and Harry despite contracting the virus survived it. and died in his care home peacefully in his 96th year after a life well lived.

My thanks to Harry's two daughters Jane and Gill for their contributions to this memoir.



By Friar's Crag in later life

*Derek Bush*

## **S. H. Smith 1932-2021 Member 1958-2021**

Stephen Hattersley Smith died at the end of last year at his home in Otley, West Yorkshire, aged 89.

For twelve years I lived in Burley between Otley, Ilkley and Bingley. If I wanted any plants I would pop into one of the Stephen H Smith's garden centres, something of a local institution. The Stephen in question and his twin Tim were both members of the YRC. The Smiths were the sons of Richard Hattersley Smith

The Hattersley element of their names is preserving the history of the oldest firm of loom makers in the world established in 1789 by one Richard Hattersley. Hattersley built the first wool weaving power loom which met its end in Shipley when it was smashed by a group of "Luddites" - revolutionary hand loom weavers fearful for their future and by coincidence, Ned Ludd was born just down the road from where I now live in Leicestershire. Hattersley's continued to prosper with the number of employees peaking to around 1100 just prior to the First World War

Arthur Tallon recalls that Tim was the more active climber of the two. He went to the Alps and to Corsica with Tim but knows Steve did go to the Alps one year with Tim and David Smith. He recalls Tim telling them about getting to the foot of a mountain and having to make the decision as to how to approach the climb. "David wanted to go up the ridge, Arthur wanted to go up the gully and Steve didn't want to go at all!" Arthur is not sure how true this was of course. It may have just been Tim's typical light-hearted approach to events. They were active in the Club in the late 1950s and 1960s and were friends and contemporaries of Albert Chapman and Arthur Tallon.

Arthur thinks Steve was involved in the occasion at a Hill Inn meet when a group of them built an igloo on Whernside and climbed up after dinner and spent the night in it. This was the sort of activity they both enjoyed.

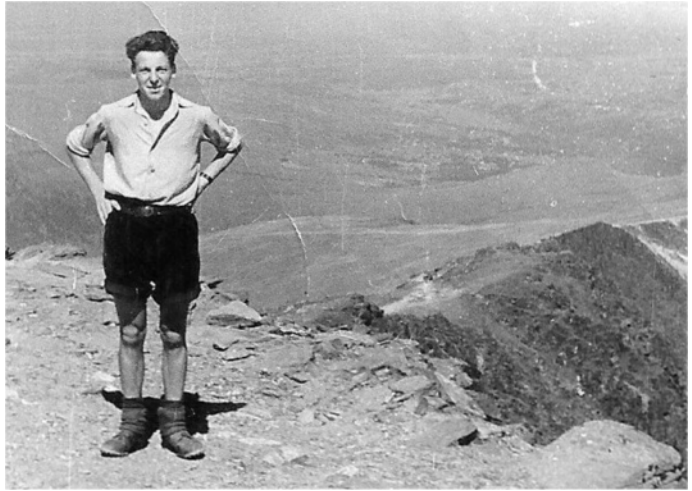
When Tim died in July 2020 I spoke to the manager of the Bingley business and at that time Stephen was still popping into the place from time to time. He had though been suffering from Parkinson's disease for some years and passed away on 31/12/2021.

Arthur remembers when Steve got married. and in 1959, Stephen married Eileen Marjorie Clare Prince-Smith the daughter of Sir William Prince-Smith, 3rd Baronet. Stephen's wife died in 2012, aged 80 and he is survived by a son and two daughters. It was a big event and Arthur thinks he was invited but at the time felt the occasion was all a bit out of his league and admits he was probably unwilling to spend money hiring the right clothes for the occasion.

*Roy Denney*

**R. HARBEN**  
**1937-2022**  
**Member**  
**1962-2022**

Raymond was born in Sheffield in 1937. It gave him an opportunity to start climbing early as at the bottom of the road there was a slag heap which he climbed in both Summer and Winter conditions but he never ventured up the steel pylon at the summit.



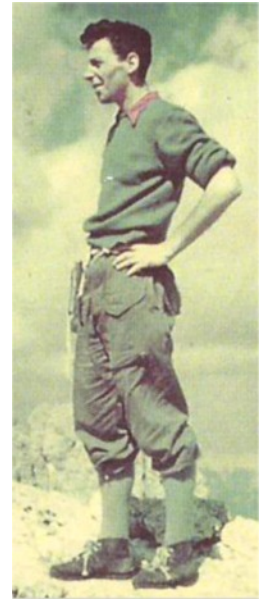
On Snowdon 1965

His parents enjoyed walking in the Peak District and he accompanied them on their weekend strolls. A keen scout he went camping in the Lakes at Eskdale then later with the senior scouts to Austria walking in the Karwendel.

He started his working career in the bridges section of British Rail in Sheffield and studied at the Sheffield College of Art and Technology becoming a chartered Civil Engineer and then moving to York.

It was following a slide show on the Lakes by Eric Byne that he decided to take his interest in the fells further and joined the Pennine Mountaineering Club where Bill Woodward was the training officer and so began a lifelong friendship.

They were joined shortly after demob by Keith Barker and Don Henderson and the foursome began climbing widely in the Peak District Wales, Lakes and Scotland and then abroad in the French and Swiss Alps and the Dolomites interspersed with skiing in Scotland Norway and Italy.



Ray ready for climbing

Ray was always good company, part of a cohort of members who joined (fairly young by today's standard) in the 60s and 70s; an ever decreasing group of members.

Ray was one to improvise from time to time and after a particularly severe winter back home they bought a Fordson tractor and built a ski tow operating at Ringinglow Sheffield.



It was on one of their climbing outings climbing on grit that they met Derek Smithson who introduced Raymond to the YRC and subsequently all four friends applied to join and to their surprise were accepted en bloc to become known as the Sheffield Four.

Ray was climber - a good one; Ray, Derek Smithson, Don Henderson and Bill Woodward looked for every opportunity for climbing in the Peak District and visits to the Lake District.

Derek recalls heading to Eskdale getting out to open a gate when Ray's car, which had a brake shoe missing rolled back and was only stopped with an inch from Derek and the gate.

Alan Linford climbed with Ray on White Ghyll and Gimmer crags in Great Langdale.

In Wales in the 1980's, Ray and Mike Hobson climbed Cynr Glas' Main Wall, a HS six pitch classic. The next day on Tryfan's east face, Glyn Edwards and Ray took alternate leads on the HVS\*\* 1936 Munich Climb.



This climb has a very interesting history on account of international tensions, with its first ascent having been made by Germans using pitons; the second was by outraged locals doing it clean and removing them.

Winter 1973,  
Ray on a  
climbing meet in  
Glen Etive



1985, Ray in Glencoe

One of Ray's less conventional climbs was the steep face of Edale's iconic Mam Tor in full winter conditions with ice axes and crampon with Bill.

Both of them were 'pretty good goers'.

Forty years on from those days, Ray, Bill, Bryan and their wives were all still skiing in Austria with the Hallamshire Ski Club.

Ray only recently sold his old skis. They had been made by the Gomme, the G Plan furniture people, which made sledges for the 1950's Antarctic expeditions, laminated and based on Swiss ski rescue sledges.

Raymond was a regular on meets until later on in life when age caught up with him and he took up golf, a pastime he thoroughly enjoyed, winning a number of competitions.

In 2009 he suffered a stroke from which he recovered encouraged by his wife Carole, but it restricted his walking to about three to five miles and seriously reduced the amount of golf played, having to resort to an occasional round in a buggy.

He and Carole still enjoyed many walking holidays, often in the Alps with their camper van.

As he slowed down he was though able to continue his bird watching, wandering from hide to hide and to continue to travel extensively. He also took up the more leisurely sport of bowling.

He and Carole had two children and numerous grandchildren.

The club was represented at his simple funeral service and Ray's boots, ice axe and crampons were placed on the coffin

As Robbie Burns wrote:

“if there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
if there is none, he made the best of this”

## **K Aldred 1931 - 2022**

### **Member 1979 -2022**

Ken died peacefully aged 91 at Kingston Court nursing home, Carlisle, having lived there since 2020 debilitated by Parkinson's disease.

Aged 47 in 1979, Ken had an auspicious start to his 43 years as a Yorkshire Rambler with his application supported by Club stalwarts Stanley Marsden and Edward Tregonning.



Through the '80s and well into the new millennium he was a regular on meets including treks, alpine and social meets. After holding the posts of Hut Booking Secretary, 1982-91, Vice President, 1994-96 and :President, 2004-06, life membership was awarded in 2014. He also became a Wayfarer in 1982. There was much more to his life though than his enduring delight in mountains and mountaineering.

Born in Hull, Ken was the eldest of three. Living near Hull Docks during the war the family had to move three times due to bomb damage. Aged 15 he was apprenticed to the weighing machine company W T Avery and gained a HNC eventually becoming a Chartered Mechanical Engineer.

Ken married Sheila in 1952, two years after meeting on the Cyclists Touring Club outings. When engineering unions secured a five-day week, weekends allowed cycling Hull to Blackpool and back. An adventurous round of Edinburgh, the Trossachs, Lake District and back home filled a four-day Easter break.

RAF National Service 1953 to 1955 saw Ken in Malaya as an armourer. Against regulations, the aircrew took him up as a favour, over the jungle testing the guns when he should have been in the service bay. After discharge from the RAF he returned to Avery's briefly before joining the Blackburn General Aircraft company.

Daughters Penny and Wendy were born in the mid-1950s. However, this did not end Ken's activities. Their cycling continued using sidecars and back seats for the girls. Later they all squeezed into an Austin mini for trips to the Alps.

Thirty years on Ken and Sheila were still cycling, that time through Brittany's bunting festooned villages after the Tour de France had passed through.

With the East Hull Harriers, Ken ran several 20-milers and marathons in the mid-1950s. A memorable cross-country team race against Grimsby Harriers started at Cleethorpes and went along the south bank of the Humber. It was January 1953, the day of the east coast floods. Mid-afternoon, as the race started, the sea was already rising with a strong wind. The course was three laps each one crossing a tributary beck of the Humber.

The first crossing was knee deep, the third one, the runners had to swim through it. The following morning the course including the railway line had been washed away and much of the east coast of Lincolnshire was inundated ten-miles inland. Jeff Hooper was officiating that race but never discovered how the Hull team got back home.

Ken qualified as a teacher in 1960 and started lecturing at West Notts College requiring a family move to Mansfield. His interest in local geology led to a BSc in Geology & Mathematics. Subsequently he took a lecturing post at Huddersfield College of Education (Technical).

The 1972 local elections found Ken an unsuccessful Labour candidate in Huddersfield though his socialist principles and sense of fair play lived on. By 1975 Ken was a JP serving as a local Magistrate and later mentoring new Kirklees and Carlisle magistrates until 2001. In this, he was efficient with a firm but understanding manner and a gentle sense of humour. His air of openness and warmth made him easy to talk to.

Their Huddersfield home saw many gatherings of family and Holly Bank lecturer colleagues. Its basement was full of home-made wine and beer, and doubled as a distribution point for the local Health Food Cooperative.

Ken's mountaineering progressed from family trips in the UK to the Alps, then to qualifying for a Mountain Leadership Certificate in 1974 which he celebrated with a gruelling 24-hour Fellsman Hike. The MLC took Ken into helping youngsters with their Duke of Edinburgh Awards and aiding others gain their MLCs.

Though retired from lecturing in 1983, he still passed on his skills through the British Council both locally and helping develop technical training colleges in India, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Swaziland. As a retirement present to himself Ken walked the Alps End to End taking the BMC bus to Chamonix and heading off towards Austria.

Moves to Penrith then Houghton, Carlisle, followed placing Ken and Sheila closer to their daughter Wendy in 1989. They were soon volunteering for the Village Hall Committee and North Cumbria Rock Garden Club. Scottish country dancing, opera, wood turning - often making personal presents - and the Keswick Literary Festival all featured.

The stark facts at the head of this tribute to Ken fail to describe his real contribution to the YRC. Arriving at a meet on Friday evening and seeing Ken settled by the fire with a drink, meant we were sure of not only good company on the hills but entertaining evening conversation.

His experiences on the bench, teaching and mountaineering provided endless anecdotes - one, oft repeated, had a 'lady of the night' in the dock again pleading for clemency saying "My work was getting on top of me."





Ken's longer trips into the mountains provided some of the most readable accounts in the YRC's journals. His 1995 and 1997 treks in Nepal resulted "The search for Bill Tillman's flower" being published in the Alpine Journal in 2003.

Perhaps most familiar memories for Members who knew him are: Ken greeting arriving travel-weary members at an alpine campsite with mugs of tea before they pitched their tents; Ken shepherding several ageing Yorkshire Ramblers off the highest Cantabrian mountains, following a slip in a chimney causing a crampon punctured hand and leg, in the dark down to waiting Guardia Civil who were astonished at their ages; Ken, after climbing Slogen, seeing two members falling down a Sunmore Alps gully going to help them and eventually accompany Derek Bush to hospital by helicopter; Ken escorting 90-year old Jack Hilton up Scout Crag and onto Pavey Ark after persuading him to don a climbing harness; and, Ken on so many cheerful long conversation-filled days out in the Lakes, Alps and Scotland whatever the weather. Ken came to the rescue too, less dramatically, when the Club needed a steady hand at the helm, he was there - purposeful with no fuss.

There are themes running through Ken's life. Compassionate service to a wide range of communities. A lasting commitment to learning across various fields. His pragmatism and wisdom shining through whatever he was doing.

At the celebration of Ken's life in The Carlisle crematorium, the YRC was represented by Michael Smith who read Robert W Service's Heart 'O the North. The ceremony reflected Ken's wide interests with an extract from Smythe's Mountain Vision; a sketch of a *Gentiana tilmanii* Ken found; and music including a German folk song, Ravi Shankar and Kenny Ball.



In a simple cardboard coffin he left us the way he walked and climbed: with a straightforward approach, no fuss and consideration for the environment.

Ken and Sheila celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary last year when wheelchair tours of local parks and a final visit to their local pub were Ken's last outings.

Sadly Sheila passed away a few weeks after Ken. She missed him greatly.

He is survived by his two daughters Wendy and Penny and their partners and his sister Beryl.

His brother, Eric, passed away some years ago.

## **R. E. Dix 1930 -1922**

### **Member 1999-2022**



Roger, joined the Club a year after his son had joined and was a long time friend and work colleague of Richard Kirby. Two years later as part of the Club meet to Morocco, Roger paired off with Richard and during this meet they obviously went into the mountains and bivouacked out but while there Roger and Richard went into a Berber village and were royally entertained by the village head for the whole of an afternoon.

They were helped by one of the villagers who had spent some time in Belgium and had a smattering of English. Derek Bush recalls saying afterwards that whilst the others were sweating on the mountain Roger and Richard had an experience they would remember for the rest of their lives.

Roger himself, relatively inexperienced in climbing and mountaineering expeditions (cycling was probably his first love) always felt reassured in the company of the likes of Tim Josephy, Ian Crowther, Derek Bush and so many others. That broadened his horizons so much and the friendships he made led him to expeditions with Derek Collins on the GR5 and cycling tours with Ian Crowther.

Roger was born in Shropshire, developed his love of the outdoors during his childhood spent in the Stretton Hills in the south of the county. That love was shared between mountaineering and cycling and during adolescence his bike frequently took him up the A5 to Snowdonia for early hill walking outings. After finishing school, and completing national service with the Royal Navy at Carlisle, Roger travelled across the Atlantic to take up a job roughnecking for a forestry company in Ontario, Canada. A considerable undertaking for a 19 year old setting sail alone in 1949.

Upon his return some 18 months later, Roger tried various jobs, including mental health nursing but, following a course at agricultural college in Cirencester, he alighted upon a career in land surveying. After a short stint in private practice, he moved to the Inland Revenue Valuation Office.

His job now took his family to Brecon, Pendle and Blackburn where Roger was able to connect with the Beacons, Lakes and Yorkshire Dales. Roger's two children, Stuart and Ruth were born in 1962 and 1965 respectively. They were all members of the Burnley Mountaineering Club and during the mid-70s the family undertook regular monthly coach trips into the northern hills.

It was Stuart who introduced his father to the YRC.

Having joined the club after his retirement from the Valuation Office, Roger was a regular attender during a 15-year period that took him into his 80s. His walking and climbing feats were comparatively minor and Roger enjoyed joking with members that his greatest achievement in the YRC was introducing his friend and future Secretary, Richard Kirby to the club! Roger was present at many meets, the most notable being the Corbetts and Calpe.



Having great stamina, Roger particularly enjoyed the annual Long Walks and he was able to help pioneer the Long Cycle Ride's introduction into the club calendar during the foot and mouth epidemic.. An affable soul, Roger was hugely appreciative of the opportunities for meeting friends, walking and cycling, that the club gave to him. It helped his long retirement to be an active, sociable and happy one!

## **D M Tetlow 1937 - 2022** **Member 1955 - 2022**

David and Albert Chapman, in 1957, both then 23 years old, joined as crew on Jack Woodman's boat Tai Mo Shan. They went to Canna to climb Compass Hill, then camped on Rhum and climbed Askival, and then moved on to Skye where starting from Coruisk hut at 3:00am, they completed a partial main ridge traverse from Gars-Bheinn to the Bhastair Tooth before descending to Sligachan. Albert was reminiscing about this in YRCJ 2013, 13 (15): 12-13.



1955 was said by Dennis Armstrong (YRCJ 2005, 12 (24): 89-90) to be an *annus mirabile*, the year when twelve new members joined the YRC. Of that bumper crop, by 2005 six regretfully were no longer with us. Two were good YRC men: Harry Haslam and Sydney Waterfall, two died tragically young, David Haslam and Brian Hartley, and Peter Warsop and Walter Decort were with us for a few years and then resigned. Albert Chapman, Alan Brown, Derek Smithson, David Smith and Dennis Armstrong in 2005 attended a July meet to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> year as members but David was unable to join them. The others became known as the 'Famous Five' and Derek is the last of them to survive.

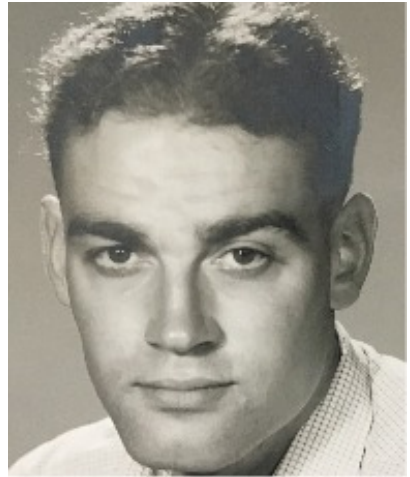
David for many years went wandering from hut to hut in the Alps and Derek Bush remembers him trying to meet up with the Club when it was having an Alpine meet.. John Hemingway used to call him 'Tiger Tetlow' for presumably early caving exploits

## **R.M. Middleton 1936 - 2023**

### **Member 1954 - 2023**

Another of the same cohort, Mike has also just died. They were born, joined and died within a year of each other. Mike was one of a family of members involved with the Club since 1901, with his father and two brothers also members. His grandfather A. L. Middleton was Vice President 1946-1948.

Mike was active in the Club until the mid 1980s. When President Dennis Armstrong organised a meet in Patterdale and that appears to have been the last one that Mike managed.



Mike in his younger days

Mike was born in Leeds, and was educated at Winchester College, Trinity College, Dublin and gained a M Ed from York University

Mike was a teacher of children with additional needs, latterly tutoring children with dyslexia and transforming many lives by enabling them to read. He taught in Northallerton, York and various places in the Midlands.

His love of the mountains was passed down from his own parents. His son Peter remembers a photo of his granny in her full Edwardian skirts on top of some Alpine peak. They used to holiday in 'The Hut' in Little Langdale. This was situated in a field at the start of the track that runs from near Fell Foot Farm over to Tilberthwaite. Once it was demolished (long overdue, he says) they would stay in Bridgend Cottage, just a few hundred yards further down the track. Peter still occasionally goes there himself.

Having left university, Mike worked with Outward Bound in Kenya, and went up MT Kilimanjaro a number of times as part of this. Obviously a man of some courage, when he joined Outward Bound he hitched all the way from Cape Town to Kenya.

Back in the UK, he mostly walked in the Lakes and Yorkshire Dales, and was a very keen cyclist, still doing 100+ mile rides well into his 70s.

He passed his love of the mountains by involvement in the DofE Award Scheme and onto his children and grandchildren, something for which Peter is very grateful, enjoying as he does taking his boys camping on the fell tops.

Older Club member who remember him do recall him as a nice, quiet man, a true gentleman.





**The YRC has two properties available for hire by kindred organisations.**



**Lowstern, Clapham, North Yorkshire**

**Often empty midweek they can also be used by members and their families.**

**To book either cottage contact Richard Josephy**

**[bookings@yrc.org.uk](mailto:bookings@yrc.org.uk)**



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## **THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB**

**EXPLORATION, MOUNTAINEERING  
AND CAVING SINCE 1892**

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