A hiker wearing a green helmet and a dark t-shirt is climbing a metal ladder that spans across a rocky crevice on a mountain trail. The ladder is made of dark metal rungs and is supported by a thick steel cable anchored to the rock on the left. The surrounding environment is a steep, rocky slope with patches of green grass and small yellow flowers. In the background, a dense forest of evergreen trees covers the lower slopes, leading down to a valley with green fields and a small village with buildings and a church spire under a clear blue sky.

**YORKSHIRE  
RAMBLERS'  
CLUB  
JOURNAL  
2023**

# Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal

## Volume 14, Number 6, 2023



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Front Cover: Klammlweg ladder on the Wilder Kaiser meet in August

Back Cover: Climbing at Badychain on the May Snowdonia meet

# The YRC130<sup>3</sup> Project

4 March  
-24 April  
2022

Reaching 130 years of age is something to celebrate. As a club we collectively marked 2022, our 130<sup>th</sup> year by visiting the tops of 130 of Yorkshire's hills, fells, mounds and tumps in no more than 130 days – our YRC130<sup>3</sup> project. The figurative starting pistol was fired on the first day of the Hubberholme meet, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022, giving until early July to get at least one member to each top. So enthusiastic were 52 of our members and their 18 guests the lot were ticked off in just 51 days.

This journal is not the place to list all the details of those tops, ascents, walkers, and their observations. Those are available online at [Tinyurl.com/YRC130Lists](https://Tinyurl.com/YRC130Lists). Instead, this report covers the setting up of the project and several notable aspects of its outcomes.

## The Challenge

In the autumn of 2021, our committee considered ideas for celebrating the 130<sup>th</sup> year. On previous anniversaries the Club had tackled the Munros, the Corbetts and Slingsby's Norwegian first ascents, so they were all ruled out. A list of 130 of Yorkshire's tops was chosen as this reflected the Club's name and the anniversary to be celebrated. Given the uncertainty over continuing or new Covid-related restrictions on travel and gatherings, the generous allowance of 130 days was set to complete the task. The tops' proximity to many members, and the criterion that if any one member reached a top it was ticked off, helped to make this an achievable goal. Such individual or small group ascents were chosen rather than massed assaults as they reduced both car use and wear and tear on the paths.



*Harvey on Fountains Fell (16)*



*Pete B and John S on Buckden Pike*

The list was filtered from the Hill Bagging online database of British Hills, filtered for those in Yorkshire and excluding the more minor tumps. Scrutiny of the list identified a few duplicates to be deleted. The occasional listing had a nearby higher point

which was taken in preference. The highest 130 of the those remaining formed our list. The tops were divided into ten roughly defined areas named for administrative convenience rather than geographic accuracy.

The project was revealed at the 2021 AGM after which members were invited to offer to visit tops. By mid-January most were covered. However, once the ascents started, no one was held to make good their offers.

A couple of aspects of the project had to be 'sold' to members. Firstly, that after many months of restrictions, the aim was wide participation. Getting one member on each top was only a beginning, not the end of it. Secondly, to come up with 130 'tops', not all were significant hills. Some were pimples on moorland, or the highest point in a field in the Wolds.



*The Harrisons making the most of 'pimple' Wharnclyffe Chase (107)*



*Andy Syme on Burley Moor. (103)*



*David H on Cringle Moor (89)*

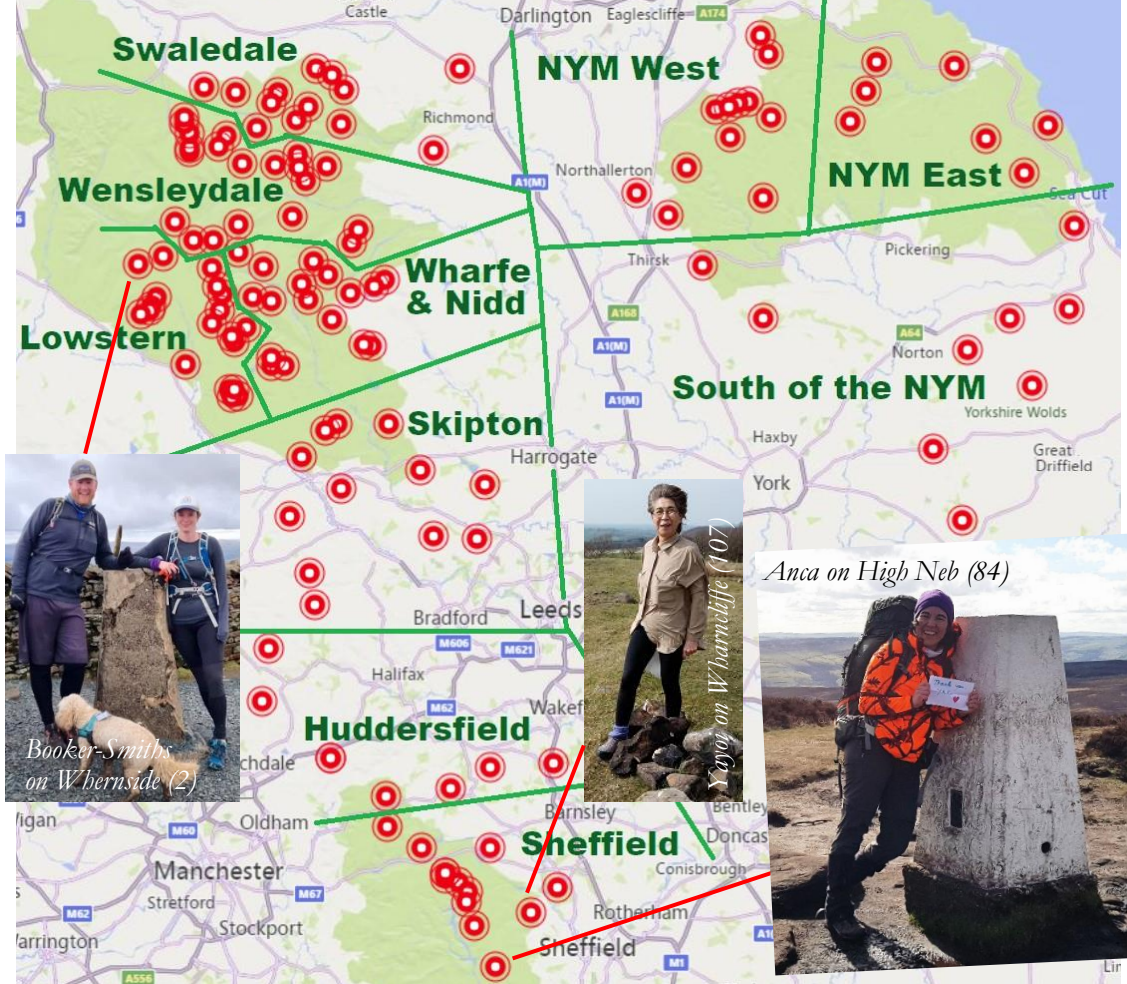
### The Variety

The 130<sup>3</sup> list's range is celebrated in our 1909 Club song, Yorkshire.

*From her battlemented cliffs facing eastward  
to the sea,  
To her high fells in the west, guarding  
moorlands in their lee  
Nature's graces lie revealed  
In profusion, wide and free...  
Here's a health, to bonnie Yorkshire and  
all that she enfolds  
From the Humber to the Tees, from the  
Pennines to the Wolds  
Here's a health, here's a health to  
Yorkshire.*



*Richard D at Yearsley Cross (129)*



The tops included the obvious ones such as the Yorkshire Three Peaks, Dodd Fell, Great Shunner Fell, etc. There aren't though 130 such prominent hills and the lowest tops included are 165m Nunburnholme Wold and Landmoth Hill, both slight mounds in fields. Seamer Beacon above Scarborough is the most easterly top, Roseberry Topping the most northerly. The greatest concentrations of tops are in the Yorkshire Dales with Wharfedale just beating Ingleborough to be the most westerly top. South of the Dales, from Skipton, there are a dozen scattered tops running down towards Huddersfield. South of there, several tops on the moors west of Holmfirth and on into the Peak District led to a string of tops on the eastern edge of the Derwent Valley, ending in the most southerly top, Stanage's High Neb.

### Logistics

The grid references, map extracts and links to route planning maps were provided online for each top, together with a brief note of the purpose of the project and circumstances where care needed to be taken. Paper copies were made available on request for any lacking access online.

After visiting a top, members could enter online their name and those of any companions, the top's name, the date and any information of note. At the same time photos taken on the trip could be uploaded to an online folder using a filename

indicating the top's number and ascensionists.

Alternatively, this information could be submitted by phone, email or text for others to enter.

The data automatically generated lists of which tops had been reached, which remained, who had done what, and an overall progress report updated every few days. These were available online with summaries in regular newsletters to members.



*Robert, Michael C and Helen S on Drumaldrace (27) the first weekend*

### **Progress**

The first weekend saw 46 visits to tops by members mostly in groups with Buckden Pike being especially popular seeing ten members going there.

Overall, 290 visits to tops were made. Progress was evenly distributed across the days of the week, except for Sundays and Thursdays being half as busy.

The first month, March, saw 155 visits made to tops by members or groups, and 117 in April. For May, June and July the numbers of reported visits were in single figures partly because all tops had by then been visited, and there were distracting meets in Scotland, Norway and France.

Those members visiting more than a dozen tops were: Jennifer & Peter Tennant, Paul Magson, Tamsin Spain, Arthur Salmon, Alan Kay, Rory Newman, Mick Borroff and



*Mick at Blea Barf cairn (56)*

Michael Smith. The first four listed were prospective members at the time and their enthusiasm for the project was welcome. Mick ticked off 27 tops.

During the 130<sup>th</sup> year as a whole, Michael visited all these tops: the last five on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2022.

### **Reactions**

What did members make of their visits to the tops? One member of many decades experience set out for one of the most arduous, pathless, rough, boggy moorland approaches and got half-way



*Michael S. at Oxnoy Common (34)*

there when his knees failed him and he had a laborious and painful retreat. That was just south of the M62's Pennine Way bridge – try it yourself sometime to see how bad it is and while there see if you can identify which clump of tussocks contains the highest point.

Paul Magson tramped up there with Tamsin Spain “*above the farm in the middle of the M62*” and commented that he’d “*always wondered what was up there - now we know.*”

Several members found the project a learning experience – beyond discovering that some of these places were ones they never wanted to visit again. Alan Linford had passed White Hill on the North Yorkshire Moors “*many a time but did not know ... the hump had a name.*” Alan Kay has long experience walking in the Dales but still found new ground was covered on his 18 ascents. Tamsin found that “*Smearset Scar is the Monte Viso of the Dales, smaller than the other peaks but providing views of Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and the Attermire area hills. We will definitely revisit this peak as it makes an ideal evening walk and is only a short drive from Lowstern.*”



*Peter Tennant on Horse Stone Naze (69) -*

## **Modi Operandi**

Members chose for themselves how to set about their ascents. Most tackled them as day walks. Becca Humphreys and the Booker-Smiths ran on Ingleborough. John Brown and Michael Smith backpacked above Swaledale. Others simply strolled out from their houses, Alan Palmer to Danby Beacon, and Alan Kay with Julia to Burley Moor. A few of the tops required short rock scrambles such as on Back Tor.

Two separate backpacking members tied for the most consecutive days spent ticking off tops: four. The greatest number of tops in a single day for any member was eight but he was driving between in three rounds of tops.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, some participants happened upon another member: two Smiths on Derwent Edge met Anca Pordea backpacking from Stanage's High Neb; and Rory Newman saw Alan Linford having lunch at the Wainstones. On Burley Moor, Arthur fell into conversation with a couple who turned out to be YRC

prospective members. On the other hand, at least three members were ticking tops round the top of Bilsdale on the same day but failed to spot one another.

Two-thirds of the 290 reported visits to the 130 tops, 193, were made by members out on their own or occasionally with a guest. Thirty percent, 86, were by pairs, six by threesomes and three by foursomes. Two other special outings were the one to Mickel Fell by seven members and a final get together on Otley Chevin by 11 members and



Ian H at the sinking trig (90)

three guests. Half of the tops saw two or three members visiting them and just 20 tops had only a single member visit them.

### Oddities

Rory Newman on Danby High Moor noted its “*odd stunted trig point on boggy moorland - only about two feet high. Is it sinking into the bog?*”

On Withins Height, Conrad Tetley and his “*less than enthusiastic 8 year-old greyhound, Ted... arrived at the high point where Ted fell asleep on the moor. We were serenaded off the moor by a single bagpiper playing atop Penistone Hill.*”

A few of the tops were unidentifiable with absolute certainty or inaccessible. The tangle of vegetation,



Mick reckons Lindley Moor (113) is somewhere under here

fallen trees and disturbed ground made finding the top all but impossible on tops such as Dunsley Moor. Rory found Seamer Beacon “*a hard-to-find top which has the remains of a folly - Baron Albert's Tower.*” The Lindley Moor spot height .292 in Norwood Edge Plantation is inaccessible inside a reservoir enclosure. In any case the ground around the mast and enclosure there has a few contenders for the highest point, all above the 290m contour.

Further south, Emley Moor tower stands on securely guarded private ground. Less than 50m away is a small covered reservoir, the back of which is close to the inaccessible top.

Concern was expressed that Barden Fell Top was on MoD land used for tank training



Barden Fell Top (108) – Forbidden Ground?

and lacked any right of access – indeed there were discouraging signs around the entrance. Consultations with ex-military members briefed Michael Smith with all he needed to make the one-kilometre assault as the sun was setting. Moving steadily over chewed up tracks and ditches he was assailed by flying objects intended to deter him - unarmed curlews and lapwings.



Maps did not always represent the terrain or trig location accurately. On Danby High Moor, Alan Linford found his planned approach was a “wellie job. The moor’s peat cutting is long since abandoned but leaving hollows for some distance before the top. The peat cutting access road is on the map but not on the ground... A slightly better access is from the Lyke Wake Walk Track.” Paul Magson spotted the Haw Cliff trig below the cliff from where it “had been uprooted and thrown over the edge to make way for a wind turbine.” Elsewhere, having tramped the area around Noon Hill, Michael Smith reported that “about 500m SSE of the listed top (.404) is Cock Howe which my GPS gave as 1m higher.”



## Conditions

Weather and ground conditions varied and were sometimes demanding.

April Fool’s Day found Alan Kay on Mallerstang Common walking over Archy Strygg “then on to High Seat. A lot of snow on both fells, though fine distant views to Lake District, Cross Fell, etc.” A couple of days later when Mike Gregg walked the Peak’s “five tops from High Stones to Hoar Stone along Howden Edge ... Bits of sunshine, snow showers, not a soul about.”

High above Nidderdale, Mick overcame the navigational challenges of an “aspirational path” on Little Whernside and found Moss Drive to be “another unmarked and featureless tussocky summit with some patches of soft snow. About 2°C with the odd light shower of hail.”

Between Carlton Moor and Noon Hill, Michael Smith held his breath and hurried over 150m through smoke from heather-burning in Scugdale.

For the Tennants “West Nab is on our local patch and a top we know well. We tried something different to see if we could get over the top to Raven Crag skirting the ‘Danger Area’ on Deer Hill Moss; we had several attempts but were thwarted by large patches of deeply pitted, wet tussocky ground and in the end retreated to the conduit path.” John Sutcliffe on the Pennine Way over Great Shunner Fell saw “that many of the mill floor flags had succumbed to the bog. Newly dropped bags of flags suggest they are planning to double-deck the pathway - probably a bottomless task though.”

In the first week, John Middleton’s early start paid off as he “was on Margery Hill’s most unimpressive summit by 09.40 in quite strong winds. It was an 8.8km round trip from the King’s Tree turning circle which took 1hr 24 mins including the usual coffee stop and a short botanical deviation. I met only two cyclists and two walkers all in the King’s Tree/Slippery Stones section.”

A 50mph wind on Pen-y-Ghent didn’t deter John S but “small cat-sized dogs were almost airborne while racing around, which they loved. While huge pit-pony-size dogs trembled with fear.”

However, not all outings were battles with the weather as Paul and Richard Dover, on Seamer Beacon by the GCHQ establishment above Scarborough, reported “Another

*beautiful sunny day with clear visibility giving good views over Ryedale and the north Wolds high ground.”* Incidentally, a signals intelligence service has been on that GCHQ site continually since 1914. Ray Harben parked there and was “*sure the car was checked out to make certain we were not Russian spies looking for Salisbury cathedral.*” There was also some encouragement for Jason Humphreys on Ingleborough’s Park and Simon Fells: “*cuckoo,*

*Alan H, Becca, Mick, Conrad and Peter B on the one that got away, Mickle Fell*



*frog spawn and two jet fighters attended to chivvy me along. Warm, dry, easy going underfoot, but with an increasing wind.”*

### **Over, Above, Beyond**

No sooner had the list of 130 tops been announced than one clever clogs pointed out that the list was fundamentally flawed. When the YRC was founded in 1892, Yorkshire included Mickle Fell which was donated in the 1970s boundary changes to Durham County. That discrepancy had to be dealt with.

Permissions were granted to enter the MoD Firing Range at the end of April and seven members gathered by the cattle grid on the B6276 to walk up it. Most then continued to High Cup Nick and down to Dufton for a pint in the Stag. Previously, GPS-prepared Mick traversed the Cross Fell - Knock Fell group followed a few weeks later by Peter Chadwick and Richard Taylor but “*old-school style using only map and compass.*”

Arthur and Frank Wilkinson queried the omission from the list of tops they visited on their



*Frank and Arthur on White Hill, one of the extras*

regular public transport based midweek walks on the moors between Bradford and Burnley. Six minor tops filtered from the original list were familiar to these octogenarians so they made a point of visiting them all in the designated 130 days: Manshead End 417m, Sheep Stones Edge 409m, High Brown Knoll 444m, Crow Hill 381m, Flight Hill 438m and White Hill 446m.



*Alan H. after Wharfedale (3)  
refreshed at the Station Inn*

As there was some doubt about getting access to the MoD's Barden Fell Top, a spare was added to the list: Cocklick Hill: "I've walked up some pointless hills in my time but this one takes the biscuit" was Steve McCain's assessment of this field near his Skipton home. As it turned out the 'reserve' hill was not needed.

For Honorary Member Alan Hinkes, what lay beyond his ascent of Ingleborough on the second day of the project was chancing upon a sign pointing out of nine of his earlier ascents including K2, Kanchenjunga and Everest. Obviously, the tenth and topmost challenge had to be faced... the 15 paces to get a pint at Ribbleshead's Station Inn.

### Elsewhere

Though members were out and about on these 130 tops their other activities continued unabated.

During this period they had skied, caved, climbed, scrambled, mountaineered, backpacked, dived, swum, kayaked, run, cycled and surveyed in places not only across the UK but in Norway, Sweden, France, Spain, Greece, South Africa and the Canary Islands. Yorkshire Ramblers do much more than ramble in Yorkshire.

### Worthwhile?

Several members commented the 130<sup>3</sup> challenges had taken them onto new ground they had never considered despite a lifetime of walking in Yorkshire. Some experiences were interesting, novel, or surprising while for others this one visit was more than sufficient. Many enjoyed the planning and navigation as much as the achievement. The success of the project was in its wide participation, the sense of a common achievement and in providing motivation for members to get out after a period of restricted access to the hills - 290 visits were made to these tops.

We do not expect this list of Yorkshire tops to become another tick list alongside those of the Marilyns, Wainwrights, Hewitts, Nuttalls, Deweys, Birketts and Grahams – there are already too many such lists. This project was purely for the Yorkshire Ramblers to do what they usually do: their own thing, for their own amusement.

However, we have already been asked by outsiders for copies of the list.

Participating Members were:

Peter Bann PM*	Mike Gregg	Anne Latham	Richard Smith
David Booker-Smith	Ray Harben	Alan Linford	Rod Smith
Fiona Booker-Smith	Christine Harrison	Harvey Lomas	Yayoi Smith
Mick Borroff	Jim Harrison	Paul Magson PM*	Tamsin Spain PM*
John Brown	Ian Hawkes	Stephen McCain PM*	John Sutcliffe
George Burfitt	Dorothy Heaton	John Middleton	Andy Syme
Derek Bush	David Hick	Rory Newman	Richard Taylor
Peter Chadwick	Chris Hilton	Alan Palmer	Jennifer Tennant PM*
Michael Crowther	Alan Hinkes	Anca Pordea	Peter Tennant PM*
Robert Crowther	Becca Humphreys	Arthur Salmon	Conrad Tetley
Paul Dover	Jason Humphreys	Barbara Salmon	Carol Whalley
Richard Dover	John Jenkin	Helen Smith	John Whalley
Iain Gilmour	Alan Kay	Michael Smith	Frank Wilkinson

\* indicates now a member

Guests accompanying Members were:

Felicity Beasley	Angie Linford
George Buxton	Christine Marriott *
Beverley Eastwood *	Valerie Middleton
Zara Eastwood	Lynn Oxlade
Alison Edwards	Malcolm Oxlade
Adrian Freeland	Gail Taylor
Sarah Gilmour	Hilary Tearle
Carole Harben	Sue Thomason
Sam Hawkes	Plus at least five dogs
Julia Kay	



*Michael on Great Whernside (6)  
with Pen-y-Ghent (9) behind*

*Celebratory gathering on the last top, Otley Chevin (114)*



The 130 tops plus the one that got away, in descending height order:

- |                              |                               |  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1, Mickle Fell, 788m         | 52, Kirkby Fell, 546m         |  |
| 2, Whernside, 736m           | 53, Snaizeholme Fell,         |  |
| 3, Ingleborough, 724m        | Redshaw Moss, 545m            |  |
| 4, Great Shunner Fell, 716m  | 54, Dead Man's Hill, 545m     |  |
| 5, High Seat, 709m           | 55, Great Haw, 544m           |  |
| 6, Great Whernside, 704m     | 56, Blea Barf, 542m           |  |
| 7, Buckden Pike, 702m        | 57, Outer Edge, 541m          |  |
| 8, Archy Styrigg, 695m       | 58, Parson's Pulpit, 538m     |  |
| 9, Pen-y-ghent, 694m         | 59, Back Tor, 538m            |  |
| 10, Hugh Seat, 689m          | 60, Woodhall Greet, 536m      |  |
| 11, Plover Hill, 680m        | 61, Blea Moor, 535m           |  |
| 12, Rogan's Seat, 672m       | 62, Harland Hill, 535m        |  |
| 13, Great Knoutberry, 672m   | 63, Back Scar, 534m           |  |
| 14, Water Crag, 668m         | 64, Proctor High Mark, 531m   |  |
| 15, Dodd Fell Hill, 668m     | 65, Clapham High Mark, 527m   |  |
| 16, Fountains Fell, 668m     | 66, Horse Stone Naze, 527m    |  |
| 17, Little Fell, 667m        | 67, Booze Moor, 522m          |  |
| 18, Sails, 666m              | 68, The Old Pike,             |  |
| 19, Fountains Fell           | Beamsley Beacon, 400m         |  |
| South Top, 664m              | 69, Hoar Stones -             |  |
| 20, White Mossy Hill, 659m   | Howden Edge, 514m             |  |
| 21, Simon Fell, 649m         | 70, Cleasby Hill, 511m        |  |
| 22, Lovely Seat, 645m        | 71, Blaydike Moss, 510m       |  |
| 23, Yockenthwaite Moor, 643m | 72, Cracoe Fell, 508m         |  |
| 24, Tor Mere Top, 628m       | 73, Thorpe Fell Top, 506m     |  |
| 25, Simon Fell Nth Top, 626m | 74, Cam Rakes, 503m           |  |
| 26, Darnbrook Fell, 624m     | 75, West Nab, 501m            |  |
| 27, Drumaldrace, 614m        | 76, Dead Edge End, 499m       |  |
| 28, Birks Fell, 610m         | 77, Kisdon, 499m              |  |
| 29, Horse Head Moor, 609m    | 78, Calver Hill, 487m         |  |
| 30, Little Whernside, 605m   | 79, Simon's Seat, 485m        |  |
| 31, High Green Field         | 80, Addlebrough, 481m         |  |
| Knott, 603m                  | 81, Elbolton Hill, 348m       |  |
| 32, Stony Band, 597m         | 82, Way Stone Edge, 482m      |  |
| 33, Woldside, 595m           | 83, Hoof Stones Height, 479m  |  |
| 34, Oxnop Common -           | 84, High Neb, 458m            |  |
| Blackstone, 584m             | 85, Withins Height, 457m      |  |
| 35, Brown Haw, 584m          | 86, Freeholds Top, 454m       |  |
| 36, Great Pinseat, 583m      | 87, Urra Moor - Round         |  |
| 37, Black Hill, 582m         | Hill, 454m                    |  |
| 38, Melbecks Moor, 578m      | 88, Little Wolf Stones, 443m  |  |
| 39, Meugher, 575m            | 89, Cringle Moor - Drake      |  |
| 40, Naughtberry Hill, 573m   | Howe, 434m                    |  |
| 41, Pickerstone Ridge, 565m  | 90, Danby High Moor, 432m     |  |
| 42, Park Fell, 564m          | 91, Round Hill, 409m          |  |
| 43, Hoove, 554m              | 92, Carlton Moor, 408m        |  |
| 44, Grizedales, 553m         | 93, Noon Hill, 404m           |  |
| 45, Height of Hazely, 553m   | 94, Cold Moor, 402m           |  |
| 46, Tarn Seat, 551m          | 95, Black Hambleton, 400m     |  |
| 47, Howden Edge, 550m        | 96, White Hill, 398m          |  |
| 48, Robert's Seat, 549m      | 97, Edge Mount, 396m          |  |
| 49, Moss Drive, 548m         | 98, Pinhaw Beacon, 388m       |  |
| 50, Rye Loaf Hill, 547m      | 99, Skipton Moor, 373m        |  |
| 51, Margery Hill, 546m       | 100, Hartcliff Hill, 365m     |  |
|                              | 101, Smearsett Scar, 363m     |  |
|                              | 102, Sharp Haw, 357m          |  |
|                              | 103, Burley Moor, 342m        |  |
|                              | 104, Rievaulx Moor, 329m      |  |
|                              | 105, Easby Moor, 324m         |  |
|                              | 106, Roseberry Topping, 320m  |  |
|                              | 107, Wharnccliffe Chase, 319m |  |
|                              | 108, Barden Fell Top, 318m    |  |
|                              | 109, Heads, 308m              |  |
|                              | 110, Danby Beacon, 301m       |  |
|                              | 111, Stony Leas -             |  |
|                              | Louven Howe, 299m             |  |
|                              | 112, Haw Cliff, 296m          |  |
|                              | 113, Lindley Moor, 292m       |  |
|                              | 114, The Chevin, 282m         |  |
|                              | 115, Emley Moor, 266m         |  |
|                              | 116, Brow Moor, 266m          |  |
|                              | 117, Dunsley Moor, 264m       |  |
|                              | 118, Far Hill Top, 257m       |  |
|                              | 119, Hood Hill, 251m          |  |
|                              | 120, Bishop Wilton Wold, 248m |  |
|                              | 121, Barns Cliff End, 222m    |  |
|                              | 122, Diddersley Hill, 209m    |  |
|                              | 123, Settrington Beacon, 199m |  |
|                              | 124, East Heselton Brow, 190m |  |
|                              | 125, Seamer Beacon, 189m      |  |
|                              | 126, Ganton Wold, 181m        |  |
|                              | 127, Croome Hill, 178m        |  |
|                              | 128, Woolley Edge, 176m       |  |
|                              | 129, Yearsley Cross, 174m     |  |
|                              | 130, Nunburnholme             |  |
|                              | Wold, 165m                    |  |
|                              | 131, Bonfire Hill aka         |  |
|                              | Landmoth Hill, 165m.          |  |



*Tarn Seat Pillar (46)*



**More from  
the YRC130<sup>3</sup>**  
Clockwise from top left:  
Great Knoutberry Hill  
(13, Peter Tennant),  
Horse Head Moor  
(29, Pete Bann),  
Darnbrook Fell  
(26, Paul Magson),  
East Heslerton Brow  
(124, Ray Harben),  
Danby Beacon  
(110, Angie Linford),  
Roseberry Topping  
(106, Alan Linford)



We held our traditional start to the calendar year with our winter LHG meet during a very wet period over the first weekend in January.

Members assembled during Friday afternoon and evening with only John and Carol managing any activity during that day.

As first to arrive, Carol lost no time in getting the fire going.

They then headed for Chapel Stile via Slaters Bridge, Dale End and the Burlington Slate Quarry, taking shelter from a heavy shower at the gated slate mine.

Refreshment at the Wainwright Inn was followed by a return via Elterwater, taking the rough Coniston track branching right from the road and signposted "Coniston by challenging route". This joined the outward track where the latter headed into the woods. They checked that the Three Shires was indeed closed, as is usual in early January. It was now dark so, lacking headlights, they returned by way of the footbridge beside the ford.

Martyn arrived about five minutes after our meet leader Robert who was accompanied by son Michael and John Jenkin. Cars unloaded, we were able to enjoy a cuppa and Carol's fire. After a jacket potato dinner and Alpaca cake we contemplated the following day's activity as the rainfall continued.

Saturday brought more early morning rain, however a fabulous full English breakfast steeled those assembled to head out for the day. Prior to setting off we were joined by Steve and Wendy Richards who had come over from Grasmere and shortly after by a dripping President.

We set off with the idea of a circular walk that would



*John J, Becca, Ged, Robert, Martyn, Carol, John W and in front, Michael*



keep us off the boggy ground and below the worst of the cloud. We headed off towards Wrynose Pass from the hut past High Hall Garth and dropping on the bridle path past Bridge End and towards Fell Foot farm after joining the road. Going past the Ting Mound we followed the road up to the Three Shires Stone near the summit of Wrynose and then split into two groups.

The first group of Becca, Steve, Wendy, Michael, Robert and Martyn headed off on the path up to Red Tarn Moss and taking the route between Cold Pike and Pike o' Blisco with good views of the Langdale Pikes when we had breaks in the weather.

Dropping into Great Langdale, the waterways off the fells were carrying plenty and Browney Gill looked impressive compared with the summer months. Heading down past Brown Howe, after a bite of lunch, into Oxendale and

past Stool End Farm we followed the track onwards to the Old Dungeon Ghyll for a brief break and a pint of local ale or a mulled wine depending on taste. Whilst in there the heavens truly opened, however the need to return the chef to LHG to prepare dinner meant that we put coats back on and headed out to return, following the track up the hill to where it links up with the road adjacent to Side Pike. We then followed the road passing Blea Tarn and dropping back into Little Langdale where Steve and Wendy recovered their car to head back to their warm cottage in Grasmere. The rest of us walked back to LHG past Bridge End to the warmth of the hut with just over eleven miles in total.

The second group of Carol and John upon arriving at the Three Shires Stone decided that they would not move as quickly as the rest of the party and so elected to go back down until they could traverse round to Blea Tarn, returning to LHG via the road and Slaters Bridge.

John and Ged, who arrived whilst we were out, formed a small working party doing some jobs around the hut including keeping in a warming fire. Supplies of brews and Eccles cake were enjoyed by all once they had dried off.

The evening brought plenty of conversation and a hearty meal of carrot and coriander soup, beef bourguignon, apple strudel and custard before both Ged and Becca headed back to Ingleton in the rain.

Sunday morning brought more of the same from a weather perspective so after breakfast most headed back home.

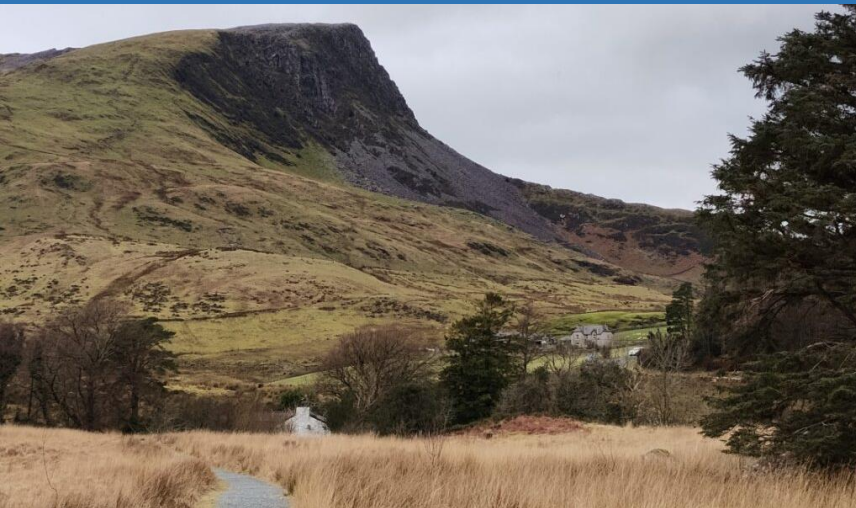
Thanks go to Robert for organising the meet. It would be nice to see more next year at this meet which will be held a week later and when the Three Shires should also be open.

Attendees: Ged Champion, Robert Crowther, Michael Crowther, Becca Humphreys, John Jenkin, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Martyn Trasler, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.



*Browney Ghyll*





Fifteen members and prospective members descended upon Tan yr Wyddfa on Friday evening. Michael Smith having arrived early and nipped up Y Garn (left), scrambling onwards to Mynydd Drws y Coed before returning via Cwm Marchnad. Alan Clare tested his quite recent new hip for an hour or so around the local area without mishap.

A couple of people risked eating in the local pub. It hasn't changed much, nor has some of the beer, by the taste of it. Most others ate in the cottage where a roaring fire discouraged any notion of going out for a drink.

Saturday dawned with a low cloud-base and occasional light drizzle. Conditions were forecast to improve and parties were soon on the hill. Mike Gregg, after walking down to Beddgelert climbed Moel Hebog and returned via Moel yr Ogof and Moel Lefn. Steve McCain, Paul and Tamsin, Michael, and Conrad ascended Snowdon from the cottage. Nearing the summit, they found themselves above the clouds with some spectacular views and Brocken spectres. They also found a multitude of people. It is a sad fact that

Snowdon has been massively overused since the end of covid restrictions. It's a pity more people share the view of this person who posted on Trip Advisor; *"I did the Pyg track there and back and found the ascent horrific – so exhausting. Rubbish views of ugly rocks and a couple lakes sometimes, would never do it again."*



*Michael, Conrad, Paul and Tamsin*



*Carol returning*

Steve returned down the Snowdon Ranger path, Michael and Conrad down the Watkin path and then back over Bwlch Cwm Llan whilst Paul and Tamsin returned the way they came.

The Whalleys, Harvey and Geraldine followed the bridleway to Beddgelert, later returning the same way. Alan got a considerable distance along the track before commonsense dictated a return.



The Nottingham three, David, Anca and Ignacio (right) drove to Ogwen and ascended the Glyders via the first half of Seniors' Ridge and the Cneifion Arete. They returned in time for dinner which must be a first for David.

Tim cycled bridleways to Nant Gwynant via Beddgelert and then the old road up to Pen y Gwryd. The roads were thankfully quiet



over Pen y Pass and down to Llanberis. He returned along the bridleway through Telegraph Valley up to the col between Moel Eilio and Moel Cynghorion before the long sweeping switchbacks of the descent to Snowdon Ranger. 45k, about 2/3 off road and an excellent circuit.

The entire meet managed to squeeze into the lounge for

dinner as the dining room felt close to freezing. The usual conviviality ensued and all enjoyed the evening.

Sunday's weather was slightly better, still cloudy but drier. Michael Smith and Conrad, seeking a shorter day, made a circuit of Cefn Du above Caernarfon looking for historical remains. Heading north to some hut circles they came across a 120m wide octagonal arrangement of large concrete blocks with metal attachments. These turned out to be the anchors for a Marconi Long Wave Transmitting Station aerial. The station was used throughout WW1 and in 1918 sent the first telegram directly to Australia. Rough going but fascinating.



Mike Gregg set off alone to climb Yr Aran via Bwlch Cwm Llan.

Steve set off up the Nantlle ridge, meeting up with the Nottingham set (now four, with the addition of Geraldine). Although it was misty, they still found the ridge impressive and entertaining. During the descent, on steep wet grass, one slipped and lost control. Rather than falling backwards they accelerated forwards. Another tackled the first with little diminution in speed. A third tackle finally brought the avalanche to a halt, fortuitously with only cuts and bruises (names redacted to avoid litigation).

*Llivedd from Snowdon's South Ridge*



This was a well-attended meet, sadly without the full winter conditions which are becoming so rare these days.

Attendees: Alan Clare, Ignacio Corradini (G), Mike Gregg, Tim Josephy, Geraldine Lally (G), David Large, Harvey Lomas. Steve McCain (PM), Conrad Tetley, Paul Magson, Anca Pordea, Tamsin Spain, Michael Smith, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.

Planning for Scotland: what's the weather doing? Search the forecasts and as usual the heart sinks. One forecast indicated winds reaching 70mph and it was clear that there was now little or no snow. Travelling up on the Thursday the weather was fine. A fish supper, no white pudding, in Kirriemuir then on to the Glen.

The new Braedownie Hut is located at the head of the Glen, at the end of the road in Glen Clova, a long cul-de-sac and is in the possession of Carn Dearg Mountaineering Club. The accommodation has a large combined kitchen, dining and sitting room. The wood burning fire kept the hut cosy and there was ample car parking. The two dorms were very snug which encouraged those of us of a shy disposition to sleep in the living room. The fridge was rather small too. There were many instructions to read, around the hut, to ward off the risk of boredom. The instructions for the shower were extensively detailed which to my simple mind boiled down to *'wait for the green light.'*

Fifteen places were booked and the meet was fully subscribed. However, David Large (right), Anca Pordea and Ignacio Corradini travelling from Nottingham on the Thursday stopped off overnight at David's family home after visiting the International Climbing Arena at Ratho (close to Edinburgh Airport) in the afternoon. The arena is set within a disused quarry with artificial climbing walls of up to 28m. Current cost per day is £12.50. Sufficiently warmed-up after a few climbs on a top rope, the three did a few lead climbs each on one of the four main walls at grades from 5+ to 7a.



Michael Smith and Tom Spencer took the opportunity on the way up to stretch their legs at a gentle trot above the River Swale, starting and finishing, by a full length, from Richmond's old Racecourse Common. A brisk pace was maintained due to the echo of tank fire to the south and small arms fire to the north.



Friday morning, bright and very breezy, clouds were scudding quickly but the wind not as fierce in the Glen as anticipated. Michael, Richard Smith, Steve McC and Tom headed up Corrie of Fee for Mayar and Driesh returning via a slippery Corrie of Farchal. They managed to locate some inclined snow on which to

practice their ice axe arrest technique. The ubiquitous deer were spotted and two hares in their winter garb were set running.

Wendy and Steve Richards with Ian Hawkes stepped northwards from the hut finding relative shelter in the glen then headed for Broad Cairn, returning with the wind to their backs along the skyline and dropping down via the Capel Road. Joyfully, ptarmigan, hares and deer were recorded.

Mick Borroff, Conrad, Richard Taylor, Mike Gregg and Chris drove a little way to the Clova Hotel (closed) to wander, clockwise on the recommendation of Ian, over Green Hill via The Snub and on to The Goet then back along the road. A decapitated hare, a mummified pheasant and the skeletal remains of a sheep decorated their path. Views of Lochnagar and Mount Keen made up for the forlorn fauna.



The Large group arrived at the hut around one pm to avoid the worst of the weather and wandered up Jock's Road to just beyond Davie's Bourach. This is an emergency shelter with a capacious sleeping platform. Vast tracts of fallen trees from a 2022 storm were a sight to behold. This short perambulation occasioned the Large party returning to the Hut before dark, a rare occurrence.



Richard S and Michael, the latter of whom, in a previous life must have been a ferret as nothing misses his inquisitive eye, set out before dinner to locate the



Hole of Weems just a short step from the Hut and a little way above the road. This is listed in a 1980 SMC guidebook as 'rough accommodation'. I'm certain founding members of the YRC would have considered this rocky space luxurious.

Chris provided the catering. Judging the correct volume and variety of comestibles when trying to avoid waste and keep costs down is a fine balance however murmurings in the ranks were voiced from certain curmudgeonly members when they discovered there was no marmalade, insufficient pudding and no cooked breakfast! I would contend that the comprehensive continental breakfast provided would put our neighbouring landmass to shame. As usual many hands made light work of dishing up and cleaning the pots.

Saturday morning dawned to a bright calm sky and 3 to 4 inches of fresh snow in the Glen and considerably more on the tops. The Large party, with Tom, had already planned to drive to Lochnagar, a two-and-a-half-hour journey requiring early rising, an early breakfast, and a pre-dawn start

The Smiths headed for Broad Cairn from where their paths diverged. Michael joined up with Steve McC, now heading south-east and retraced the path, now snow covered, taken by the Richards and Ian the day before. Richard S with an excess of youthfulness,

*Broad Cairn early on Saturday*



continued on towards Cairn Bannoch, Tolmount and Tom Buidhe, returning along Jock's Road in Glen Doll no doubt whistling Jacobean rebel songs.

Ian, along with Mick and Mike, motored south out of Glen Clova with an eye to a traverse of the hills above Glen Uig following the watershed and finishing on Broom Hill.

The rest set off for Mayar and Driesh. The soft wet snow draped the woodland which created that serene hush. The

snow would soon begin to melt but under a blue sky looked very picturesque. On the last shoulder below the top of Mayar a light mist rose obscuring any view and remained for the rest of the day. There were several parties tramping these hills and any number of hungry dogs. The Richards had a desire to continue along the broad ridge beyond Driesh to Cairn Inks then dropping down to the Clova Hotel, so from Mayar they quickly vanished into the thickening mist.



The Large party traversed the broad boulder strewn corrie of Lochnagar scouting for a route in condition. There was some solid neve under the fresh snow but nothing appealing so the party contented themselves with an ascent of Black Spout following the left-hand branch which led to a precarious cornice. Reaching the summit around 4.00 pm and back to the car by 7.00 pm guaranteed a late arrival at their lodgings. Those of us sitting comfortably in the hut took turns to guess the hour of their return but nobody had guessed after 10.00 pm. The atmosphere was light as the familiar late return was not due to the often bad weather or the severity of the climb.

The day was not without some excitement. On his return Ignacio was sporting a small cut above his left eye, in the style once

popular in institutions such as Heidelberg University, and fresh blood was still trickling down his cheek. The injury was sustained while negotiating the cornice. Last laugh to the Old Man.

Sunday dawned and the sun edged the tops of the opposite snowy hillside with a sharp pink line which quickly blurred as the sun rose.

Tasks were underway or completed before the meet organiser had a chance to ask

for volunteers. Wendy thoroughly cleaned, amongst other things, the electric fridge. Having lived in the USA, this little fridge was child's play.

The weather was better than expected and a pleasant time was had by all, both old and new faces.



(CH)

Attendance: Mick Borroff, Ignacio Corradini (G), Mike Gregg, Ian Hawkes, Chris Hilton, David Large, Steve McCain (PM), Anca Pordea, Richard Taylor, Conrad Tetley, Wendy Richards, Steve Richards, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Tom Spencer.



*Black Spout (above)*



*Ian on the track from Easter Lednathie (below)*







A challenging weather forecast preceded the Peak District meet. Snow was forecast in Central England and as predicted, substantial snowfalls had occurred on the Thursday night, causing numerous road blockages and road closures across the high Derbyshire passes.

Friday dawned with brilliant blue cloudless skies and stunning winter-white scenery with all assessing their potential journey plans. An advisory directive from

Derbyshire County Council that all unnecessary journeys should be avoided had been issued and a few members dropped out. A sign of the times, a WhatsApp group was very sensibly set up to keep everyone in touch and share information regarding snow conditions on access routes. On a personal level, some 'digging out' was required at the Yorkshire end, snow equipment was put in the boot and we set off on our adventure.

Our destination, the Orpheus Caving Club Cottage (above) was reached without problems, thankfully, and we found that Richard T, Martyn and Tim were ahead of us literally 'preparing the way'.

They had been digging through three-foot snow drifts to obtain easier access to our remote cottage. Cars were left just off the road adjoining the track to avoid getting snowed in. Everything had to be carried in over the snow, which was difficult, although we had no need to open the gates, as the drifting snow reached to the top and we could just walk over them. On reaching the cottage fire lighting was the priority in the sub-zero temperatures. It was very 'interesting' accommodation with outside toilets, a 'first' for some members.

Everyone settled in to the room with the fire, the forecast overnight was for  $-9^{\circ}\text{C}$  and I don't think I was alone in trying to plan to avoid a middle of the night toilet visit!



A few members had the England rugby international on their mind, Pete so much so, that he took a 'short cut' to the pub in Hartington, which turned out less short than he had envisaged. The rest of the party returned to base and drove down to join him, only to witness a very disappointing or perhaps dismal England performance. We drove back in more snow. Richard and Fliss had returned and a delightful supper was enjoyed by all.



*Lunch in  
Wolfscoate  
Dale:  
Mick,  
Richard,  
Ann,  
Beverley,  
Conrad*

*Sunset from  
the Orpheus  
CC cottage*



Saturday dawned bright, with no more snowfall. Most people had not had the best night's sleep due to the cold. Conrad had opted for a few chairs in front of the fire, rather than the cold dorm.

Mick arrived bright and early, having driven down from Yorkshire on clear roads after an alpine start with routes planned for us. We all set off on a 'frying pan' walk and

found the snow was 'deep and crisp' but not 'even'. We started on the Tissington Trail for approx. 6 km, which had areas of quite deep drifting, which made walking more challenging and some snow-free areas. Richard and Fliss headed off on a slightly different route, although our paths were to meet later in Wolfscote Dale, which they ascended. The rest of the party made a steep descent through snowdrifts to drop into Dovedale, followed by a lovely meander along the riverside track and a gentler ascent of Biggin Dale, passing through the National Nature Reserve.

Temperatures were more benign on Saturday night and most people slept well after their exertions. Sunday saw most people making homeward journeys, after giving the cottage arguably the best clean it had seen for some time. Mick, Tim and Richard T headed over to Hollinsclough in the sunshine and did an entertaining circuit of the limestone reef knolls of Hollins, Chrome and Parkhouse Hills – the Dragon's Back. The scrambly ascent of the latter required care in the stiff breeze and slippery underfoot conditions, and it was a delight to see a few patches of the tiny white flowers of Common Whitlowgrass emerging from the melting snow – spring is on its way!



*Martyn, Richard, Tim, Conrad, Bev and Anne in Wolfscote Dale*



A great weekend was had by all. Thanks have to go to Bev and Conrad for great food, Mick for route planning, everyone for great companionship and getting stuck-in on the chores. Pete and I took a scenic route back over the high peaks via Chatsworth, where we had to call in just to see how the other half live. (AL)

Attendees: Mick Borroff, Bev Eastwood, Tim Josephy, Anne Latham, Pete Latham, Fliss Roberts, Richard Smith, Richard Taylor, Conrad Tetley, Martyn Trasler.



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Reading the above, Roy Denney recalled walking over the Dragon's Back's (then newly opened to the public) in 1984 with his family to celebrate his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. They then retired to the traditional Quiet Woman pub in East Sterndale. That pub is now closed.



Following a wet week in The Lakes and with a mixed weather forecast promising both good and bad conditions, twenty YRC members travelled up to Glenridding, on the lower western side of Ullswater, with hope in their hearts and the promise of a sociable meet in Rod and Yayoi's capable hands. The Bury Jubilee Hut in the old Greenside Mine complex, was pleasingly spacious and well equipped with an invaluable log burner. Alan Hinkes popped in briefly for a chat finding everyone discussing their news and plans for the weekend's routes

Saturday dawned grey and dull with full cloud cover on the tops and a forecast that hinted at better things.

The Whalleys and John T took the miners zig zag track above the hut to reach the desolate footbridge amongst the upper Greenside mine workings. From there they reached Nick Head with its wonderful views over the glacially sculptured Glencoyne Valley. Harried by icy winds and briefly hail, they descended Bleabank Side and headed for the Travellers' Rest pub, returning up the track back to the hut, spurning Alan Hinkes' offer of a lift because, as Carol put it, *'we're 'ard'*!

Just ahead of them up to Nick Head were Steve and Wendy, the Crowthers and their guest, Robbie, who then traversed the highly recommended Miners' Balcony Path under Glencoyne Head. Branching north they squelched through some sopping conditions



*Robert, Wendy, Michael and Robbie*

underfoot, passing through the hamlet of Douthwaitehead before finding the path back towards the Dodds at Grovebeck Fold. With lowering clouds, biting wind chill, rain, hail and exposed terrain, they pressed on with minimal stops over Great Dodd, Watson's Dodd and Stybarrow Dodd – much to the dismay of Robert's stomach. With dissent in the ranks, Steve finally picked a lunch stop in the shelter of the upper Greenside Mine workings for a well-deserved brew. The passing back through the scrub juniper and gorse, they were pleased to reach the now warm hut.

Meanwhile, Fiona ran all the way around Ullswater – a very respectable 38km effort. Fe reported some sunshine and praised the benefits of pork pie and a Yorkie Bar during a quick pit-stop at Pooley Bridge.

Richard Smith, Chris and Dave headed up into Grisedale. Dave took in the summit of St Sunday Crag, whilst Rik and Chris ascended the fine grade III\*\*\* scramble of Pinnacle Ridge. The trio then routed via Grisedale Tarn up to Dollywaggon Pike, across Nethermost Pike and summited clouded Helvellyn.



Back in Grisedale, Conrad, Bev and Mick arrived at Eagle Crag quarry after a traverse from the hut. Scrambling virgin Bev roped up and Conrad led the Eagle Crag scramble (II\*).

Bev completed the route in good style, then they continued up Nethermost Pike East Ridge – a less frequented gem of an ascent, described by Wainwright as ‘a first-class route ... steep and exciting, finishing with an arête like a miniature Striding Edge’. Following a cloudy ascent to the summit of Helvellyn, they descended via Swirral Edge to be back in time for a hot shower and a beer by the stove, swapping tales of derring-do with the rest of us.



Also on the Dodds was Harvey Lomas, who came up Sticks Pass, turned south to top out on Raise then retraced his steps to head north onto Stybarrow Dodd. With the conditions showing no signs of easing, Harvey returned to the hut via Sticks Pass.

Loyal to their customers, Rod and Yayoi contented themselves with a walk down to Glenridding, making final purchases for the evening’s feast. Having walked back up, both were soon turning their hands to the preparation of the evening meal.

Finally, on enquiring of Alan Clare what he and John Jenkin had done for the day, I was informed that they ‘had a fossick about’ – further details were not forthcoming. Not even Alan Hinkes, who again dropped in for a chat, could squeeze the facts out of his namesake. My trusty Concise Oxford Dictionary reveals that this phrase describes one ‘rummaging or searching’ and ‘looking for gold etc in abandoned workings’.

Refreshed and warmed up with tea, beer and wine, all were looking forward to dinner. Rod and Yayoi did not disappoint, serving up a memorable feast, aptly described by Carol as ‘probably the best we’ve ever had on a YRC meel’. After Parma ham and melon, came slow roast pork with apple sauce, delicious stuffing, gravy, roast potatoes and veg, all perfectly



*Chris at the lower fall of Mosedale*

cooked. Completely spoilt, second helpings were not to be turned down and Chris proved that there was no limit to the amount of crackling that one might devour – just reward for earlier efforts on Pinnacle Ridge. Cheesecakes finished us all off and after many hands turned round the dishes there was plenty to discuss around the stove. It wasn't long before heavy eyelids led to the bunk beds, in somewhat warmer climes to the night before, to dreams of better weather the next day.

Sunday dawned just as gloomy as Saturday, but with promise of a midday improvement. Breakfasted on bacon butties, many hands moved to clean, tidy and prepare the hut for the next visitors. With long drives ahead, several members set off home with, for some, a little local exploration on the way.

Ever the early-bird, Rik set off with Dave and Fe for High Street, parking at Hartsop and ascending via Hayeswater. The weather stayed dry but cloud obscured the upper levels with 'patchy' views from the top. Finally, the weather cleared as the group descended Threshthwaite Cove for a great finish down Pasture Beck to Hartsop.

Chris and Mick set off for Sharp Edge on Blencathra in mind, but the cloud-shrouded summit persuaded them to try a lower scramble. As Chris had never been there before, they headed over to little-known Swindale for a shortish walk down to Mosedale Force past plenty of drumlins. This has an entertaining scramble up and along the stream side rocks past waterfalls and cascades, with some deep pools to bypass which Mick last did with Derek Bush some years ago. Unfortunately, the water was too high to cross the beck to link up the sections of clean rock and the wet sections they tried were extremely slippery. They thus retreated to walk along the opposite side of the dale back to the stepping stones at Truss Gap.



*Wendy heading towards Hartsop*



*Steve enjoying the views from Kidsty Pike*

Steve and Wendy decided a long walk was in order and anticipating the midday clearance, traversed across the foot of Grisedale and around to Patterdale, to watch red squirrels running riot in the pines at Thornhow End. They then followed the east side of the valley up to Hartsop, arriving as the sun made itself known. Pushing on up Pasture Bottom they briefly met with Fe, Dave and Rich on the lower slopes of Threshthwaite Cove, before reaching Thornthwaite Beacon via Threshthwaite Mouth. It had turned into a stunning day.

After a quick lunch and egged on by the weather and broad back of High Street, the duo pressed north over Racecourse Hill to the little-visited Kidsty Pike for views down to Haweswater. After traversing High Raise, a gentle descent took them, reluctantly, to a downward escape track alongside Martindale – a less visited but beautiful valley. It was then a matter of linking-up various scenic paths to finally join the eastern shores of Ullswater and the final trudge back up the track out of Glenridding to Greenside and a now lonely car outside the hut. A classic Lakeland day to remember – all 23 miles of it.

Thanks to Yayoi and Rod for their wonderful efforts – both organisational and culinary. A very sociable meet, despite some ‘iffy’ weather, and some notable achievements from everyone, including the fossicking about. (SR)



Attendees: Mick Borroff, Alan Clare, Michael Crowther, Robert Crowther, Bev Eastwood, Chris Hilton, Alan Hinkes, John Jenkin, Harvey Lomas, Robbie Marram (guest), Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Richard Smith, Rod Smith, Yayoi Smith, Dave Booker-Smith, Fiona Booker-Smith, Conrad Tetley, John Thurston (PM), Carol Whalley, John Whalley.



The unspoilt area of rugged granite of the Peneda-Gerês National Park bordering Spain is relatively little



known and offers superb hill walking. Our self-catering apartments in the Pousada do Gerês's grounds came with a good breakfast provided.

In contrast to the washed-out Costa Blanca meet in 2022, this week was blessed with sunshine and blue skies for almost our

entire visit. So shorts and tee-shirts were the norm until the overgrown nature of some trails was recognised and a few ticks removed.

Almost everyone assembled at the Pousada on Friday evening after their travels, John arriving by bus. Several visited towns on the way up from Porto. After visiting the local Roman bridge, most headed down to one of the local bars, for a tapas-style meal including smoked sausage flambéed in aguardente (local grappa).

The following selection from the week's many routes gives a flavour of what the area has to offer – so much that one member returned with spouse in the autumn.

Mick, Ian, John, Richard, Pete, Jen and Peter drove to the Serra do Soajo to walk to **Pedrada** and the **Fojo do Lobo** (wolf trap) from the Travanca campsite.

A good track through the gorse gave access to more broken ground where long horned barrosã cattle grazed and three wild boars were seen.

*Pete, John and Jen heading towards the col leading to Pedrada*





*John braves the killing pit at the end of the funnel*

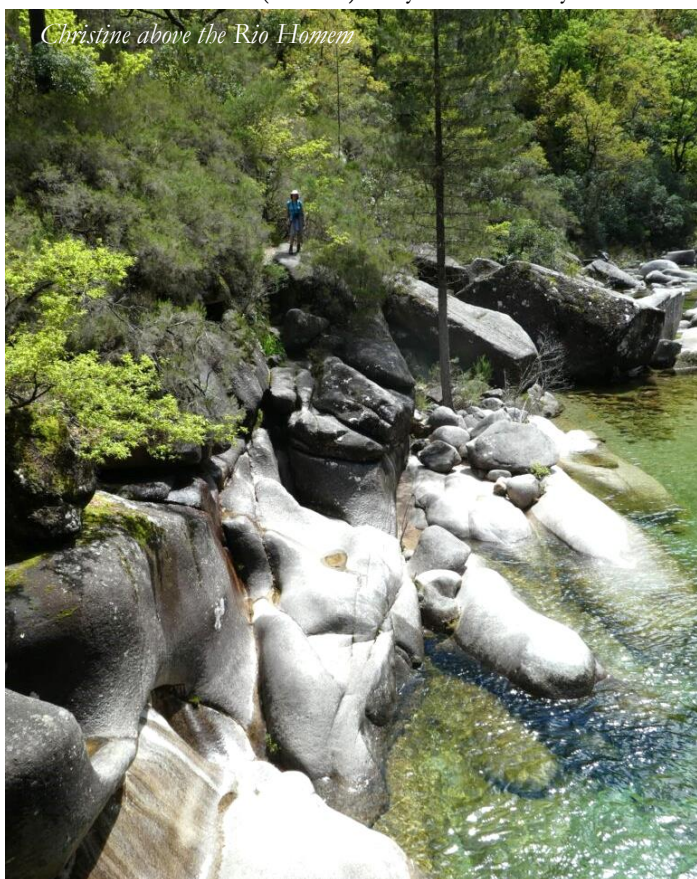
The rocky ascent led to **Pedrada** (1416m) and then a pathless descent by the funnelling 2m high drystone walls of the wolf trap leading to the deep terminal pit. A good faster track led back to the car. 18.2km, 900m ascent.

The Smiths drove to **Fafião** for **Trilho da Veziera** and **Bicos Altos**. Fiona ran the runnable parts of the longer round shown in a guidebook, anticlockwise (21km) getting well and truly scratched on the northern half. The other three took the equally rough shortcut from the dam past two shepherds' rock huts then steeply up over Bicos Alto (1199m). Beyond this they

re-joined Fiona's route on the far side to descend. 18.7km, 1,006m ascent. Having finished her yoga exercises, the considerate daughter drove to meet them, saving them the road walk back up to the village.

From the apartments, Chris, Christine, David and Nick hiked the length of the reservoir, **Albufeira de Vilarinho da Fuma** to a bridge crossing the Rio Homem which was an ideal lunch stop.

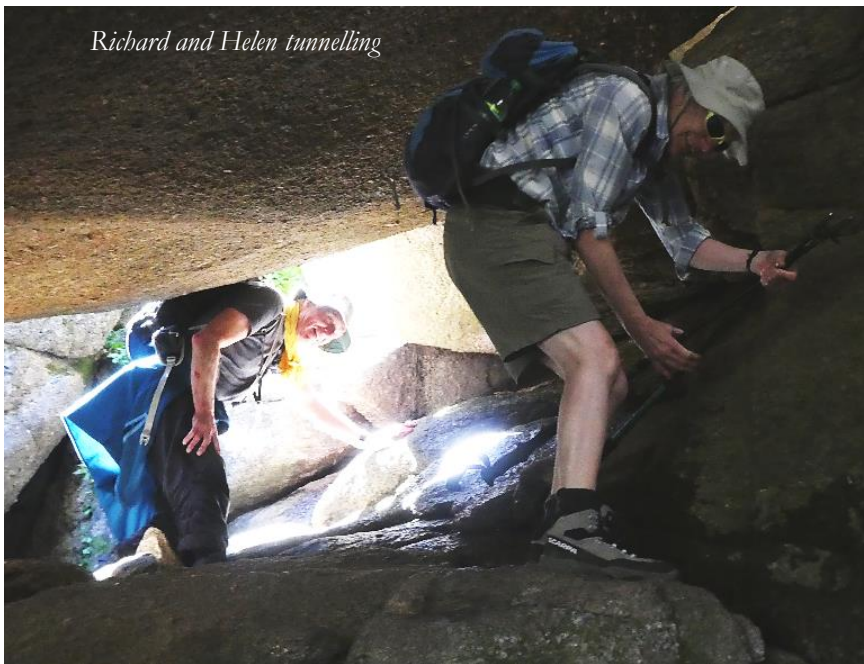
The return leg took them along an original paved section of Roman Road with original milestones. They took their time observing the diverse flowers and insects including butterflies. Steve and Wendy also took that historical Roman route north by the Albufeira, branching off at the end to follow the



*Christine above the Rio Homem*

old Roman Road up to the Spanish border. Reversing the route, they opted for a cool dip at a series of waterfalls.

After a short walk into Carreira and a coffee stop, Steve and Wendy explored the rocky peaks to the south east of Campo do Gerês: **Calcedonia** and **Curvaceira**, before taking the **Trilho das Silhas dos Ursos**, topping out at 900m at the fine viewpoint over the



*Richard and Helen tunnelling*

Gerês valley. Descent was via a section of the GR50 back to the Pousada, an early introduction to the tricky route finding through scratchy, and overgrown paths. Michael, Helen and Richard did a variation on this later. The highest part between the rocky peaks involved tunnelling down through enormous boulders. 17.3km with 730m ascent.

Mick, Ian, John, Peter and Jen set out from the hostel to tackle the **western half of the Cicerone Gerês circuit walk** and climb the **Pé de Cabril** (goats foot mountain) in the Serra do Gerês. They started on a section of the Roman Road and picked up the main valley route to cross undulating rocky terrain on a good path, with flowers and butterflies. Lunch was taken at Prado, a spring-watered meadow with a shepherd's hut. The triple summits of the Pé de Cabril came into view and all except John scrambled to one of the summits via by a few strategically placed stemples. A long descent followed. The views of the wild terrain to the east were impressive. The Albergaria beech woods' shade was welcome and the track above the reservoir was followed back to the village. 22.9km with 990m ascent.

They later returned to hike the second half of the round taking in an ascent of **Borrageiro** (1430m). From the Portela de Leonte they headed up into undulating granite hills interspersed with three grassy meadows each complete with a spring, oak trees, and a small cabane. After the top and lunch, they sighted two sizeable herds of cabra montés (Iberian wild goats). They then met Steve, Wendy and Pete who were doing the full circuit in one go. Probably the best walk of their week. 16.9km with 960m ascent.





*One of Brufe's older espigueiros (granaries)*

Chris's party as before did a walk from **Brufe** which took in three villages and attempted a top called **Carvalhinha** (1096m). They unintentionally entered a labyrinth of prickly gorse which delayed their return journey leaving Chris, who had taken a lower route, wondering what had happened. Later Booker, Fiona, Helen, and Michael followed much the same route finding a way to that top. Starting on ancient paved ways they passed through mixed woodland, gorse, and heather covered boulder-strewn hills past barrosã cattle and wild horses with foals on the higher areas.

Pete, Wendy and Steve crossed the dam of the Albufeira de Vilarinho das

Furnas and took a pleasant path up **Muro** (1345m) passing grazing cattle, shepherds' beehive shelters, and swathes of yellow gorse and purple heather. Passing a probable old wolf trap, they went over **Lourica** (1359m), Serra Amarela's highest point, to drop through old paths, meadows, and sub-alpine forest back to the Albufeira. The last 150m to the dirt track was through gorse and brambles.



*Shepherds' shelter on Muro*

A large group walked the **Trilho dos Currais** from Vila do Gerês. After a shady start through the woods, they explored several communal goat-grazing corrals. They had views from the Miradouro do Pedra Bela before returning for a welcome beer. Jen picked up two ticks, Mick one. 10.5 km with 650m ascent.

On a day of two halves, the party split allowing available VF kit to be shared. The walk

took in **Ponta da Misarela** from **Sidros** or the **Roman bridge over the Rio Rabagão**. Consternation was provided by Michael almost stepping on a metre-long fleeing Western Montpellier Snake. The **Via Ferrate Teto do Mundo** near Alturas do Barroso gave an entertaining, short, steep ascent on granite. From its **Corvos** summit (1,216m), Chris and Dave watched the climbers wobble across a wire bridge.





Tim tackled the trail to the **Pé de Cabril** and located a partially hidden slot that gave ready access to the middle and eastern tops. Others later passed under the Pé de Cabril and down to Portela de Leonte, for the climb to **Curral do Vidoal**. After tricky route finding off the **Prado da Messe**, the descent was via the Casa de Albergaria and the old Roman Road, through rocky outcrops and thick shady oak forests.

A mass outing was made to the **Minas dos Carris from Portela de Homem**. As this is in a protected reserve, permits were applied for earlier. They were carefully checked soon after

we set foot on the long rough track up the valley to reach the abandoned buildings of the old tungsten mine complex. Nearby **Carris** (1508m) was ascended making the highest point of the week. Steve and Wendy had a proper swim in the Rio Homem on the way back. 22km with 850m ascent.

Meanwhile Chris and Christine walked from almost the Spanish border alongside the Rio

Homem

then the

reservoir

and village

by our

apartments

for a beer

and vinho

verde

respectively.

Richard later

took the

same route,

also having a

beer there.



*Helen crossing Bicos Alto*



Wednesday evening, everyone enjoyed a group meal at the Parque Cerdeira restaurant.

Chris, Tim and Nick went to Ermida to do the PR14 **Trilho Sobreiral da Ermida** – a cracker of a walk with miradors, waterfalls, stone shepherds’ huts, ancient cork forest and importantly, a bar at the end. 14km with 750m ascent.

The Smiths, David and Christine departed early for Porto and a spot of tourism including visiting an exhibition of the terracotta warriors and tasting eight port wines – some of them twice. Steve and Wendy took the bus for some extended sightseeing in Braga then Porto even including dipping a toe in the Atlantic. Most opted to catch their flight home by rising very early for the drive back to Porto.

This was an excellent meet in a new and interesting area with sunshine every day. The next area of Portuguese granite mountains to the east is even less well-known and may provide a future meet. Thanks, Mick, for the inspiration and meticulous planning.

Attendees: Mick Borroff, Pete Bann, David Booker-Smith, Fiona Booker-Smith, Chris Harrison, Ian Hawkes, David Hick, Tim Josephy, Christine Marriott, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, John Sutcliffe, Richard Taylor, Jennifer Tennant (PM), Peter Tennant (PM), Nick Welch.





It rained on one notable citizen's parade but it didn't rain on ours. A steadily improving forecast culminated in an affable weekend; sunny spells, light winds and a temperature sufficient to allow sitting out till well after dark.

Balloch O'Dee campsite, eight miles west of Newton Stewart proved to be an excellent choice, dog and family friendly with a pleasing absence of music. The quirkily decorated and regularly maintained facilities were more than adequate and the owner was most friendly and helpful.

By Friday evening various enormous bouncy castles (pneumatic tube tents) had been erected, offering accommodation for several garrisons although none were occupied by more than two inmates. The contrast between these and the tiny hovels occupied by the hard men, Mike, Tim and Alan so affected the campsite owner, James, that he instantly offered them a £5 discount.

Some just drove up on the Friday. Fiona and Dave couldn't resist the attractions of the Devil's Porridge museum in Gretna, finding it surprisingly interesting. The 'porridge' was a First World War explosive mixture made in what was then the world's biggest munitions factory. Michael and Helen visited the Cairnholy chambered cairn (right) and the Mill of Fleet. Mike climbed



Cairnsmore, a name he seemed to have a bit of an obsession with.

Saturday dawned dry but with low cloud which lifted and dispersed as the morning progressed. The main body of the meet drove to Glen Trool. After an early hiccup when Michael and Mick each thought the other was navigating, they and Richard (with broken rib from a frisbee-catcher's shoulder), Floss (portaging Richard's gear), Helen and Rebecca



*Merrick's rough track, Richard, Helen, Rebecca*

went up Merrick from Glen Trool via the rough track up to Loch Enoch and directly up Redstone Rig. Also in attendance were the dogs Bailey and Fern who each thought the other was beneath their dignity so did their

own thing. Arran and Ailsa Craig were seen through the haze.

David and Christine walked part way up Merrick for the view, then returned to walk around Loch Trool. Fiona also drove to Glen



*Mick, Richard, Fliss, Rebecca, Helen, Michael watched by Bailey*

Trool to embark upon a 27km run in preparation for The Lap, a 75km circuit of Windermere later in the month. Each to their own!

Dave and Tim cycled a part of the Seven Stanes route from Newton Stewart, north to Loch Dee then by Loch Trool and back. Around 65km mostly on forest tracks, it was a very enjoyable round. Hilary also cycled, from the campsite a similar distance.

Mike climbed another Cairnsmore,

the one of Fleet, and over another Marylin, Craig Hill.

Alan continued his tradition of fossicking although he did have two aims; to find a pub and to source some sausages. He failed on both objectives.

Helen had planned a barbecue: our friend James provided a capacious firepit and Fiona brought a flag. Opinions on the monarchy ran the full gamut of possibilities but Alan encompassed all views with his toast of “Up King Charles!”

A most convivial evening ensued and as the campsite children were being herded to bed, festivities ended about ten o’clock

Sunday was a misty morning but with the promise of sun. Mike inevitably climbed another Cairnsmore before departing north towards Eigg where he is destined to be disappointed, there are surely no Cairnsmores there.



*Patriotic Fliss*





Tim went Glen Trool and cycled a 27 km loop around the Loch and beyond, mostly on singletrack and through ancient forests bursting into spring life.

Helen and Michael started up Cairnsmore of Fleet in glorious sunshine but cloud enveloped them at 460m and did not release them until they had topped out and dropped below that height again. The hoped-for views were denied them. The next generation of the Smiths walked a round of the Mull of Galloway.

David and Christine set off for home, breaking their journey to visit the Cairnholy site and enjoy a short coastal walk.

Mick and Hilary headed over to the Cairnsmore of Fleet National Nature Reserve to the East of Newton Stewart. Mick walked over the Clints of Dromore ridge up to Craig Hill, returning via the disused railway line. Dozens of large hairy moth caterpillars were displaying themselves on the grass. Meanwhile, Hilary cycled on a series of forest trails over towards Loch Clatteringshaw and took in a section along the old railway track bed.



*One of the Hairy Moth Caterpillars*

Camping meets are always a lottery being so dependent on the weather but everything combined to make this a most enjoyable weekend. Well found and organised Tim.

Attendees: Fiona Booker-Smith, Dave Booker-Smith, Mick Borroff, Alan Clare, Mike Gregg, David Hick, Tim Josephy, Rebecca King (PM), Christine Marriott, Fliss Roberts, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Hilary Tearle (G)

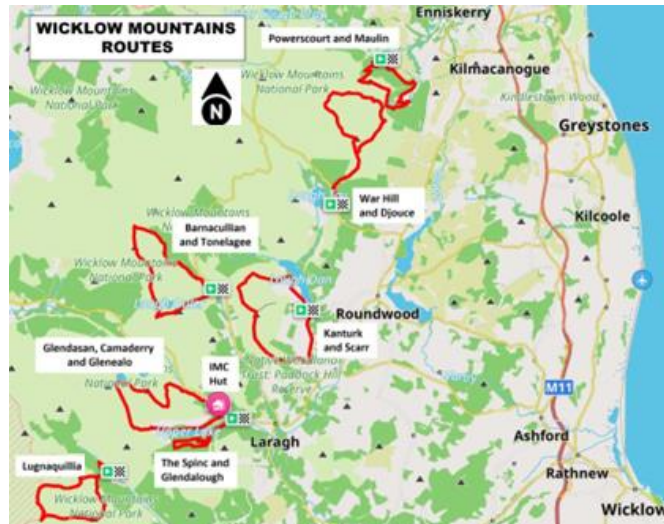
The Wicklow mountains are the hills nearest Dublin and form the largest upland area in Ireland, the highest point being the Irish ‘Munro’ of Lugnaquilla (925m). They have granite peaks, post-glacial deep valleys, corries, mountain lakes and remote moorland. It became a National Park in 1991.



All five members were in the area for this first time. Their base was the Irish Mountaineering Club’s hut in Glendalough on the Eastern side of the Wicklows near Laragh and had the place to themselves. It was a sunny week of blue skies with a chilly wind on the summits – no need for waterproofs or gaiters. Midges were only out in force early morning and in the evenings. Proximity to Dublin brought weekend visitors and these hills get a more attention than the other Irish mountain groups the Club has visited recently.



Seven routes were walked and one included a short scramble. We carried 1:25k OS Ireland and 1:40k Harvey paper maps, but OpenStreetMap on a phone or GPS device more comprehensively showed paths with labelling not included on the two topo maps. After a calm crossing from Holyhead, Mick, Tim and Conrad drove from Dublin encountering slow traffic on the motorway and crowds enjoying the sunshine and the





bars in Laragh. They did a late afternoon walk from Glendalough through the old oak woods and a felled plantation up to the rocky Spinc ridge overlooking the glacial lakes in the valley. On the return they visited the monastic city with its 30m high round campanile, built a thousand years ago and a graveyard near the cathedral ruins

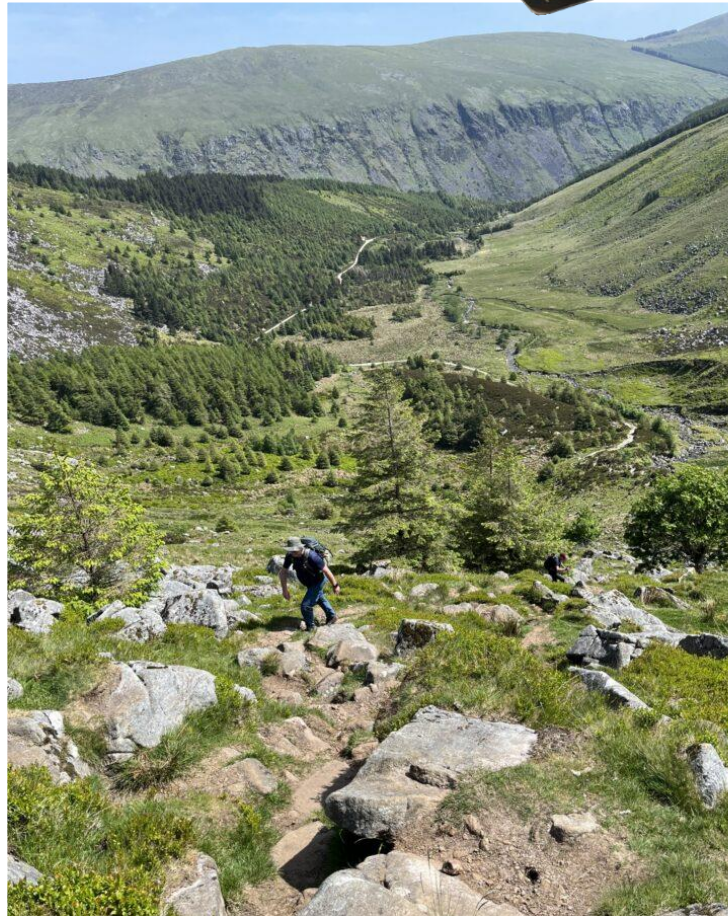
Back at the hut after Guinness, they found Pete and Anne had already arrived by bike from Cronybyrne, near Laragh.

Sunday - Given the weekend



crowds, all decided on one of the less popular walks where parking would hopefully not be a problem and chose a round of Scarr and Kanturk from Oldbridge near Lough Dan. They got last parking place in the layby. These mid-height hills are centrally located and give all-round views.

Monday –Herman’s Wicklows guide suggested as Lugnaquilla most scenic the Faughan Rock Glen route from Glenmalure. In the forested valley the first of many Sika deer were seen. The route gave good views ‘Lug’s’ three rocky corries as well as the expected panorama. Descending, they encountered a new sign informing walkers that access was denied to the main Glenmalure Zig-Zag path after an assault on the landowner by a walker





determined to take his two dogs with him despite this not being allowed. Fortunately, the alternative, Art's Lough descent route was not at issue.

Anne and Pete cycled from the IMC hut down to Laragh and then up the Glendalough valley on the Miners' Road as far as the lead mine ruins. Locking their bikes up, they then

ascended the path as far as the footbridge over the Glenealo River and returned via the monastic city.

Tuesday - With Tim off on his bike, the others walked from the hut round two valleys on either side of Camaderry. Both the Glendasan and Glenealo valleys have been mined for lead and zinc since the early 19th century and reworked in the 1950s. They were connected by a tunnel under Camaderry. Their lead-bearing veins all occur in granite giving a contrasting landscape to that seen around the Yorkshire Dales lead mines. Lunch was taken near the upper reservoir of the Turlough Hill pump storage hydroelectricity scheme with views across to Lugnaquilla. Several herds of sika deer were grazing at the head of Glenealo and the stream was followed and back across the stepping stones to the hut.



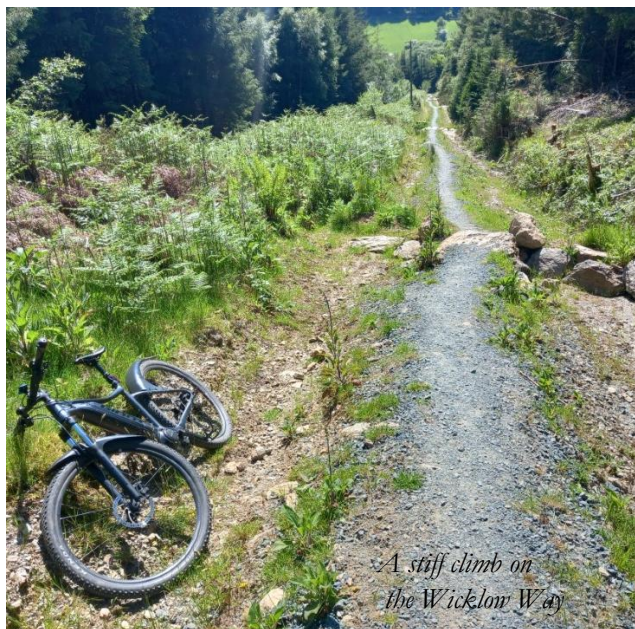
Tim drove to Glenmalure to ride south along the Wicklow Way, returning via forest tracks. The start, a 500m ascent up steep forest tracks was brutal. Worse was to come, after about 7km the way was blocked by forestry work.



After a couple of hours casting about, including 1km on a narrow wooden causeway he found himself well off route and only 9km from the start.

Returning to the car he found a small road accessing the circuit a bit further on. The rest of the way was monotonous, mostly in plantations. He arrived back at the car after 65km and over 1,800m of ascent. The battery was flat!

Wednesday - Pete and Anne needed to start their journey to Dublin to catch the Holyhead ferry and Conrad was doing some genealogy research in Wicklow, so Tim and Mick headed up the Military Road out of Laragh to walk the round of the Barnacullian Ridge and Tonelagee. It was a varied outing. A long and pleasant saunter beside the Glenmacnass River slowly gained height and led to an all-too-short scramble up granite slabs beside the infant river. The lengthy ridge from Barnacullian led to a vast desert-like expanse of exposed peat



*A stiff climb on the Wicklow Way*



dotted with vegetation-topped peat hags and they were glad that it was dry underfoot. Tonelagee was gave a fine view to the heart-shaped Lough Ouler.

Thursday - Tim was biking again, so Mick and Conrad set off on a walk taking in the summits of War Hill and Djouce. A section of the Wicklow Way was followed over White Hill with a superb view across to Lough Tay nestling below Luggala. They followed the Way down to Glensoulan and its junction with the Dargle River. The up-valley path on





the OSM map was only patch deer tracks through bracken and heather. Once on War Hill the going became a lot easier and the rocky tor at the summit of Djouce was soon underfoot, returning over White Hill.

Tim accompanied Conrad and Mick to their car park and cycled down to Ballinastoe mountain bike centre to do a purpose-built trail then follow the Wicklow Way back to Laragh. In this he was thwarted by peremptory signs threatening prosecution to anyone daring to cycle along the wide forest tracks. Still the ride to Laragh along quiet lanes was pleasant. A local cyclist told him that basically off-road riding is illegal in Ireland but his advice was to ignore all that, “*Sure you’ll be fine!*”

So in the afternoon Tim followed beautiful trails through ancient oak and beech forest along the Avonmore river. Worth the risk of incarceration.

Friday - Two shorter routes from the guidebook were combined, starting from Crone. The deciduous woods of the Powerscourt Estate were crossed to the foot of the 121m high Powerscourt waterfall, supposedly the highest in Ireland. After following the Dargle River downstream, a steep ascent through trees led to a short section of the Wicklow Way, a path across a fellside to Maulin and a descent through a plantation.

An excellent week.

Attendees: Mick Borroff, Tim Josephy, Anne Latham, Pete Latham, Conrad Tetley.



Given the considerable number of retired members in the Club, Rod Smith suggested the idea of a running a midweek meet to the Meets Committee who thought the idea had merit: quieter fells, fewer congested roads, easy parking, and the possibility to book into one of the smaller kindred club huts.

*Buttermere from the slopes of Red Pike*



Flaming June was chosen and the FRCC's Birkness Coach House cottage booked, just a stone's throw from the shore of Buttermere. The weather genie played ball and a select four attendees enjoyed a superb meet, bookended with additional days on the hill in the glorious sunshine.

Driving in and leaving the cloud bank over the Pennines behind, Mick couldn't resist the sunlight picking out Blencathra's Sharp Edge. He parked at Bowscale and headed up. A couple of walkers were met beside the Glendermackin river and a few more up by Angle Tarn watching some wild swimmers. Sharp Edge had not a soul on it. After Blencathra Mick continued over Atkinson Pike and Bowscale Fell under blue skies.

Michael meanwhile from Rosthwaite, traversed Glaramara to Sprinkling and Styhead Tarns, returning via Stockley Bridge and Thorneythwaite Farm. That only left a drive over Honister to reach Birkness in time for a splendid dinner prepared by Rod and Yayoi with olives and snacks, followed by wild garlic soup, beef in ale pie, strawberry cheesecake, then cheese and crackers, all paired with a fine tempranillo.

In the morning a mouse made an appearance at breakfast and after posing for a photo, swiftly scampered down into the toaster saving us the job of cornering and catching it. Kind-hearted Mick released it into the woods.



Rod was attending a meeting of the Mountain Heritage Trust trustees, so fortified with a continental breakfast and bacon rolls, Yayoi, Michael, and Mick set off from the Coach House and walked towards Buttermere village bound for the summits on the south side. All climbed up to Bleaberry Tarn and High Stile via its scrambly NE ridge, then on to High Crag. Yayoi and Michael descended to Gatesgarth Farm while Mick continued over Haystacks, and Fleetwith Pike via the Dubs Hut. Mick met a large group of people and a guide bedecked in via ferrata kit at Black Star where one of the Honister Slate Mine via ferratas terminates. On the descent a group of wild swimmers were in the so-called Buttermere Infinity Pool in Warnscale Beck made popular recently on social media. Lower down the path, two Spanish visitors asked if they were on the correct path to it.

Dinner was taken at the Kirkstile Inn nestling under Mellbreak at Loweswater where the food, ambience and pub-brewed craft beers can be warmly recommended.





Having usually ascended the hills of the Coledale round from the east, Mick decided on a different approach from the empty Cinderdale Common car park beside Crummock Water. A few walkers were encountered on the route up the Lad Hows path to Grasmoor and then over Sand Hill to Hopegill Head – all enjoying the warm weather. The return was made via the Hope Gill path below Ladyside, then by contouring south around the fell and the waterside path.



*Rod and Yayoi on Knott Rigg with the High Stile route marked*



*Looking back from Saturday's route to Red Pike*

Michael, Yayoi and Rod parked at Newlands Hause to walk up Knott Rigg and were rewarded with fine views of yesterday's routes. Rod and Yayoi needed to head home so turned back. Michael continued over Ard Craggs to Little Town to cross Robinson and descend by Moss Force. Later he spent days in Langdale and Conistone.

All four hope that there will be more of these mid-week meets in future years.

Thanks Yayoi and Rod for suggesting, organising and feeding this meet.

Attendees:  
Mick Borroff,  
Michael Smith,  
Rod Smith,  
Yayoi Smith.

Seven members, a prospective member and a guest attended this successful and enjoyable meet at the Clogwyn MC's hut The Old Stable, situated on the road to Croesor near Plas Brondanw, erstwhile home of Clough Williams Ellis. Williams Ellis was the celebrated Welsh architect who created the fantasy Italianate village of Portmeirion nearby. Our thoughts however were focused on climbing and although the long dry spell was breaking down over the weekend, we were lucky with the showers and activity was not seriously affected.

Arriving early, Helen S and Michael walked the ridge to Croesor. A return along the disused quarry railway line failed requiring a long diversion.

Downpours on Friday night cleared to leave a warm

*Badychain, Helen and Andrea*



sunny day. Climbers, Helen B, Andrea, Mark and Richard drove to the Moelwyn crags. At Craig yr Wrysgan first, Mark and Richard climbed White Streak and Honeysuckle Corner (HS) while the others did the excellent Y Gelynen, given VD but no pushover at that grade. They then moved over to Craig Clipiau, Richard's diretissima approach causing some dissension among the ranks. Helen and Andrea climbed Usher's Dilemma, a fine HS whilst Mark and Richard did Depression Direct (VS\*\*) with a tough finish.

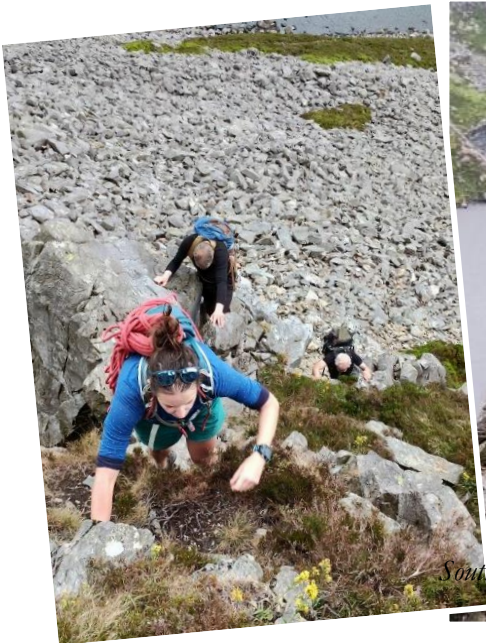
*Llyn Hywel, Helen with Fiona and Chris surveying the ridge above*

The rest of the meet drove down to the Rhinogs to mount an assault on the fabled South Ridge scramble of Rhinog Fawr, rated “moderately difficult” by the 1935 first ascensionist, Showell Styles. He was a modest man



and they feared the worst. After parking at the head of Cwm Nantcol they ascended through ever more rough and spectacular terrain to the shores of Llyn Hywel. Tim, who had driven through Rhyd Ddu early that morning and witnessed the hordes already setting off for Snowdon was struck by the wonderful solitude. One man and his dog were about all we spotted, and those at a distance.

After a nervous lunch under the precipice, pipes were knocked out and the assault began. Smith led off, followed by Smith and Smith. Hilton offered encouragement and Josephy took up the rear where he could escape if things got too much. Smith negotiated a steep buttress, Smith followed but Smith took a detour through deep heather. Relying on quantum tunnelling (look it up), she attempted to go through a rock rather than round it, resulting in a splendid bruise as a badge of honour. Another steep step intervened and Smith stuck. Smith uncoiled the rope and lowered it. Josephy tied Smith on and Hilton applied firm pressure to the buttock (discussion ensued as to which noun “firm” should be attached but delicacy precludes further elaboration). This proved the last major obstacle and the summit was soon gained in triumph.



*South Ridge scramble of Rhinog Fawr*

A very steep and rough descent took them North to Bwlch Drws Ardudwy below Rhinog Fawr. It was hot and oppressive. Hilton announced he was suffering from glacier lassitude and wasn't up for the ascent. Resistance rapidly crumbled and apart from Smith junior who carried on down the valley to the hut, the rest returned to the car down the valley.

The meet reassembled in the small but cosy and very well kept Old Stable hut to find Andrea and Helen constructing some fantastic salads to accompany the sausages roasting in the oven. The usual convivial evening ensued and all were in bed before long.

Turning in involved a steep ladder ascent through a trapdoor into the roof space.

Sunday dawned bright and sunny. Chris climbed Cnicht before a swift descent and heading home. The Smiths accompanied him over Cnicht (right) then continued to the Rhosydd quarries, battling the insect life before returning to Croesor, just managing to beat the rain. Finding the café closed,





they stopped at the Plas Brondanw Gardens close by the hut.

Helen, Andrea, Mark and Tim went to the sport crag of Badychain just above Tan y Grisiau. This is a delightful spot with views south to the Rhinogs and Trawsfynydd. Recently bolted, it offers a wide range of routes across the grades and is an ideal spot for a short day. A good number of routes in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades were climbed on excellent grippy rock before the storms finally rolled in after lunch to put a stop to proceedings.

The hut was an excellent venue, the weather was kind and a good time was had by all. Thanks to Helen Brewitt for the catering and the Clogwyn Mountaineering Club for the use of their charming property.

*At Rhosydd quarries:  
Michael, Helen and  
Richard (left) and  
Richard (below)*



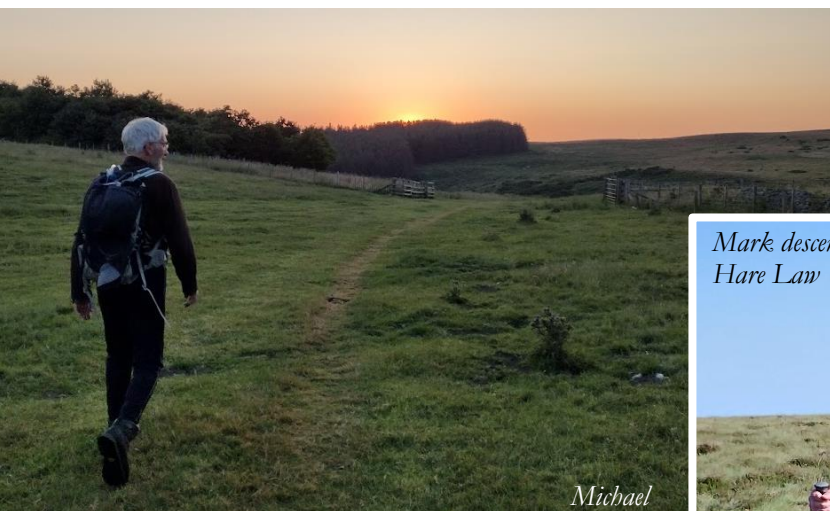
Attendees:  
Helen Brewitt,  
Chris Hilton,  
Tim Josephy,  
Mark Rothwell (PM),  
Fiona Smith,  
Helen Smith,  
Michael Smith,  
Richard Smith,  
Andrea Stimson (G).

The Walker Walls residential centre a mile or so southwest of Wooler saw fifteen members gathering on Friday evening. For many this is a less familiar area so maps were out and there was discussion of which length of walk to plan on tackling and in which direction, clockwise or the meet's organiser Mick's suggested anticlockwise. The main concern though was the forecast of thunderstorms starting in the middle of the day. To reduce the chances of returning soaked or not returning having been struck by lightning, several decided on an earlier than usual start.

Mick's full 52km route from the accommodation went out via Brown's Law took in Humbleton Hill (298m), White Law (302m), Yeavinger Bell (361m), Easter Tor (438m), Newton Tors (537m), Hare Tor (518m), *across College Valley to the Stob Stones (326m), White Law (430m), The Curr (564m), The Schil (601m), Birnie Brae (508m), Auchope Cairn (726m), Cairn Hill West Top (743m), Cairn Hill (777m),* The Cheviot (815m), Scald Hill (549m), Broadhope Hill (517m) and down via Harthope Burn giving 2,400m ascent. His lesser route omitted those listed in italics leaving just 38km with 1,700m ascent. Beyond those

two options were a number of shorter outings.

Rucksacks were packed, boots readied and plenty



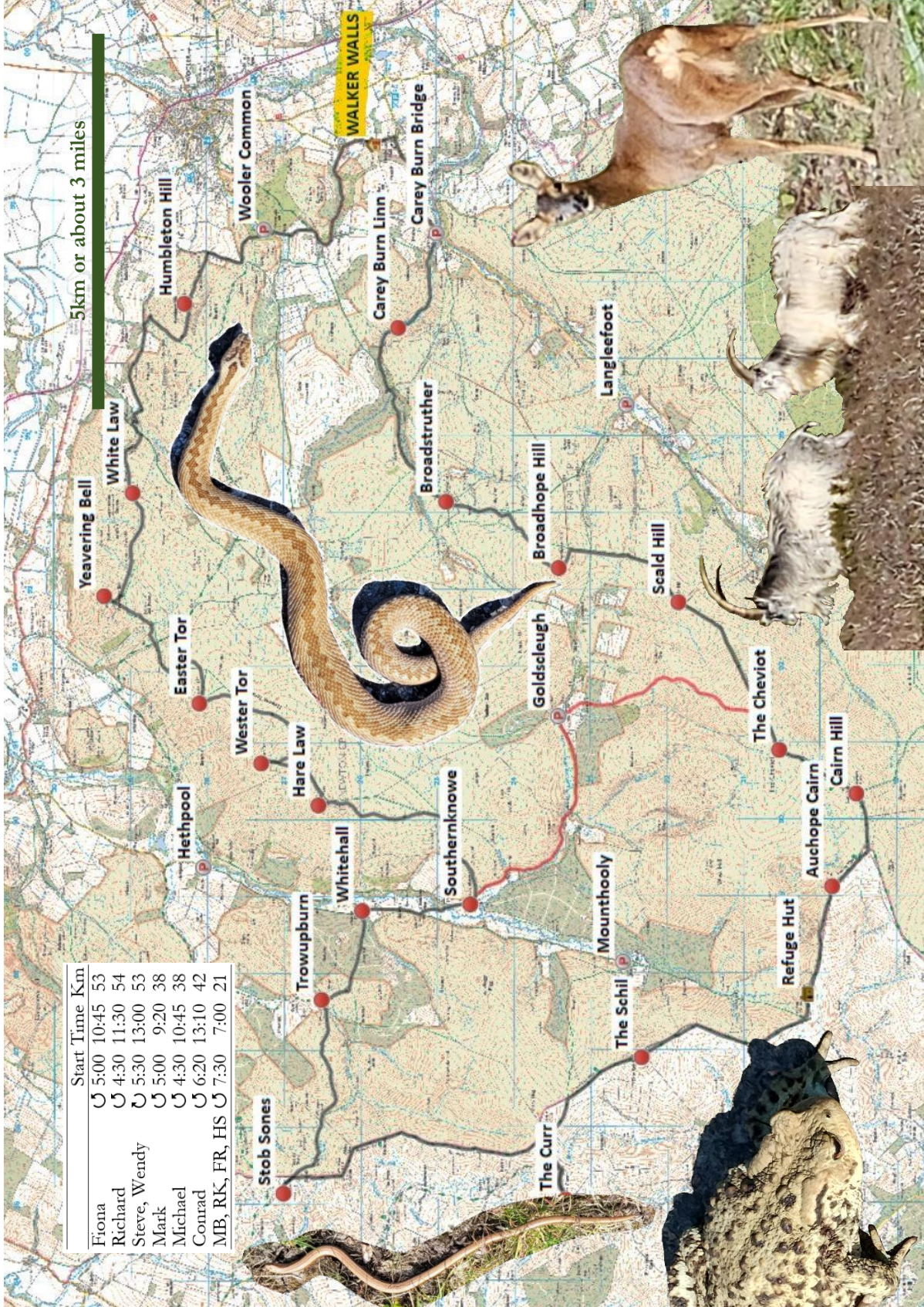
*Michael*

of water loaded ready for a forecast hot morning with strong winds. Most then opted for an early night.

That night was barely over when at 4am the first to rise were up and off by 4:30. All went widdershins except the Richards who walked clockwise. Conrad was alone in requiring the donning of waterproofs in the later rain. So those pre-dawn starts were not really necessary to avoid a wetting though rain did stop both the Test at Headingley and play at Wimbledon.



*Mark descending  
Hare Law*



All these wildlife images were taken while on the Long Walk



*Running the Laws*



Beyond the prescribed routes, Harvey went up Humbleton Hill, the 1402 site of an Anglo-Scots battle described by Shakespeare in the opening scene of Henry IV part 1.

Carol and John made a 16km round of the Hartshope Valley, Housey Crag and Langlee Crag with 440m ascent in a six-hour outing.

On the full route, Fiona was fell running and found the wind gusting at 45km/h enough to blow her into a fence. The heat, sunshine and wind all presented challenges though the prolonged dry spell had helped by drying out the boggy sections. Richard started with Michael then soon after they were caught up by Fiona, the younger generation strode off ahead. Fiona was on her own after the Auchope refuge above College Valley. Steve and Wendy met Fiona on the slopes of The Curr.

Mark, Michael and Conrad took the shorter, 38km, route. Though they each spent short sections of the route with another member or two, and sometimes happened upon a

*Pause at the Linn on Carey Burn:  
Fliss, Rebecca, Helen and Mick*



dumped sack where a side trip to one of the Laws was made, mostly they were walking solo.

The alternative 21km route taken by Becca, Fliss, Helen and Mick took in Yeavinger Bell's hill fort (second largest in England) using the main walk route before branching off along the St Cuthbert's Way path and returning via Commonburn House and Carey Burn.



Nature provided interest along the way with sightings of feverfew, foxglove, cloudberry, slow worms, lizards, toads, adders, roe deer, wild goats, hares, rabbits galore, buzzards, curlews, oystercatchers, kestrels, thrushes, stonechats and blackcaps.



*Windblown Richards by Cheviot's trig*

Hilary had been busy cooking at home and arrived with a meal of vegetable samosas with salad, raita and spiced apple chutney, followed by three curries - kochi chicken in coconut milk, matar paneer and dahl with garlic served with naan breads and to finish, lemon tart with fresh fruit and cream. Sat eating this meal, Carol noticed that five members of the 1980 Sardinian Caving Expedition were present – 43 years on.

Sunday's early mist was soon burned off and once the accommodation was tidied up people loitered before departing.

Once escaped from the packed car park, Mark set off from Halterburn to walk the Pennine Way past the Stob Stones, White Law and Black Hag returning on the alternative lower PW route. His only real excitement came from dealing with the cows and calves that had settled around his car.



The senior Smiths, acting on local knowledge, went to Ford to seek out four stone-cut rock art carvings of deer or perhaps goats (left), cup and ring markings and Roughting Linn waterfall.

The Richards set off to a Bamburgh campsite for a few days mostly coastal walking. Floss and Richard were bilberry picking at Hepburn Crags while Fiona strolled up Ros Castle. She later swam almost a mile in Druridge Bay.

Duties done, Mick parked at the Memorial Hall in the College Valley and walked over Blackhaggs Rigg and Black Hag for the views, then north along the border fence over Steer Rigg and back down by Trowup Burn admiring its butterfly population.

The residential centre we used had been converted from two cottages. Privately run not-for-profit, it provided comfortable and well-equipped accommodation with convenient access to the hills directly from the door. Thanks go to Mick for finding this place and for devising the routes. Also special thanks to chef Hilary for preparing the delicious evening meal. (MS)

Attendance: Fiona Booker-Smith, Mick Borroff, Beverley Eastwood, Rebecca King (PM), Harvey Lomas, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Felicity Roberts, Mark Rothwell (PM), Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Hilary Tearle (V), Conrad Tetley, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.

The location of this meet was determined in 2018 on the Kangchenjunga trek by a chance encounter with Dieter and Ina Höss who kindly offered us the use of their Klausen Hütte at Wildenkaralm near Kufstein. Built in 1859, at  $\approx 1,400\text{m}$ , it enjoys grand views. The cabin has eight bunks, solar powered lighting and device charging, water on tap outside, a flushing loo, a wood-burning stove (which we had no need to use), and a two-ring gas stove.



Before the meet, Mick and Conrad spent a couple of weeks mountain walking and tackling via ferrata around Auronzo di Cadore on the banks of Lago Santa Caterina in the less-frequented eastern Dolomites and among the Carnic Alps.

**Schönfeldjoch and Wildenkarjoch** In glorious sunshine and too much heat the two of them walked from the alm up to the Schönfeldjoch (1,716m), traversed the easy ridge to Wildenkarjoch (1,747m) then down to the Wildenkarsattal col above the alm. Onward traversing the Angerljoch (1,854m) - some of which was loose, exposed and unprotected. From the col before the Krenspitze, the faint path disappeared and we carefully picked a route down a steep scree and into the pines to take a thin path back to the alm.



*Conrad on the ridge to the Krenspitze approaching the Angerljoch*

**The Kaisergebirge** The next day went in search of views of the Kaisergebirge peaks by taking the Lengauer Klettersteig (aka VF



Sinwel) to traverse the Grosser Pölven (1,595m). After a hot walk in from Bad Häring, the short aided climb was all too quickly over, leaving an undulating wooded ridge then farm tracks and shaded paths past the Annakapelle down to the car.



### **The Wilder Kaiser**

That lead to the next objective being a round of two Wilder Kaiser protected paths. Having reached the Gaudeamshütte from Wochenbrunneralm, we climbed west behind the Gruttenkopf to the start of the



Klammlweg. Cables, ladders and stemples led to a col with fine views and, a few minutes later, cooling drinks at the Gruttenhütte. Refreshed we tackled the more interesting Jubiläumssteig via ferrata. While still effectively a protected path, this popular route was longer and more exposed than the Klammlweg. The circuit was completed by descending via the Gaudeamshütte.

Later that day Kjetil, Ann-Karin and their dog Niko arrived having driven for three days from their home in Norway. We all met up in Thiersee and travelled up to Wildenkaralm.

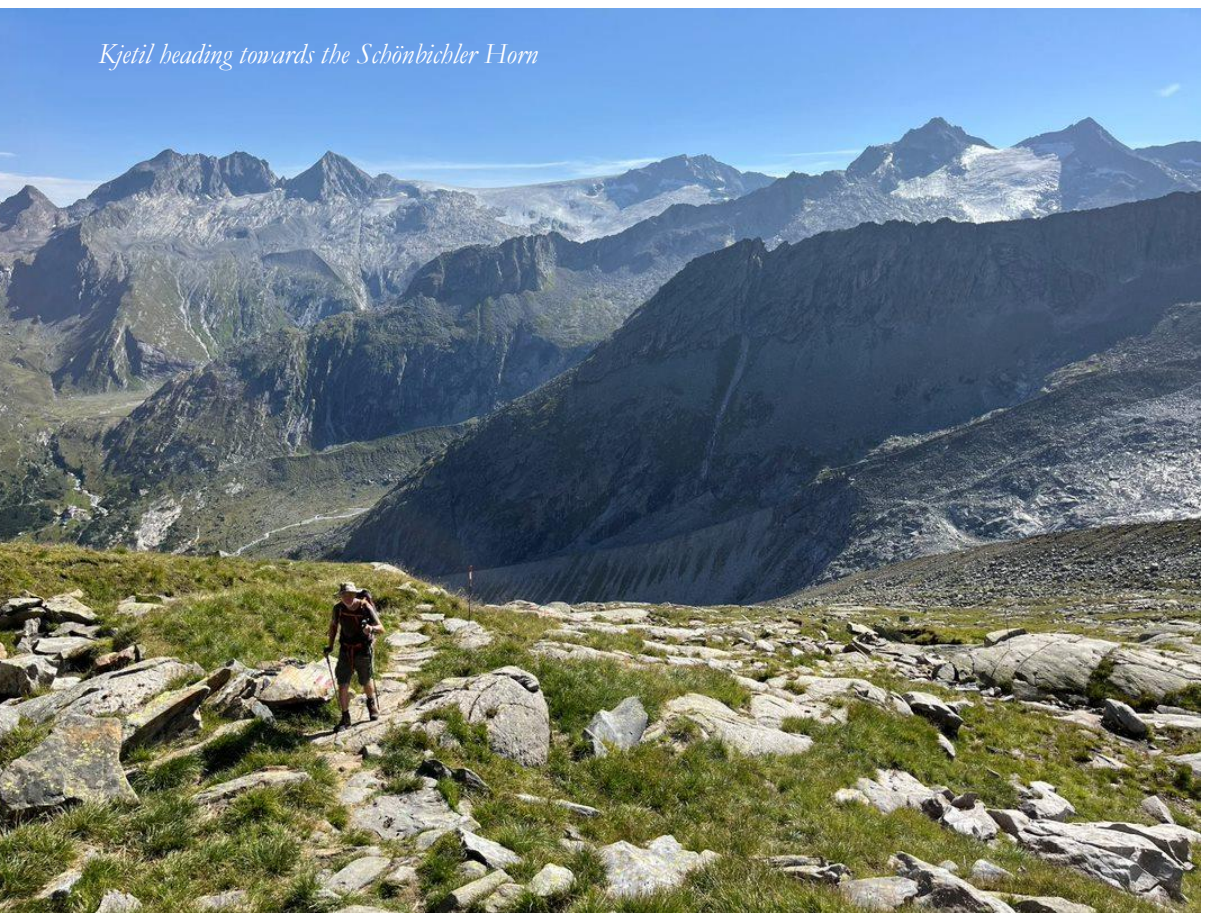
**The Hinteres Sonwendjoch** The Norwegians' long car journey and a breakfast rain shower prompted a decision to walk from the hütte up the principal local summit. After a gradually steepening path to the summit cross on the Hinteres Sonwendjoch, we took a path down to Bärenbadalm for lunch. We then visited Ackernalm at 1,383m, the highest traditional Tyrolean alpine cheese dairy, to order a round of it's tasty Zipfer beer. Down the valley and then back up to the hütte completed the outing.

### **Berliner Hütte**

Our next plan was for a two-day visit to the Zillertal region for a walk up to the Berliner Hütte and subsequent traverse the Schönbichler Horn (3,134m), leaving a car at each end of the route to avoid the 7km walk back from the Schlegeisspeicher reservoir to the Breitlahner. From the latter's car park it is three hours up the Zemmgrund valley to the Berliner. Half-way up a torrential thunderstorm began, fortunately just as we reached the Grawandhütte for shelter. The remainder of the walk followed pleasant alpine meadows with inquisitive cows, and finally up a flagged mule path to arrive dry at the magnificent baronial-style 1878 Berliner Hütte (2,042 m). After a beer on the terrace, we had a tasty four course meal including beef and local produce.

Over breakfast it was decided that the climb would be a problem for Niko, so Ann-Karin opted to take him on a visit to the Schwarzensee alpine lake and descent to Breitlahner.

*Kjetil heading towards the Schönbichler Horn*



So three set off first descending to the foot of the mountain then along a meandering path that led up above old moraines to the Schönbichler Horn summit in 3½ hours. The heat of the day demanded a number of rest stops *en route* to the col. The scramble to the splintered summit involved a series of rocky sections with the aid of a cable, and was rewarded with a fantastic panorama of the Zillertal Alps.

*The Zillertal peaks from the Schönbichler Horn*



Theoretically the descent was a straightforward path to the Schlegeisspeicher reservoir. Initially, the way was protected but then the engineered path became large oblong pieces of slate, scattered with rocks and scree. A stop was made for a drink at the Furtschaglhäus but we still just reached the car before another thunderstorm began ... the walk seemed to take forever.

**Pendling (1,563m)** After yesterday's long walk and with another forecast of possible thunderstorms, it was decided to do something a gentler and climb nearby Pendling. Parking by Gasthof Schneeberg, a steady ascent was made on forest roads then through meandering alpine forest. The trail became steadily steeper until the top was reached for lunch by a cross. A short walk to the nearby Pendlinghaus gave views of the Wilder Kaiser and Zahmer Kaiser ranges while we lingered over beer and chocolate cake. On the descent with a German family, their daughter took a great shine to Niko. We almost managed to get back to car before the rain started.

**Thiersee** Dieter warned us of a forecast with snow possibly as low down as Wildenkaralm for a few days and kindly offered us the use of an apartment in Thiersee for the rest of the week. The weather had definitely changed for the worse. We awoke to hill fog and rain, so cleaned the cabin and descended to Thiersee and settled in to watch rain over the lake.

The next day was also wet and misty though a late afternoon dry spell allowed a walk around the lake.

**Kaiserklamm from the Kaiserhaus** After slow damp start we went to Kaiserklamm in Alpbachtal on Dieter's recommendation, for a short walk in a narrow 1km long natural river gorge used until 1966 to float felled logs to a collection point. This gave spectacular

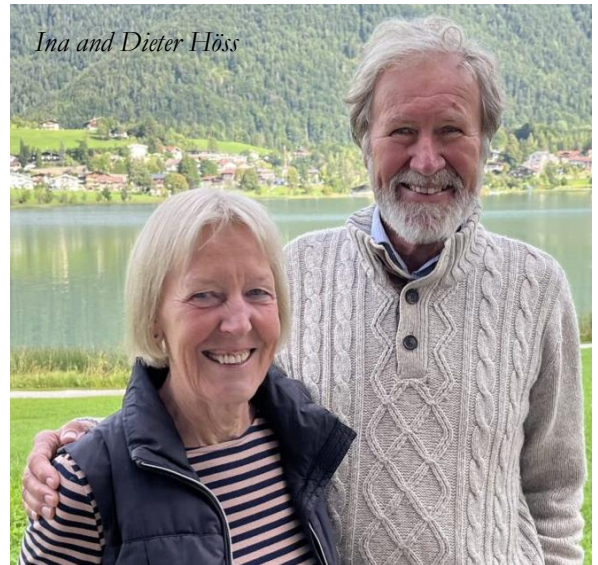
views of the rushing water below and the varied flora thriving in the humid environment. Kayakers were assessing but not attempting running the Brandenburger Ache river – sensibly given the conditions.

In the evening we enjoyed an Indian meal with Ina and Dieter followed by a slideshow of their 2018 Kanchenjunga trek where we first met.

**Bettlersteig and Kaiser Tal** The Kaiserlift, one of the oldest chairlifts in the Tyrol but thankfully revamped in 2015, presented a challenge – trying to fit apprehensive enormous Niko into the dog box on an adapted chair. From the Brentjoch top station (1,256 m) the views were extensive. After a short ascent to the Kaindlhütte, the Bettlersteig route was taken down into the relatively wild Kaisertal to the Anton-Karg-Haus and its chapel. The 18km route followed a steeply descending path through mixed woodland with several streams to cross. The descent included bridges, log steps, stemples and water crossings. The final stretch of the walk visited the Tischofer Höhle (Kufstein's equivalent of Victoria Cave above Settle) with its impressive portal, then a climb down and back up a steel staircase to cross a gorge. Finally, a downhill plod led back to the chairlift car park as rain started to set in.

**Steinplatte (1,869 m) by the Wieslochsteig** On the final day, we planned to climb the Schuastergänge klettersteig on the Steinplatte. After an hour's drive involving inquisitive armed Polizei stopping the only English car crossing the Austro-German border, Mick, Kjetil and Conrad arrived at the Stallenalm car park. Given the wet conditions and mist shrouding the summit, a decision was taken to switch to the Steinplatte via the easier Wieslochsteig instead. The pleasant route took several gullies and protected paths most lined with alpine flora. Once at the top a short lunch break at the summit cross was taken and a descent made via the normal route to a welcoming hütte for refreshments.

In the evening we took Dieter and Ina out for a dinner at Alpengasthof Schneeberg renowned for its traditional Austrian cuisine. The next morning Mick and Conrad headed north to the Amsterdam ferry while Kjetil and Ann-Karin went southwest to Tuchen near Perpignan.



The four participants really enjoyed this relaxed meet to a mountain area in Austria not visited by the Club before, with the outing to the Zillertal being the icing on the cake. Careful selection of routes at the weekends helped avoid the crowds and parking was never a problem. The second week's weather was poor and the forecasts of thunderstorms constrained our route choices away from the klettersteigs.

Further Reading: Wilder Kaiser – 65 routes in the Kaisergebirge. Sepp and Marc Brandl. Rother Bergverlag, 2022.

Attendance: Mick Borroff, Conrad Tetley, Ann-Karin Tveranger (G), Kjetil Tveranger

The introductory meet invariably brings new faces to meet the regulars and this was no exception. This time the five youngsters were all aged about eight and predominantly wearing pink and decided teenager Lucy was their leader – she kept them amused with great forbearance.



One PM arriving at Clapham by long-delayed train walked as far as the A65 and bivvied down in the underpass there at dusk and reached Lowstern early on Wednesday.

Helen and Michael dropped off Trudi near Wharfe on Friday, so that she could return to Lowstern after exploring the eastern side of Crummackdale, before they traversed Pen-y-Ghent and Plover Hill in light showers. Meanwhile, the Eastwoods explored around Clapham and gathered fresh blackberries for a mid-walk snack. About to start a photography course, Zara enjoyed capturing some shots of Clapham Station.

The afternoon peace at Lowstern steadily waned as the remaining residents arrived, replaced by the excited chatter of discovering new surroundings and lower voices planning the weekend's activities.



The 'light supper' provided by the Lathams that night was a filling buffet. Conversation was punctuated by the odd burst of 'jiving' and quoits. Between a campervan, tent, the bunks and the sitting room floor, everyone eventually found a sleeping space.

Saturday morning the Lathams rose to the challenge of a 7.30 breakfast so the cavers could beat the rush at Long Churn. Early risers were rewarded with the view of fingers of low-lying mists gently flowing up the valleys in front of Lowstern.

As it happened, the previous evening's youngsters' resolve to give 'wild' caving a try failed them and they enjoyed a tour of Ingleborough show cave.

With Lucy using Tim's lamp the remaining intrepid party of five cavers were in an unusually wet Long Churn cave about 10am and three then made a longer trip of it via Baptism Crawl to peer down Dollytubs. The Raines dropped Trudi off at Selside to



*Paul & Pete content above ground. John (right) happy below*



walk back over Ingleborough, before themselves accompanying the cavers the first few metres into the system then exploring the area before walking a loop above Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

The Lathams first

prepared the evening meal then with grandchild Lottie and Paul visited Gaping Gill, Ingleborough Cave and the Clapham playground. Later, Anne and Lottie swam at the Ingleton outdoor pool which was busy with holidaying families.

Tim made a bridleway circuit of the estate on his ebike: Sulber, Crummack and back. Carol and John headed west to walk from the Jubilee Tower over Grit Fell and Clougha Pike before meeting caving friends for a drink.

By five o'clock, cups of tea or glasses of beer in hand, the adults were sat outside Lowstern relaxing in the pleasant late summer evening while the youngsters ran around the woods burning of yet more energy.

The Latham's Saturday's evening meal appeared punctually at 1900 hours amidst juniors excitedly planning a ghost hunt: cottage pie and vegetables followed by a mixed fruit crumble ensured they were well fuelled for their running around. Four tables end-to-end





were required to seat everyone. Mid-meal, three unexpected visitors arrived, Phil with his son and daughter-in-law over from Australia. They had managed to track down Paul.

The weather on Sunday was damp with the prospect of rain

in the middle of the day. Lucy went to the Ingleton climbing wall with Paul, Ged and Tim where they had probably the most rewarding day.

After reading about the Settle-Carlisle railway on the display boards, Becca, Debbie, Beverley and Zara began the circular trail by the Ribbleshead Viaduct passing the old tramway, loco shed, signal box and an older lime kiln. Simon and Yasmine wandered into Clapham then up Clapdale Lane to the farmhouse above IngleboroughCave where we witnessed the CRO in action on a serious callout.

As the skies cleared a little, the crag climbers headed for Twistleton where the Richards were already starting a climb Dr Banda (D) opposite the Candle, before setting up an abseil. Behind the Candle, four top-roped Waxwork (D) and two more gave it a try. Evie also abseiled down the route just before the heavens opened and everyone beat a retreat to their vehicles.



*Carol out west*



*Lucy on the Faces Wall*



Most then lunched at Lowstern, chatted over teas and headed off home. The Richards, seeing the sun reemerging, returned to the crag to complete their abseils and Clinker (S).

Thanks to all who helped organise and supervise the activities, and especially to the Lathams for their catering.

Attendance: John Brown, Ged Campion, Grace Crowther (G), Michael Crowther, Robert Crowther, Lucy Dover (G), Mary Ann Dover (V), Paul Dover, Phil Dover (V), Tom Dover (V), Beverley Eastwood, Zara Eastwood (G), Becca Humphreys (V), Tim Josephy, Evie King (G), Grace King (G), Rebecca King (PM), Debby Kuhlmann (PM, V), Anne Latham, Pete Latham, Alan Linford, Harvey Lomas (V), Lottie Pickles (G), Simon Raine, Yasmin Raine (G), Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Trudi Warner (PM), Carol Whalley, John Whalley.



Early birds arrived on Thursday and Mike Gregg had a long walk on Friday, despite the changeable weather. Dave Carpenter toured Whymore Fell and Cathedral Cavern. Other less hardy souls arrived from Friday lunch time, hung around in the rain in the Wayfarers' Robertson Lamb Hut (RLH) then headed for the Old Dungeon Ghyll (ODG), no doubt hoping that Dutch courage would inspire them to deeds of derring do on the fells on the morrow. Bruce's ambition was to qualify as a BIC (Bacchus Inspired Chef). He certainly quaffed a considerable quantity to ingratiate himself with the deity.

Dinner, preceded by nibbles to allay the pangs of hunger, consisted of five-bean chilli and dessert. Whatever the recipe, Bacchus inspired Bruce to produce a superb meal.

Saturday's weather was much better and, inspired by filling breakfasts, groups set off in various directions while Dave Ormerod installed new lights in the upstairs toilets then replaced some outside courtesy lights. The weather improved throughout the day.

Naomi, Tamsin and Paul climbed Pavey Ark via Jack's Rake. Naomi misheard and thought that Paul had said "*Perry Crag*."

They also went to Pike of Stickle.

Naomi and Tamsin again got confused and called it "*Pickle Stickle*." Paul then carried alone to Scafell Pike.

Mark also visited Pavey Ark, The Stickles, Bowfell, Crinkles and Pike of Bliscoe, completing the full horseshoe around the Pikes.

John and Carol Whalley walked from RLH to Hell Ghyll, then down and some way up The Band before taking the path to the footbridge in Mickleden and back along the Cumbrian Way, to the Old Dungeon Ghyll hotel.



Sue Mellor went via Chapel Stile, Elterwater, Little Langdale and back past Blea Tarn, down to the ODG to join the crowd.

Bruce, Tim, Paul Read and Dave Lawrence walked up Oxendale to Crinkle Crag. Dave then returned down The Band whilst the rest continued over Bowfell then down via Angle Tarn and Rossett Gill. The stone steps and rocky surface of the engineered path down beside the Gill caused some suffering to Bruce's knees.

Dave Carpenter, along with Dave McKie and Mike Gregg went to Scafell Pike returning via Esk Pike and Bow Fell, down Great Slab and the Climber's Traverse.



*The Scafells from the Crinkles*

Dave Webster, Nigel Musgrove, Steve Auty and Martin Tomlinson did a challenging ascent of Bow Fell via Hell Ghyll, followed by a daring descent across the Great Slab, Climber's Traverse and The Band to queue-jump repeatedly at the ODG.

On Saturday evening Bruce again sought inspiration in Bacchus' nectar – successfully. After nibbles he served Tumbet, a seasonal taste of Mallorca with pan fried chicken. Sue and Gary produced a superb blackberry & apple crumble with custard. Cheese and biscuits followed.

Alan Clare was inspired to propose a vote of thanks to Bruce on behalf of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club. Bacchus was mischievously capricious when he was rising to his feet and



trying to stand. Nonetheless he delivered a sincere vote of thanks. So did Dave Carpenter for the Wayfarers. No problems with balance – he held the table. Bruce was declared a fully qualified Bacchus Inspired Cook.

Because of the weather forecast few had planned any climbing but on Sunday, Dave McKie led Dave Carpenter up Revelation (HS\*\*\*) on Raven Crag before the rain set in. Others planned various shorter walks. Tamsin and Paul climbed Pike O'Blisco and Tim drove to Grasmere and did a round of Easedale and Helm Crag.

Despite the weather, this was an excellent weekend, renewing social friendships and getting in some good walking and climbing. George Chambers, ninety not out, had a relaxing decadent weekend. (GC)

Attendance:

Yorkshire Ramblers; Alan Clare, Mike Gregg, Naomi Hogg (G), Tim Josephy, Paul Magson, Mark Rothwell, Tamsin Spain, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.

Wayfarers; Steve Auty, Dave Carpenter, George Chambers, Dave Lawrence, Dave McKie, Nigel Musgrove, Dave Ormerod, Bruce Hassall, Gary Mellor, Sue Mellor, Paul Read, Martin Tomlinson, Dave Webster.

### Joint meet with the Gritstone Club

By Friday night fifteen members, one PM and two Grits had assembled at the cavernous, recently renovated, spotlessly clean and well-equipped Watson Scout Centre in Carlton-in-Cleveland. The sitting room though was cosy with the gathering on Friday evening resembling a jumble sale of climbing books, ancient maps, outgrown unused trousers, discounted Club kit bags and a Club sweatshirt.

Several members had made good use of Friday. A party including Mick, Martyn, John, Jennifer and Peter set off from the Scout Centre, climbed to join the Cleveland Way, followed it eastwards across Cringle Moor, turned south to drop into Raisdale, with its pretty mill, returned over Bilsdale West Moor to Lordstones and then back down the lane to the village. The Smiths met David H and Christine M who had travelled up from York to join them for a walk starting at Old Byland near Rievaulx. The Autumn colours were

just beginning to show.

Helen B organised a Friday meal for ten at the Blackwell Ox pub in the village which serves delicious large portions of Thai food. They enjoyed it even if it did seem a bit incongruous eating Thai washed down with a pint of Wainwrights!

Following a 7.30 Saturday breakfast (which prompted comments from the Grits that we have early starts) most of the group headed off to Scugdale - many to climb. Ten members were in the area at some stage of the day. Some chose to walk from the centre, others walked back -

two parties strayed off route – *‘blown off course by the wind’* as Richard T remarked. There was plenty to entertain everyone with a variety of climbing grades, and most spent the entire day there. Tom, the youngest there, climbed twenty routes including a solo VS. Add in the others’ routes and there were too many to list their names.

Having climbed during the morning Michael accompanied by Helen S did a round from Scott’s Crags to Green Howe and back along the south side of Scugdale dropping into the



valley via a steep pathless descent through heather and tall bracken - definitely not recommended. Scout troops were out in force on the tops playing "Wide Games" which involved avoiding their leaders - on our approach several of them dived into the heather.

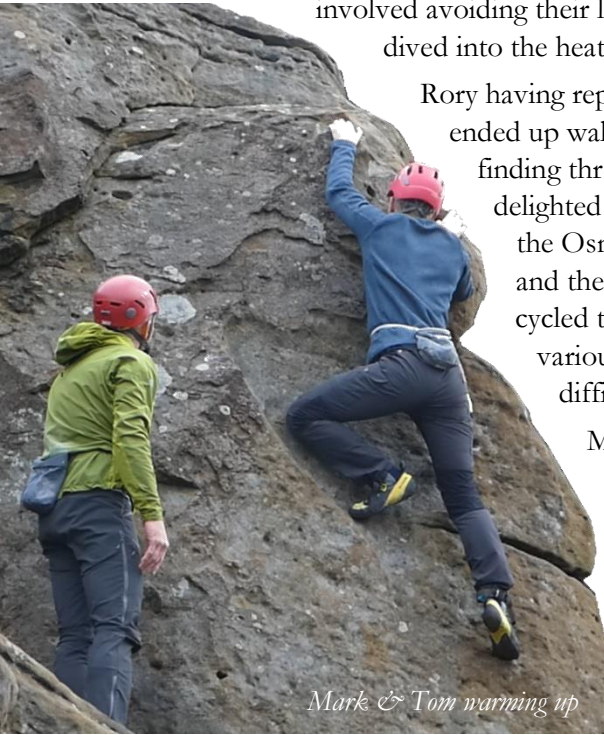
Rory having replenished food supplies in Stokesley also ended up walking to Scugdale with challenging route finding through woodland on the return. Alan was delighted to complete his longest walk for some time in the Osmotherley area, including Cod Beck reservoir and the quarries. Harvey, new to mountain biking, cycled to Lordstones on his e-bike and completed various routes to east and west discovering the difficulties of cycling on rough ground.

Mick, Simon, John, Peter and Jennifer walked from the church in Westerdale with a steady ascent up the old packhorse route past Dale Head to Castleton Rigg, turned south to cross the broad ridge between Westerdale and Rosedale to arrive at White Cross (aka Fat Betty, a medieval cross thought to date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century) on Danby High Moor - replete with coins, various biscuits

and a packet of Polos to sustain impecunious and hungry travellers. They lunched high above upper Eskdale and then walked down the River Esk back to the village. Both Castleton cafes closed, they were forced to resort to a pub for refreshments!

It was, as usual, very sociable on Saturday evening. Rory provided a tasty dinner of Spaghetti Carbonara and salad, apple pie and cream, followed by cheese and biscuits. Michael later showed videos of recent club meets.

It was a slightly later breakfast on Sunday and after tidying up, several members wound their way home. But there was still plenty of activity going on. Michael, and two Helens in thick drizzle walked along the Cleveland Way from Lordstones to Hasty Bank, followed the earthworks south to Medd Crag and worked back crossing two valleys on "paths" - not always evident on the ground and in a couple of other places impassible. Wendy and Steve walked from the scout centre to Lordstones - considered their options over a civilised coffee in the cafe and then also walked to Hasty Bank returning on the north side on a parallel route below the scarp.

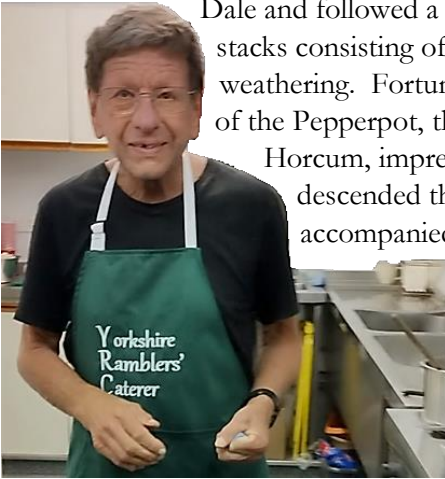


*Mark & Tom warming up*



*Mick leading  
Simon, John and  
Peter past one of  
the Bridestones*

Mick, Simon, John, Peter and Jennifer set off from Lockton for what Mick claims is one of the best walks in the North Yorks Moors. They skirted Hagg Wood, then down to Stain Dale and followed a paved track to the Bridestones, a famous series of isolated stacks consisting of silicified portions of sandstone, formed by differential weathering. Fortunately, now out of the mist, they enjoyed lunch at the foot of the Pepperpot, then headed along the Old Wife's Way to the Hole of Horcum, impressive for those seeing it for the first time. Finally, they descended the valley into the deciduous woodland near Levisham, accompanied by the song of long-tailed tits, with a final short climb back to the car.



A very enjoyable meet with plenty done. We did not have the unseasonably hot weather enjoyed in the south but at least escaped the torrential rain causing floods in Scotland. Many thanks to Rory for his organisation and catering, also to the North Yorks Scouts. (HS)

Attendance: Mick Borroff, Helen Brewitt, Alan Linford, Harvey Lomas, Rory Newman, Simon Raine, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Mark Rothwell (PM), Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Tom Spencer, John Sutcliffe, Jennifer Tennant, Peter Tennant, Helen Topliss (Grits), Richard Topliss (Grits), Martyn Trasler.



*Simon, Peter, John, Fat Betty & Jennifer*



We last visited this Low Row Barn in 2017 and had similar murky weather and lumpy-mattresses on that occasion. However, the barn is warm, well placed, has ample parking, and has a sociable sitting area. Swaledale itself has plenty to offer and members got off to a good start on Friday.

Paul & Tamsin day on Wild Boar Fell from Mallerstang, started

with a rainbow and patches of blue sky but the summit was in thick mist. Michael and Helen walked from Reeth, along Fremington Edge and back via Marrick hamlet and Priory. Locals, Steve and Wendy walked with large sacks to the bunkhouse from their

home in Leyburn with rain then low cloud, through Apedale, up to Whitaside Moor then down into Swaledale

The nearby hamlet of Crackpot is not named after the inhabitants but comes from the old English word 'kraka' (crow) and the Viking word 'Pot' or deep hole. On Saturday, Tamsin, Michael, Richard, and Paul explored Crackpot Cave. As the Main Entrance collapsed long ago, they entered via the aptly name Kneewrecker Entrance. Fortunately, all wore knee-pads. Further in the cave opens out into a larger passage with water only filling their wellies in one short section. They had the day's best views as the rest of Swaledale remained shrouded in mist.

After lunch, Richard and Michael walked north to follow Barney Beck to







beyond Healaugh, crossing the Swale on the replacement ‘swing bridge.’ A final pull up the hillside gave access to the earthworks of the Maiden Castle iron age fort. Paul and Tamsin walked by the Swale to Grinton, meeting Harvey on his way back. Then on to Reeth finding a cafe for hot chocolate and cake.

Meanwhile, Steves M and R, Wendy, Ian, and Helen set out from the bunkhouse to complete a round ‘with good views’ suggested by John Sutcliffe, who unfortunately was unable to attend. They too walked by the south side of the Swale to Grinton, calling in at the Bike Cafe where they met Alan and Anne. With the dreary conditions there was no hurry to move on, but they continued via Fremington Edge to Storthwaite Hall, crossing Slei Gill on a newly restored footbridge. There clearly had been huge movement of rocks around the river bed which must have damaged the previous crossing. After lunch, heading to Booze, named from the Old English boga (bow or curve) and hus (house), i.e. the house by the stagger. And so to Langthwaite for the pub and some relief from the persistent drizzle. The pub was quiet and the landlady chatty – reminiscing about the flooding of the pub in 2019 and of having to wait 76 years to experience being rescued by a fireman’s lift! Heading over Reeth Low Moor the weather deteriorated and all were thankful to arrive back at the bunkhouse. We will have to take John’s word for it about the good views.

Anne and Alan had a gentle riverside walk from the bunk house towards Grinton then back on themselves due to time constraints. They



decided against any heroics regarding crossing at the stepping stones with only a couple of stones breaking the surface.

Becca catered for the weekend. On Friday night we had homemade mushroom soup and rolls plus Ann's homemade chocolate and courgette cake. There were cooked breakfasts both mornings with the odd leftover sausages particularly appreciated by Ghunsa. Saturday evening's spaghetti Bolognese was followed by home-made apple crumble.

It rained cats and dogs on Saturday night which made for a noisy night for those in camper vans. Between the showers an owl kept them awake instead.

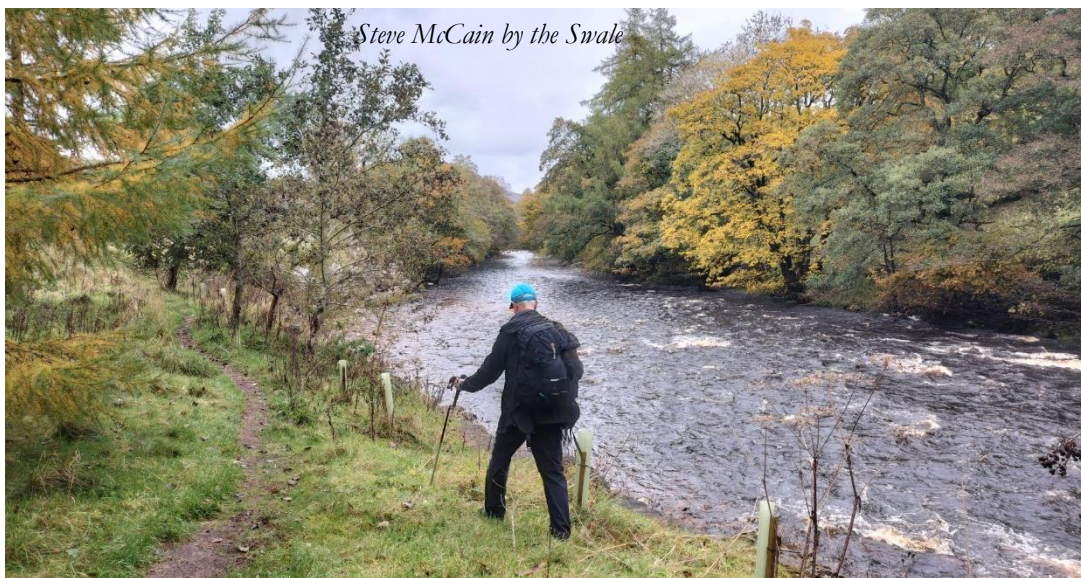
On Sunday, Ian and Steve McCain decided to retrace Becca and Debby's route from the day before, only this time with the benefit of views, with cloud well above Great Shunner Fell out to the west. They made their way from Low Whita below How Hill on a track past Haverdale House, onto Hag Wood, as far as the bridge crossing north into Gunnerside. After lunch they took the path east, climbing past rowan and birch trees north of the River Swale as far as Turnip House, dropping south towards Isle Bridge, then joining the meandering path on the northern edge of the river, briefly onto the road back across Scabba Wath Bridge to the bunkhouse.

Steve and Wendy, after declining several offers of a lift back to Leyburn, walked into Reeth via the lower slopes of Reeth Low Moor above Healaugh. Suitably refreshed at the Bike Centre Cafe they traversed southwest over Grinton Moor back down into Wensleydale where, they claim, the sun always shines.

An enjoyable weekend with just the right number of people for chatting as a whole group or in small groups. Discussions included a wide range of topics... training search and rescue dogs, travel stories, stamp collecting, geology, volcanoes, copper mines, courgettes.... and more. Thank you to Becca for organising the meet.



*Steve McCain by the Swale*





Attendees: Ian Hawkes, Becca Humphreys, Debby Kuhlmann (PM), Alan Linford, Anne Lofthouse, Harvey Lomas, Paul Magson, Steve McCain (PM), Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Tamsin Spain, and Ghunsa the dog.



*Back to front: Michael, Paul and Richard by the entrance*

To begin at the beginning, four years ago six members arrived at their last cabin on a week's ski tour in Norway. With the strong, cold wind behind them it had been good day: over a pass, down a series of lakes, crossing a snowed-in summer road and up to an eight-bunk cabin, only to find it already occupied by six knitting Oslo friends. An hour or so later a lone chap arrived from the opposite direction, into that headwind and with a large pack, having covered over twice our mileage. Chatting that evening and over a meal together last year, we found a common interest in Slingsby and Greenland. That's how Nils Hagen was invited to be the principal guest at this year's Annual Dinner.

Following the AGM in the Settle Social Club, Nils gave an entertaining and informative talk on his experience of using clothing and equipment copied from Nansen's 1888 first crossing of the Greenland icecap, when he followed much the same route a century later. Rather than reporting the detailed progress of the team of four, he gave a relatable account of how it felt to be using the gear, which prompted a host of questions before time had to be called to make our way to Falcon Manor for the Dinner. Visitors to the talk included FRCC members and users of the Ingleton Climbing Wall.



Fifty-eight members and guests assembled for the Annual Dinner announced by Master of Ceremonies, David Large. Wendy Richards gave a climbers' Grace and, after the meal, her husband Steve gave the Loyal Toast. Michael Smith announced the toast to Absent Friends. Our President, Becca, welcomed the Club's guests, presidents Simon Richardson from the Alpine Club and Patsy Mellor of the Craven Pothole Club, before toasting all our kindred clubs and our guests. Nils responded with the toast to the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club before joining the five-strong members' choir and Helen Smith at the keyboard to close proceedings with the singing of 'Yorkshire.'

*The Singing of 'Yorkshire': Arthur, David H, Trevor, Helen S, Jason, Peter and Nils*



Though some members had walked up Trow Gill to Gaping Gill on Saturday morning returning only slightly damp, the weather was unencouraging for Harvey's Sunday walk around Attermire. Undeterred, a cag-clad party braved the showers, slipping and splashing their way over the lower part of the route before sense prevailed and a more direct way back to Settle was taken. A stark contrast to the good winter conditions four members had enjoyed four days previously on the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête and Ben Nevis.

Eighteen gathered in Lowstern at dusk for Wendy's home-made scones served with clotted cream, jam and tea. All lingered chatting, to be joined one-and-a-half hours later by Arthur Salmon, Barbara and Conrad Murphy who had taken an alternative route.

For planning and their roles in making this sociable meet such a success, thanks go to Michael, Helen, Wendy, Christine, Tom, Steve, Harvey, Davids Hick and Large and, in the choir, David, Arthur, Trevor, Peter, Jason and Nils.



Attendance: Mick Borroff, Helen Brewitt, Aaron Champion, Ged Champion, Imogen Champion, Peter Chadwick, Alan Clare, Rachel Costigan (G, Sunday walk), Roy Denney, Paul Dover, Anne Dover (G), Ann Dover (G), Richard Dover, Tony Dunford, Karen Dyer (G), Beverley Eastwood, Iain Gilmour, Sarah Gilmour (G), Nils Hagen (Principal Guest), Ian Hawkes, David Hick, Becca Humphreys (President), Jason Humphreys, Debby Kuhlmann (PM), Geraldine Lally (G), David Large, Alan Linford, Angela Linford (G), Anne Lofthouse, Harvey Lomas, Malcolm Lynch, Duncan Mackay, Nicole Mainaud (G), Christine Marriott, Patsy Mellor (G, CPC President), John Middleton, Valerie Middleton (G), Conrad Murphy (G), Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Simon Richardson (G, AC President), Ann Salmon (G), Arthur Salmon, Barbara Salmon, Trevor Salmon, Simon Snowden (G), Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Tom Spencer, John Sutcliffe, Conrad Tetley, Martyn Trasler, Kjetil Tveranger, Gail Taylor (G), Richard Taylor, Carol Whalley, John Whalley, Charles Phillip Wilkinson (G), Frank Wilkinson.

Above Kettlewell, at 467m high on the slopes of Great Whernside, Hag Dyke has a special place in the hearts of long-standing members, having seen a string of meets in living memory. It was the finish point of the seven peaks long walk in June 1978 when the start was near Dent and *'perfect for walking, sunny but not too hot, with firm going underfoot.'* January 1982 saw Great Whernside shrouded in cloud throughout and some had difficulties in navigating to Meugher's top this being pre-GPS. January 1983 gave cold, dry, windy conditions. More snow in 1984



with mention of a blizzard. There was a September meet there in 1993 for which memory fails. Another Christmas meet with good snow cover was in 1999 when one member had to thaw his Kettlewell parked car's frozen brake drums with a potholer's camping stove.

However, the forecast for this 2023 meet weekend was dismal: wet, windy, and accurate. Another portent that this was not to be a sparkling end-of-the-year meet was the string of late cancellations each for a plausible reason. One prospective member thankfully stayed home to avoid passing his stomach bug to those attending, another broke a femur falling from his bike, and a third bounced off the bonnet of a car after it had pulled out suddenly in front of him. That last one is clearly made of sterner stuff as despite badly damaged ribs, he made it to the meet for the Saturday night. A couple of members cancelled because of a spell of poor health, one because of unspecified circumstances, and another had damaged



*Clockwise from the door: Helen, Wendy, Paul, Alan, Iain, David and Tim*

his back while lifting things. Sixteen other members and guests made it up the two-mile uphill path to Hag Dyke, most arriving in reasonable health, windblown and dripping.

The track up to Hag Dyke had suffered in the recent heavy rains and we were advised not to take vehicles up there, although Tim, in his daughter's pickup, managed it fairly comfortably along with Alans Clare and Linford and a supply of beer. One of the Hag Dyke wardens kindly arranged a 5pm rendezvous at the car park and took the food and a few rucksacks up in his Land Rover. This allowed to several members to fortify themselves in the Blue Bell Inn for the ascent. That Friday afternoon, three of them had warmed up (perhaps '*already tested the waters*' would be a better expression) with a round from Bolton Bridge taking in the Valley of Desolation and The Strid. The Lathams had been out cycling in the Kilnsey area, close to where another member had been out dealing with estate business.

In the dark and lashing rain, some struggled to find the door into the ex-farmhouse hostel. Once in, they were greeted by another warden, Andrew, who ensured that their wet and muddy gear was stowed in the right place. Andrew was ever attentive, assisting with advice regarding the fires and cooking as he had done during our 1980s meets.



After the rigours of arriving, all welcomed Tim's individual steak pies, peas, and chips with a rich gravy followed by fruitcake and cheese. After a convivial chat, everyone headed off to the comfortable bunks. These were designed for boy scouts not our longest members.

It took a while to get going as Saturday

dawned - not on account of the weather but a slowness in locating the master light switch which reinstated daytime lighting after the overnight emergency lights only circuit. Power restored, breakfast was prepared with Steve using tongs to toast bread by glowing embers and Michael toasting bread in a frying pan.

Several small determined groups set off east, straight up towards Great Whernside. With each step up to a higher bench the bogginess increased, the wind strengthened, and more rain found a way into clothing. So only six members made it to the less boggy top and its trig point. The others retraced their steps, heading down to Kettlewell for valley-based outings.

Peter Chadwick determinedly headed off south to Sandy Gate and the rough country of Conistone Moor walking





the boundary of the Sheep Gait there, checking what repairs may be needed to retain the flocks on this shared grazing area. He found brief respite in a shepherds' stone shelter. A round of about 10 miles and a return as the light was failing.

Paul headed off east following Stone Beck towards Angram Reservoir returning over the flanks of little Wherside. Another round with an outwards route over rough country.

The others, Smiths, Richards and Conrad, made their way north to the Leyburn road, then towards Kettlewell either via Starbotton or near Dow Cave.

Setting off north from Hag Dyke, Tim and Iain walked past abandoned East Scale Lodge and down the road to Kettlewell.

Wherever they were, everyone found tricky stream crossings as water was pouring out of every small hole in the hillsides. The bridge over to Dow Cave was under the water. Many assembled in either the Kings Head or the Blue Bell Inn to dry out a little, take refreshment and spin out the afternoon until a return could be made to arrive back at Hag Dyke as darkness was falling.

Peter and Verity Elliott produced an evening meal to put right the rigours of such demanding conditions: soup and rolls, cottage pie with peas and carrots, fruit pies and custard with cheese to follow.

The wind roared overnight. As breakfast was being prepared, there was a brief clearing and a red glow across the clouds. It did not last. After clearing up the hostel, most were making their way down and either home or, in the case of the Richards, to the Lake District.

Thanks go to the Ben Rhydding Scouts & Guides for the use of Hag Dyke and to Peter, Verity and Tim for organising the meet and catering.

Attendance: Peter Chadwick, Alan Clare, Peter Elliott, Verity Elliott (G), Iain Gilmour, David Hick, Tim Josephy, Anne Latham, Pete Latham, Alan Linford, Paul Magson, Lewis Preston (G), Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Fiona Smith, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Conrad Tetley.

A handful of the older members named above were also on the 1980s Hag Dyke meets.



*Verity and Fiona busy crafting Christmas gifts while Conrad reads*





*Harvey and Conrad  
cleaning the Lowstern roof*

## Lowstern – 19-21 May

The working meet tackled the usual range of cleaning and minor maintenance jobs in a weekend of decent weather.

The powered mower has been replaced with a more reliable model which is much easier to start.

Maintenance work at Lowstern was complicated this year by the planned development of the wash rooms being delayed until 2024 because of the contractor withdrawing as they were due to have started the work. Mick Borroff and George Burfitt have worked on a replacement arrangement which should have this large-scale project sorted before next summer.

## Low Hall Garth - 28-30 July.

The focus of this LHG working meet was to paint the upstairs inside walls of the main cottage, paint the walls in the barn with masonry paint and deliver the stove Alister had renovated.

Friday's early arrivers, the Whalleys, got the fire going then took a walk round the valley, over Slaters Bridge to the Three Shires Inn.

Simon and daughter Yasmin arrived next and settled into the (quieter) bunks in the





barn. Meanwhile, Ged, Alister and Neve enticed the heavy replacement stove out of Alister's van with blocks, ramps and rails, Egyptia-style, and carefully into the barn. Anne got on with measuring up for curtains and cushions - David Smith will have turned in his grave.

A showery Saturday saw the

team tackle the painting of the barn walls, Yasmin managing to get more paint in her hair than on the walls. Carol and Anne painted the inside window frames in the cottage. Carol demonstrated her expertise as a caver, by contorting herself into kitchen windows recesses for the finishing touches. Alister did technical things to the electricity and plumbing. John Whalley strimmed the car park borders and maintained his bench.

Saturday night saw Tim, Harvey and Imogen arrive just in time for the meal prepared by Alister and Neve. A sociable evening was had by all. John Whalley, delighted to find a Penguin copy of Xenophon's *Persian Expedition* in the small library, claimed it was nothing like as exciting as his trip to Ghar Paru.

Sunday's showers inconvenienced the mortar mixing for the holes in the barn walls. The barn painting was completed with Simon doing excellent work on the window surround, which was leaf green before he started. The barn was spring cleaned. Alister loaded his van with mouse-infested garden rubbish which someone had kindly stashed in the drying room. The walls of the upstairs bunk room were given a coat of emulsion.

A great weekend with lots of work completed so members and outside clubs can continue to enjoy this marvellous hut.

Attendance: Ged Campion, Imogen Campion, Tim Josephy, Anne Lofthouse, Harvey Lomas, Simon Raine, Yasmin Raine (G), Alister Renton, Neve Renton, John Thurston (PM), Carol Whalley, John Whalley.



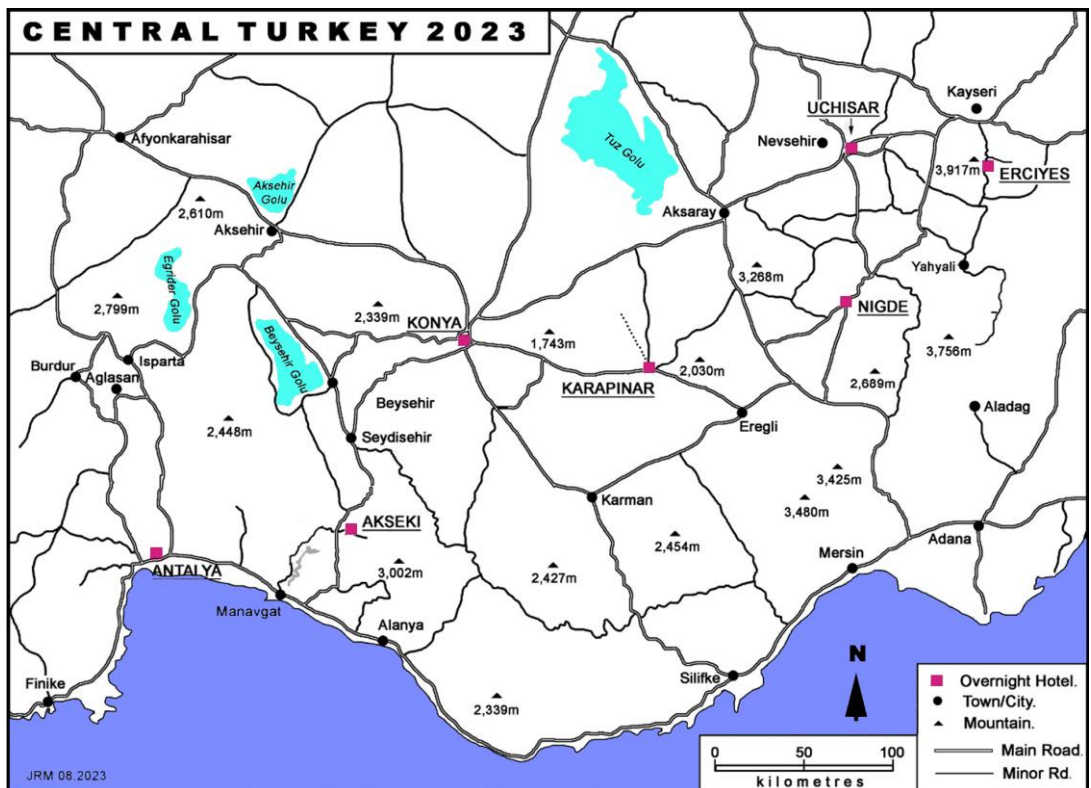
# Trials, Travels & Tribulations Through Central Turkey

John &  
Valerie  
Middleton

Our panic began when Yasemin, our Turkish botanical guide from 2022, had to drop out of this 2023 trip due to family reasons, with barely a month's notice. With some trepidation we decided to attempt the 24-day trip in an alien environment by ourselves.

Four weeks does sounds long enough but we can assure you it is not long when dealing with a foreign country and changing our itinerary, hiring a car for a 3,000km one way trip, re-booking accommodation, making cash transfers, obtaining latitude and longitude references for the plant sites of interest and much more. On the plus side we tailored our trip closer to our revised needs. The die was cast – but had we got it right?

Arriving in the small town of Uchisar on the edge of Central Cappadocia, we were warmly welcomed, and put at ease by Emel, part owner of the Kale Konak Hotel. Stage one achieved. For the next few days, Emel became our ever-patient survival mentor and good friend. Each day was filled with unexpected adventures and surprising highlights.



## Cappadocia

This unique area of about 250km<sup>2</sup> is formed from volcanic ash and lava flows dating from 60 million BP (Before Present). The principal volcanoes were Erciyes Dagi (now 3,971m), Hasan Dagi (now 3,268m) and Melendiz Dagi (now 2,963m) with various smaller cones erupting up to 10 million BP.

Wind and water erosion through the ages have produced this spectacular landscape. The 'caps' to be found on many 'Fairy Chimneys' are due to the final upper layer of volcanic rock (usually ignimbrite) being harder. In the late Neolithic era, people moved into this area and found the softer lower layers could be easily hewn into habitable caves. Later, others chose to burrow down forming underground cities capable of holding over a thousand inhabitants and their livestock. There is also a preponderance of churches, many with iconic frescoes up to one thousand years of age. Perhaps the most notable area is around the beautiful but overvisited Ihlara Valley with its one hundred or so churches, most hewn into the cliffs.



*Fairy Chimneys' just a few metres from our hotel*

There are three main points of entry into the 10km long Ihlara Gorge. The fascinating old village of Belisirma lies between two of them: the principal town of Ihlara to the south; and Selime to the north. The challenge is how to cross from one side of the valley to the other without having to purchase drink or food from the multitude of vendors. If one fails the challenge then do not worry, the local food is a delight and often eaten on boarding placed across the sizeable Melendez stream.



*The Love Valley, Cappadocia*

### **Erciyes to Nigde**

The perfectly shaped Erciyes Volcano dominates most views in Cappadocia. At 3,971m in height it usually has year-round snowfields. The ski village at 2,200m provides reasonably priced accommodation, well-placed for walking and finding alpine flowers in the surrounding meadows. For birders an excursion can be made to the 'Sultan Marshes' where 80km<sup>2</sup> of wetland reserve of can be viewed from the edge, from a small boat or along 1km of boardwalk through the reeds.

Our highlight from Erciyes was a ninety-minute drive south to the east side of the Aladaglar limestone massif which covers an area of over 800km<sup>2</sup> with a relief ranging from 400 to 3,750m. Over 150 caves are known so far, the deepest being Kuzgun at -1,400m with a length of 3,187m (Turkey's second deepest). It is thought that the waters from Kuzgun and other nearby caves re-appear at the Karpuzbasi resurgences near the end of the Zumanti River Gorge, by Karpuzbasi.

Nerves of steel are required to navigate the narrow, winding, and avalanche-prone road down this wild remote gorge but it is worth it for the sight of six pristine waterfalls appearing along a cliff face. Surprisingly, by the last waterfall is a café and just beyond, an immaculate public toilet. Another resurgence in this massif is in a verdant valley, Yesilkoy Selalesi, though it is not directly related to



*Kapuzbası Selaçeleleri*

the Kuzgun Cave area. This also applies to the Derebag Selalesi towards Yahyali town. We visited four remote waterfall sites in this 14-hour day.

The west side of the massif is normally reached from Nigde on a minor road leading to Camardi. The limestone is again riddled with small caves together with a large canyon which gives the easiest access to the rugged upper surface and 3,756m Demerkazik Tepe, the summit of the Aladaglar range. The gorge is also popular for some its good non-bolted rock climbing

### **Nigde to Konya**

The road to Konya crosses the Konya Plain where Karapiner town sits between a volcanic landscape to the east and a flatter limestone one to the north. Formed around 5 million BP, it is only the volcanic landscape to the east that has mellowed into pleasing grey and green humps and hollows. Six kilometres beyond Karapiner on the Eregli road is Acigol at an altitude of 981m. This is a beautiful accessible crater lake almost 2km across with sides were adorned in flowers on our visit early in June. Nearby the 1,804m Karakadag volcano gently towers above.

Across the Eregli road a 2km track leads to Meke, a smaller crater also at 981m within which, just 9,000 years ago, an eruption formed a 50m high central cone. This island is now sits in a thick salty lake up to 12m deep. Meke looks beautiful in sunshine, but threatening when covered by clouds.



A track runs part way round the crater and continues to a hard surfaced road. At this point, the 1,302m high Kucukmedet volcano rises imperiously above, and to one side is a further depression slightly larger than Meke.

To the north of Karapinar are the agricultural flat lands of the Konya Plain and the slightly raised Obruk Plateau. The surface is mainly alluvial sands and clays laid on bands of Ansuya limestone and other carbonate rocks. 'Obruk' is the local name for the many large sinkholes in this region. They are thought to originate from aquifer and cavern collapse at considerable depth (c300-500m). Several of the very largest obruks may reach almost a kilometre across and up to 200m in depth. All obruks, large and small, well worth seeing though it isn't easy finding holes on a flat surface. Helpfully, on the minor Karapinar to Esentepe road several of the best are signposted.

We spent an interesting seven hours searching and finding six sinkholes. The most spectacular were Meyil, Cirali and Yilanli. These have been known for a century or more but over the past thirty years, many new obruks have suddenly, and dangerously appeared, probably be due to extraction of deep groundwater for irrigation. To date, no cave passageways have been found.



*Cirali Obruk – Note the ancient houses carved into the rock and the modern farm and houses ringed on the rim. A small lake persists in the bottom.*

## **Catalhoyuk**

We made a worthwhile visit this little-known archaeological site reputed to be one of the most important ever uncovered. It is Neolithic, some 9,000 years ago, and has revealed copious information on this age and peoples warranting recognition in the UN World Heritage List. Catalhoyuk is 25km south of Karapiner. Its large site is newly opened and currently free to the public and is a model of understandable signage.

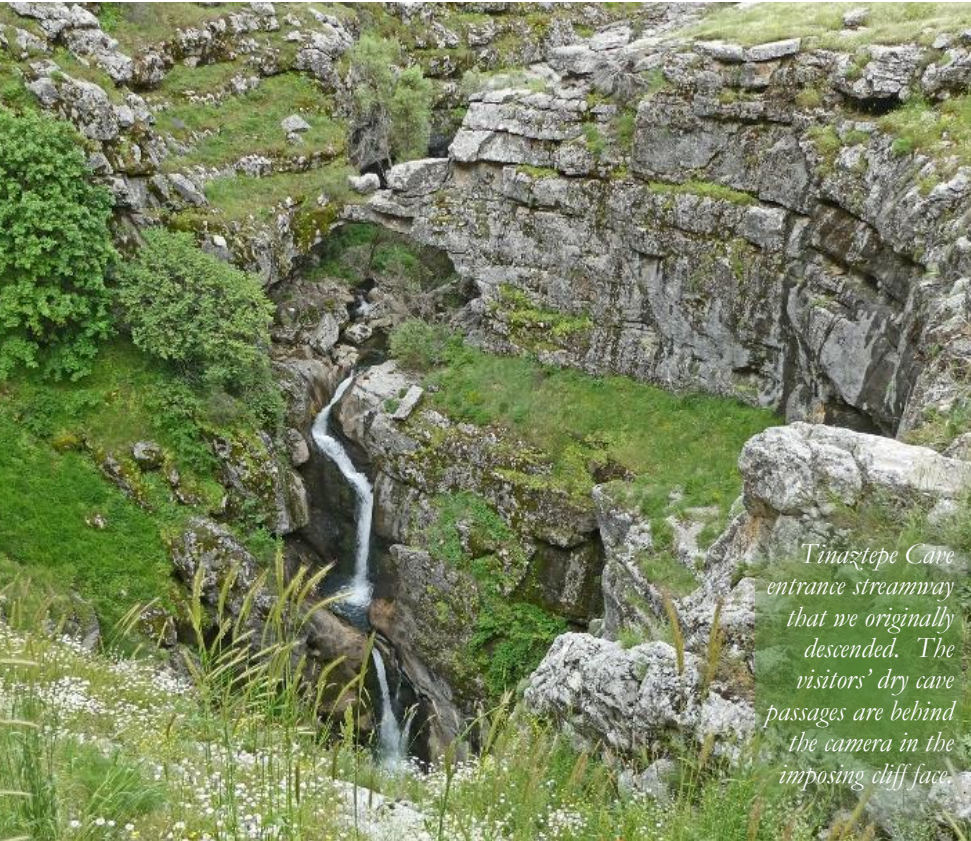
Konya is an unlikely stop-over point for many ‘outdoor enthusiasts’ but we think it is a must. This strongly religious city is full of impressive mosques, minarets, and palaces. It is also the ancient centre of Sufism, a moderate form of Islam. In the Central Square is the unforgettable Mevlana Museum, celebrating the life of Mevlana Celaddin-I Rumi who was born in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and become one of the world’s greatest poets, a mystic, teacher, disciple of Sufism, and a renowned Whirling Dervish.

## **The Limestone South**

Much of the area to the south and southwest of Konya is limestone country riddled with caves and other karst features. Two of the deepest caves are Egma, at -1,429m whilst Morca reaches -1,276m.

In 1966 and 1967 Dr Temucin Aygen, a local geologist and speleologist, invited a small team of French and English cavers to join him in exploring the then unknown local caves. The reason for the invite was due to a proposal for a new Dam/Barrage in the region. Tony Dunford and I were amongst the small English/YRC contingent. The trip was extremely successful with many new caves and kilometres of passageway being discovered. For details see 1968YRC Journal No. 34. Our

route from Konya to Antalya in 2023 passed through the same region. We expected it to be particularly interesting – and it was.



*Tinaztepe Cave entrance streamway that we originally descended. The visitors' dry cave passages are behind the camera in the imposing cliff face.*

Almost 90 minutes' drive down the 695 road from Konya we spotted a large sign for Tinaztepe and the name rang a bell. Tinaztepe was the last cave we explored in 1967 – but why the signs?

On the last day of our expedition Dr Aygen, Tony Dunford and I made a bumpy 5km 4x4 trek across the barren Tinaztepe limestone plateau. At its end, beneath an impressive cliff, Dr Aygen showed us an unexplored stream cave which we then

descended to a depth of around 80m before we ran out of equipment at the top of a vertical drop but we could see a large passageway continuing. French cavers later returned and managed to extend the system.

To our amazement our 2023 highway now passes within 200m of the cave which is complete with car park, restaurant, fuel station, and play area. Even a forest instead of the barren plateau. We were not sure if this was progress or not.

To make matters worse a display by the entry kiosk credits a French friend as the cave's discoverer. We pointed out that it was we three who initially descended Tinaztepe, but to no avail. We were, however, given a free cup of local herb tea and permission to take photographs. Ahh well, *c'est la vie!*

### **The Oympinar Barrage**

We then visited the now finished barrage. This region was our main objective of the 1966 visit as it actually included the Dumanli resurgence, a cave that discharges a third of the water into the Manavgat River. It was also considered to be the largest single karst resurgence on earth with an early season output of up to 50m<sup>3</sup>/s.

Dumanli was just above river level in a near vertical-sided canyon with a raging torrent of water. To reach the entrance a 200m long and 1–2m wide path had been blasted into the cliff-side to opposite the rising. Many epic and risky attempts were made to cross the river. Finally, a young Turkish helper managed to jump from on high into the centre of the stream and reach the other side with a

rope. The rest is history. See *'The Siege of Dumanli'* in the 1968 YRC Journal and *'The Dumanli Rising'* by Tony Dunford and Tim Gilbert in *Exploration '66* (University of Nottingham).

Our first impression of the new Oymapinar Barrage was one of awe. It rises spectacularly from a narrow base to a height of 185m between the two canyon walls. A steeply winding road by the Dam takes visitors through a tunnel to a viewing area then on to see the lake. The view is both impressive and beautiful. Tourist-filled boats and small launches now zoom around above the many drowned caves and passageways that we had once so excitedly and laboriously explored.



*The Oymapinar Lake Dam wall and Lake*



*The Dam is just to the left of Lake picture.*

To add to the disappointments at Tinaztepe and Oymapinar, despite reaching each botanical reference point, we were too late by too weeks for the flora. However, our unexpected adventures amply compensated for any disappointment.

*"Where were all the tribulations then?"* you may ask. Well, a major one for us was every single day in simply the driving: no rules of the road; speed is essential; overtaking on either side is accepted; U turns are made anywhere; traffic lights are normally ignored; and police radar speed traps usually have long queues of offenders whilst more race by. Surprisingly, we did not see any accidents

Acknowledgement: The authors thank Alexander Klimchouk for many of the statistics cited. See also Tony Waltham's article regarding Obruks in *Cave & Karst Science*, Vol.42. No.3. (2015).

## A Paean for John Middleton.

David Handley

John we salute you! Your globetrotting combined with the wanderlust and thirst for new horizons puts your exploits over decades into a category of their own. The details of so many of your travels, recorded in the YRC journal, are a testament to your driving ambition and thirst for discovery and scientific knowledge. You are an example for us all to witness, delight in, and maybe even aspire to. No one in the Club, at least in recent times, can match your passion for visiting wild, obscure and faraway places. You have excited the minds and imagination of so many of us armchair adventurers. We must credit too, Val who has wholeheartedly supported your adventures and been central to their success.



Taking full advantage of the unusually dry summer conditions in the northwest this year, YRC members, aspiring members and past members have been busy putting up a selection of new routes in the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District. It's hard to find new crags these days, so many of these developments have taken place on crags that do not allow climbers to easily arrange protection in the manner of 'trad' climbing. This is usually because the rock may be suspect or does not have natural features like crack lines or bedding structure often found on traditional routes. Therefore, all these routes listed are classed as "sport" routes equipped with bolts for protection.

## Yorkshire Dales

### Giggleswick South, Tomb Thumb Buttress

**Sharks Fin Soup. 14m 5b** Start just right of *Oberon* (see online [UKC](#) for location ) below the slightly overhanging crack that encourages a hand jam. Climb this to a generous ledge. Step onto the wall and continue with good holds pleasantly to the tree. Lower off is a wire strap round the mature ash tree. (18<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Glyn Edwards, Ged Campion and Norman Wilkinson)

### **Rumplstilskin. 10m 6b**

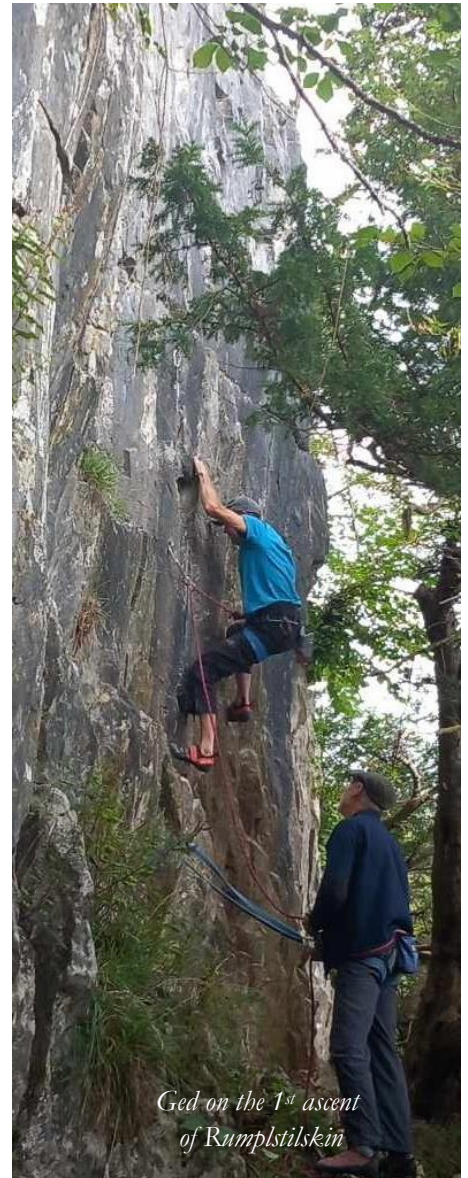
Start on the ledge left of the second half on 'Puck,' approached from the start of *Oberon*. Step on to the 'flame de pierre' like flake using the thin crack and climb to the break. From here make technical moves up through the scoop to easier climbing above. (8<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Ged Campion, Glyn Edwards).

### Kinsey Wall.

This is one of Yorkshire's smaller crags situated along the path from Bucker Brow towards Giggleswick Upper Crag. From Bucker Brow cross two walls until a small dry valley leads up left to the 'G Spot', a cave shelter. Kinsey wall is the small crag by the G Spot. Routes are described left to right.

**Knuckle Chuckle. 7m 6b** Interesting climbing to jugs at half height. A long reach gains indifferent holds then better ones to the Yew tree and move right to the lower off.

**Happy Valley. 7m 6a** Climb the slight arête to gain the short corner and continue steeply on good holds.



**No Hangers Yet 7m 6c** This is the route is believed to be bolted by Dick Tongue and Mick Johnson. There are 2 studs in place and 2 studs and chain for the lower off. There is a particularly awkward move to gain the ledge above the overhang.

**Winter Warmer 7m 6c** Start just left of the large grounded flake and delicately gain the hanging corner and step right to the shared lower off.

**Five Knuckle Shuffle. 7m 5b** The original trad route climbed by Karl Lunt and team in 2005, retro bolted by Dick Tongue and Mick Johnson. Step from the end of the grounded flake and climb the wall through the scoop/ ledge and up to the lower off shared with the previous route.

**Near the Knuckle. 7m 6a+** Just right at the end of the grounded flake gain the wall and follow the line of the right curving cracks.

**Knuckle Down. 7m 6a+/6b** Just right again a better crack runs up to a small roof. Gain this and finish steeply.

All the above routes, some of which are not YRC additions, were climbed and mostly bolted during May 2023 with contributions by Ged and Imogen Campion, Glyn Edwards and Norman Wilkinson.

### Great Douk. Chapel Le Dale

The doline of Great Douk Cave is a collapsed feature within a fault zone, creating an impressive rock walled depression which has not previously been developed for climbing. The resurgence cave in the doline sports one of the best novice trips in the Yorkshire Dales. Considerable work was done to unearth and clean the crag and make it suitable for climbing. Four routes have been developed so far.

**Douk Original 14m 6a+/6b** The first line of bolts right of the impressive overhangs. Climb the clean wall to the bedding plane and continue up the groove on good holds until, instead of stepping right onto the ledge as for the Direct, a difficult move left gains hidden jugs. Good holds on a thin break above enable vertical progress to be made through the steep ground to a generous ledge. Easy climbing to the lower off. (26<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Ged Campion, Glyn Edwards and Norman Wilkinson)



**Douk Direct 14m 6a+** As for the Original but step right onto the obvious ledge at the steep ground. Continue direct with a couple of stiff pulls to the generous ledge and lower off above. (26<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Glyn Edwards, Ged Campion and Norman Wilkinson)

**Diggers Dilemma 14m 6a+** Right again is a clean rib in the short wall up to the bedding, above the covered entrance to the cavers dig. Climb this to the ledge, followed by the interesting wall left of the corner to another ledge. From here move right and up, passing another bedding to reach the Cavers Perch (put a sling on this, but don't swing on it) and continue to the lower off. (9<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Glyn Edwards, Ged Campion and Norman Wilkinson)

**Clemantine 14m 6c+** Climb scrappy ground to the bedding and a Cavers Perch (sling). Standing on this makes it possible to start a difficult series of moves to reach undercuts at the roof. Steep moves on good holds leads up the crack. (12<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Glyn Edwards and Colin Binks)

## The Lake District

### Runestone Quarry

Deep ravines and dilapidated quarry buildings hide this sheltered fast-drying sport venue that offers enjoyable slabs and steep walls catching the morning or afternoon sun. Runestone Quarry sits hidden in an elevated, secluded position, marked by huge spoil heaps, overlooking the Langdale fells.

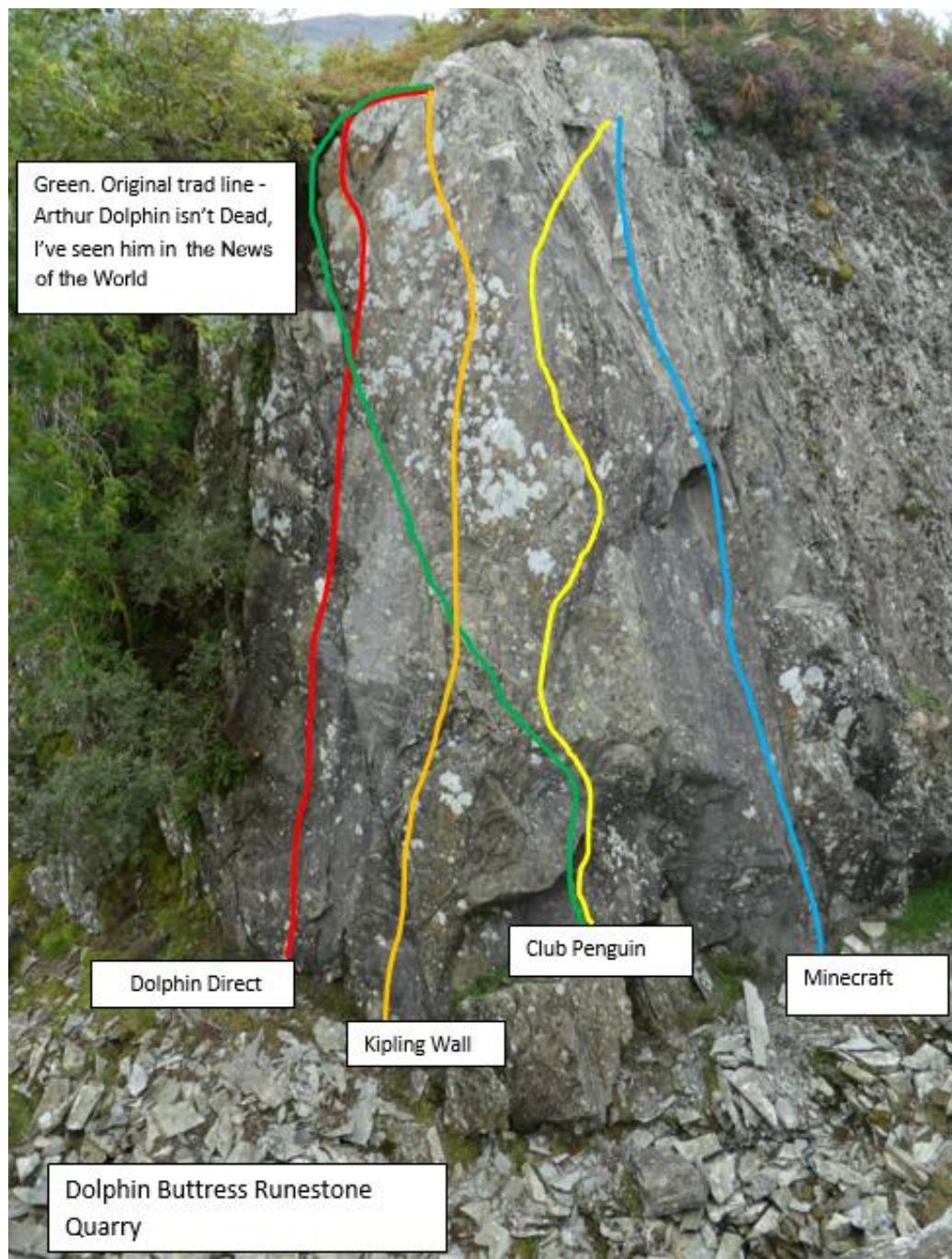
The quarry is just up from LHG, following track past High Hall Garth to the fell gate then left steeply to join main track from Fell Foot Bridge to Tilberthwaite. The spoil heaps can be clearly seen above. Head for Tilberthwaite to where track branches right to quarry. Cross a stone stile and head up a diagonal ramp to Lower Quarry.

For many years YRC members have top roped and bouldered in the quarry. Teams added a few bolted routes from the 1990s onwards, but in 2020 just before the pandemic, prompted by the July publication of the new FRCC guidebook "*Lakes Sport & Slate*" the quarry saw a burst of activity from an invasion of climbers re-bolting old routes and developing new ones.

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



## Runestone Lower Quarry, Dolphin Butress



**Dolphin Direct 10m 5a** Starts on the extreme left side of the butress up easy ledges past an in-situ peg finishing as for original trad route '*Arthur Dolphin isn't dead. I've seen him in the News of the World.*' This line is not yet bolted independently. Protect available by clipping the first two bolts on adjacent route, *Kipling Wall*. (8<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Imogen, Aaron and Ged Campion)



**Kipling Wall 10m 6c** Start one metre right of *Dolphin Direct* to reach the very steep wall. Using the thin, leftwards slating ramp gain the holds to reach the top of the arete and lower off. (9<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Imogen, Aaron and Ged Campion)

**Club Penguin 10m 5b** Step off the pointed flake and pull over the onion like bulge to an easy slab. Follow the steep arete and step right at the top to the lower off chain. (19<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Imogen, Aaron and Ged Campion)

*Aaron (above) and Imogen (right) on Club Penguin*



**Minecraft 10m 5a.** Follow the groove over the overlap then up friable rock to the lower off chain. (19<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Imogen, Aaron and Ged Campion)

# The Eastern Dolomites and Carnic Alps

Mick Borroff

Before the August 2023 Austria meet, Conrad Tetley and I took the opportunity to enjoy a couple of weeks in the Dolomites, despite this being the peak of the Italian holiday period. So we based ourselves in Auronzo di Cadore with easy access to the less-visited Cadorine Dolomites, the Marmarole group to the south, the Sesto group to the north and the Carnic Alps close to the Austro-Italian border and the Piave valley to the east.



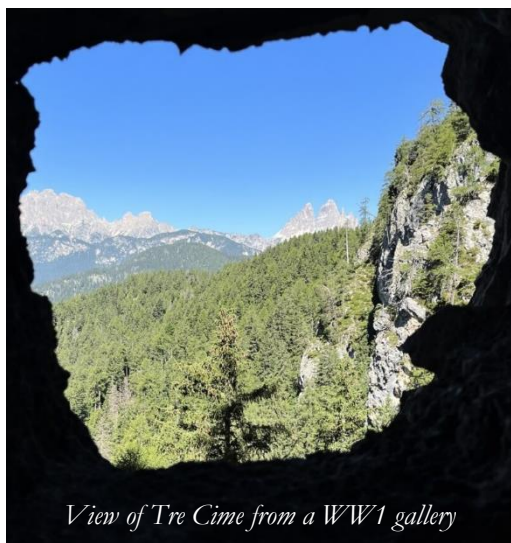
Ten days of via ferratas, mountain ascents and hillwalks across this area, avoiding the crowds (being near the Tre Cime helped here) while enjoying tackling slightly lower or less dramatic peaks but still with impressive views. However, forecasted afternoon

thunderstorms were a major issue for route selection.

This summary of our activities may help others planning to visit this area in August.

**Monte Aiarnola (2465 m) from Passo d'Antonio** This unfrequented mountain in the far east of the Sexten Dolomites gave a straightforward *via normale* and good views of the Marmarole.

**Via Ferrata Corrada d'Ambros from Malga Melin** This excellent route in the Carnic Alps along the Austro-Italian border has fantastic views of the saw-toothed spine of Crode dei Longerin. An entertaining narrow



*View of Tre Cime from a WW1 gallery*



*Conrad emerging from the WW1 gallery onto the ladder pitch on the Via Ferrata Corrada d'Ambros*

switchback ridge had sections of cabling, a mined gallery, a few stemples and a ladder, all interspersed with long airy unprotected sections.

**Pian del Buoi from Monte Agudo** The old WW1 military road up to Pian dei Buoi was officially closed due to a recent mudslide, so Sentiero Attrezzato Amalio da Pra was out of reach. Instead, we took the chairlift up to Monte Agudo (1573 m) with its panoramic view of the Tre Cime and Croda de Toni, and across the lake to the Carnic Alps. An undulating wooded ridge took us to the high open meadow of Pian dei Buoi, passing mined galleries and various other WW1 buildings and remains, returning by our outward route.

### **Via Ferrata Sartor and Monte Peralba (2,694 m) from near Rifugio Sorgenti**

This is another interesting via ferrata in a lesser-known area north of Sappada. This was very enjoyable with steep, clean slabs to be negotiated topped off with a steep path to the summit of Monte Peralba with exceptional 360 degree views. (Photo on next page)

### **Passo dell'Arco from Sappada**

As the Sappada chairlift was closed due to thunderstorm damage, our way was through the forest on the other side of the valley on a protected path to Passo dell'Arco, so named after the large natural arch at the col with a WW1 bunker tunnelled into the cliff underneath. The pass had a superb view across to the Carnic Alps.

### **Col Pramossi (1,531 m), St Daniele chapel & Col Ciampon from Laggio de Cadore**

Having moved hotels we spent the afternoon walking from Laggio up to an undulating wooded ridge overlooking the village. This eventually descended to some cables that led down to the historic Saint Daniele Chapel, dating back to 1350, perched high above Col Ciampon which houses a restored WW1 Italian military village with a commanding position above the Cadore valley. This is now an outdoor museum and worth a visit.



**Giro di Monte Pelmo from Passo Staulanza**  
the Pelmo starting up Val d’Arcia, then a steep, interesting ascent of a gully and ridge up some stemples and diagonally up scree slopes to the high point of Forcella Val d’Arcia (2,476 m). We descended to the Rifugio Venezia and back to complete the round. A memorable and recommended tour.

We walked the classic circuit of

**Lagi d’Olbe and Monte Lastroni from Sappada**  
The Sappada chairlift repaired, we walked up to lovely Lago d’Olbe with its fine reflections and then ascended Monte Lastroni (2,449 m) by a WW1 mule track. We narrowly avoided a torrential thunderstorm which lasted about an hour by sheltering in a convenient hut.



**Forcella Fossiana (1,986 m) and Rif Giaf from Passo della Mauria**

The forecast of afternoon thunderstorms dissuaded us from attempting Sentiero Attrezzato Olivato, so we did an alternative ascent below Monte Miaron. This went up through the forest and scree slopes to Forcella Fossiana to the northeast of Monte Cridola. Then down to Monte Boschet and Rifugio Giaf, and an undulating descent through delightful beech woods.

*Mick on cabling*



*The James Herriot Way is a long-distance walking trail that winds its way through the picturesque Yorkshire Dales in northern England. The trail is named after James Herriot, the pen name of veterinary surgeon James Alfred Wight, who wrote a series of books about his experiences in the Dales.*

*The James Herriot Way is a 52-mile circular route that starts and finishes in the market town of Thirsk. The trail takes in some of the most beautiful countryside in England, including the rolling hills of the Dales, the moors and the picturesque villages that dot the landscape.*

*Along the way, walkers can enjoy stunning views of the surrounding countryside, visit historic sites, and explore charming villages and towns. The trail is well-marked and offers a range of accommodation options, from campsites and hostels to hotels and B&Bs.*

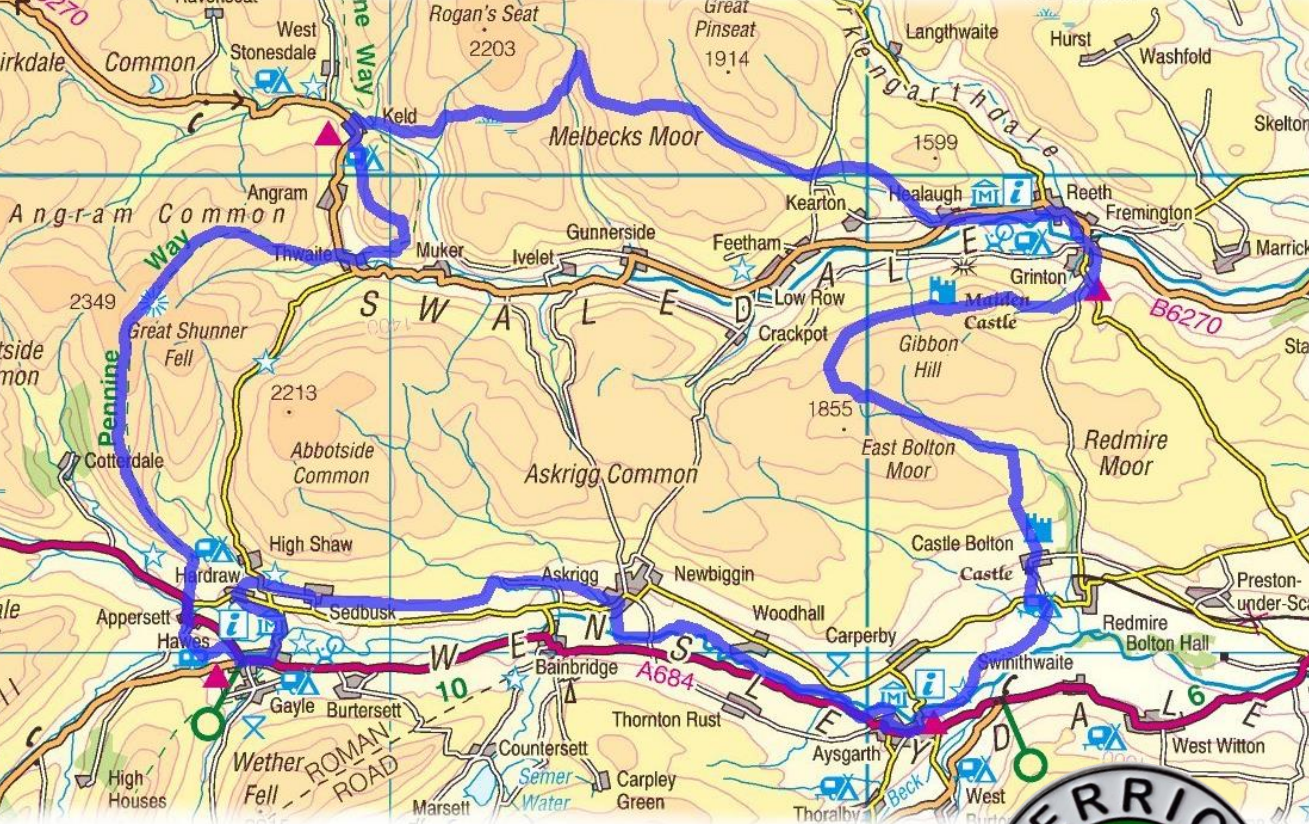
*Whether you are an experienced walker or just looking for a new adventure, the James Herriot Way offers a unique and unforgettable experience. With its stunning scenery, rich history, and charming villages, it is no wonder that this trail is one of the most popular in England.*

This is most likely the first contribution to the Yorkshire Ramblers' records produced using Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is the result of using the AI tool, Canva, prompted by the key words, James Herriot Way. It is appropriate to mention that as I write an AI Safety Summit was held at Bletchley Park. We were told that AI would take over our jobs, we will all soon be leading lives of leisure. Don't get too excited, we have been hearing similar stuff for decades: computers, robots, expert systems.... The only thing different this time was the list of so-called world leaders willing to lend their names to this premature exaggerated speculation.

The AI effort above is reasonable, but fails to mention the two famous TV series, and title of the books *All Creatures Great and Small*. Thirsk was the location of the Wright surgery, not the start of the walk, some repetition of charming, and well-marked the way is not.

Yayoi and I walked the Way in August. It is basically a loop clockwise up Wensleydale and down Swaledale, connecting Reeth, Aysgarth, Hawes and Muker, in any order, or even anticlockwise. Our members will not need detailed instructions. If unwise they might purchase *Walking the Herriot Way* (Stuart Greig), but will be disappointed by very poor illustrations, badly drawn maps and an excess of superfluous information. Much better, and considerable cheaper on Amazon, is Bob Allen excellent *A Dales Walk*, which contains what is, in effect, the Way.

We were not overwhelmed by the pubs at which we stayed at Reeth (pictured below) and West Barton (just off the Way). The former had the worst electrical wiring I have ever encountered (have they been inspected for electrical safety?), at West Barton, when we arrived at 6pm, we were told they was no time for a drink of a shower, dinner was at 6:30 and service finished at 6:45. At both establishment the pub grub was dull, unimaginative and heavy. The Youth Hostel at Hawes was excellent, but so many others on the Dales have closed. By contrast the B&B at Muker was superb, but the nearby pub was closed, as apparently is often the case.



Mention might be made of variations. A lengthy loop over the moors between Grinton and Bolton Castle, can be removed by a bee line. The connection between Hawes and Keld/Muker is, of course, the Pennine Way across Great Shunner Fell. The ascent, though gradual, is long. We missed Keld because we could not book accommodation, hence the B&B at Muker. There is a choice on the return to Reeth, either a higher route through the old lead mines to the north of the alternative valley route down Swaledale.

It is painful to say, that the Dales seems to be suffering long covid. Recruitment of helpers in the hospitality industry seems to be a continuing

problem. Many establishments, were closed or operating restricted hours. In too many cases the customer has to fit the service not vice-versa.

But, this is a beautiful, unchallenging walk. The scenery is the Dales at its best, pick up a map and enjoy your own route.



Mid-May 2023, it's hot, and I'm camped on the lawn of a large hotel in the Scottish Highlands. I've had a much-needed wash and shave in the hotel, just eaten a fine three course meal in the restaurant, and tomorrow morning I'll have breakfast in the hotel.

Who said backpacking across Scotland is arduous? – read on to learn more of this fine example of Highland hospitality.

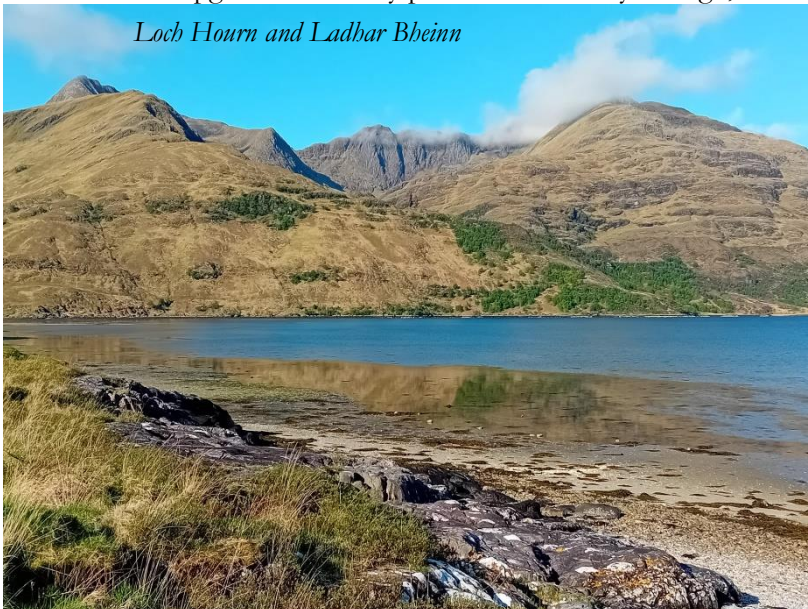
It's five days since I left Mallaig to start walking the 200 miles or so to Johnshaven, a small fishing village on the east coast of Scotland. This year, probably my last major visit to Scotland, the route I've devised is a mixture of sections from previous years' crossings, and a few new sections.

I took the ferry from Mallaig to Inverie, walked over Mam Barrisdale, intending to camp at Barrisdale. Fine weather, shapely peaks, blue skies and fluffy clouds on the hills, what better place is there in Scotland than the Rough Bounds of Knoydart?

It is exactly forty years since I first visited this area, when with Howard Humphries, father of the YRC's current President, we ascended all the Munros in Knoydart, our contribution to the Club's 1983 project of ascending all Scotland's Munros in a week.

I planned to camp at Barrisdale, but the bothy there was unoccupied. It had been enlarged and upgraded since my previous visit ten years ago, so it was a no-brainer to forsake the

*Loch Hourn and Ladbar Bheinn*



tent for the luxury of the bothy, and have the benefit of a chair, table, water on tap, and plenty room to spread out gear.

The walk alongside Loch Hourn is as beautiful as ever. It's not an easy loch-side stroll by any means, plenty rough-going, deceptive ascents and descents, but magical nevertheless, with views down into clear water where jelly-fish abound, and across to some of the finest Munros of the "Rough Bounds".



It's almost a shame to reach the tarmac at Kinloch Hourn, though there's now a teashop there, so it's a necessary pit-stop.

Onwards eastwards, through devastated forestry, not the prettiest of sights, to

reach the Great Glen at Invergarry. Here an Ordnance Survey mapping error means I must walk a mile or so on the road, though there's an unexpected consolation prize. It is Sunday lunchtime as I pass the Invergarry Hotel, there's a delicious smell of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, clearly much better than my intended dehydrated dinner, so it's another "no-brainer" and I have my Sunday lunch in style.

Across the Great Glen now to ascend the woods above Laggan (there are two places named Laggan in the Highlands, two backpacking days apart) to gain Glen Turret and Glen Roy. An old indistinct track pulls me just a bit too far north, and when within 100m of the ridge deer fence, a great gash in the hillside stops me dead in my tracks. It's almost unbelievable; it's as if plate tectonics in the Highlands have suddenly torn the hillside apart. Impossible to descend into the gash, too steep and too deep, so after trying and failing to pass it to the south, I struggle upwards, and with relief pass beyond the top of the gash, and reach the deer fence. But it's very high, wobbly and unsafe to climb, so I follow it until finding a secure section, climb over safely, and start the long, boggy descent to Glen Turret.

This is hard going, I'm beginning to feel knackered, so in the shelter of an abandoned building I stop for a brew-up and re-assess the day's plans. I decide to have another look at the parallel roads of Glen Roy, then aim to stop for the night at Luib-Chonnal bothy.

I have the bothy to myself, with the luxury of a chair, table and sleeping platform. Water is just a few yards away.

*Luib Chonnal bothy*



Memories flood back – I was last at this bothy about 15 years ago, when a friend and his newly married wife passed by, we shared a brew and a chat, then went our separate ways. I never saw Bernie again, one of the real characters of the Scottish backpacking scene, he sadly died far too young.

I'm right on the main water-shed of Scotland, so after a kilometre of bog-hopping, I begin to follow the infant River Spey, past Loch Spey, and fairly hard-going to reach the bothy at Melgarve. Not fully recovered from yesterday's exertions, I stop at Melgarve – there's no-one there, nor is there even a stick of furniture in the bothy, so I sit on the door step and have a needed rest and brew-up. The tables and chairs that were here when I last visited three years ago have all gone. Perhaps they've been chopped up for firewood, as regrettably sometimes happens at bothies, or possibly stolen, too often a problem at easily accessible bothies.

I now have a few miles of road walking, past Garva Bridge – a good camping spot I've used occasionally – past Spey Dam, and the minor road into Laggan (the second Laggan). Here I'd hoped to overnight in the village hall, but find it full of other folk with the same idea. They look like serious snorers to me, so a few enquiries, and a lot of luck, lead me to the hotel that's just up the road.

It's full to capacity, but the wonderful Manager says I can camp on the hotel lawn and otherwise have full use of the hotel facilities. This is Highland hospitality at its best. Are they always so generous, I wonder, or did they just take pity on a scruffy, exhausted old man? I leave a sizeable tip when I depart next morning.

I press on into Glen Banchor, an attractive "back-door" route into Newtonmore, and collect a resupply parcel from friends who own the hostel in the village.

Easy going for a couple of days, and I'm now camping in a spot I found years ago, just beyond the Cairngorm Club footbridge, near the northern entrance to the Lairig Ghru. Surrounded by mature pines, with flat, well drained grass and water just a few metres away, it's perfect and so attractive, it's almost a shame to move on. But move on I must.

Last time I passed through the Lairig Ghru, the mountains on either side, all well-known Munros, were plastered with snow and ice, and in bright sun could be mistaken for fine Alpine peaks. Today, though, there's no snow even at the summit of the Lairig, though the scree and steep gullies, particularly on the eastern, Cairn Lochan side, are in bright sunlight, giving the hillside for a mile or so, a distinctive striped appearance. The boulder-field at the top of the pass is a bit awkward, largely I suppose because there's no snow to hold the rocks firmly in place.

Slowly, ever so slowly, I make my way to Derry Lodge. It's taken me nearly ten hours walking to get here, but I erect the tent and prepare a needed brew, with a pleasant feeling of satisfaction that I can still, just, manage the passage through the Lairig Ghru.

Time for a change of plans, though, as I'm not up to the planned route through Glen Gairn to Ballater. So I take an easier, shorter alternative, call at Mar Lodge for tea and cakes, and go on to Braemar for a much needed shower, shave and good night's sleep at the campsite.

The King isn't in residence at Balmoral, so I walk through the estate, have a good lunch at the much-improved tea shop, then on to Ballater, where I stay with friends from previous years.

I now have a planned short day, SSE over the hills to Glen Tanar. For years I'd wanted to camp near the Shiel of Glentinar, formerly a shooting lodge, later a bothy that was burned to the ground about thirty years ago by a group of revellers who foolishly left a fire burning whilst they celebrated dawn on mid-summer day on the summit of Mount Keen. There's a large flat grass covered area adjacent to the ruins of the bothy, far too tempting for a camper to ignore, though ignore it I had done over the years. Not now, though, and it was worth the wait – flat, short grass, water 20 metres away, views down the Glen, and Mount Keen rearing sharply above – perfection.

Another change of plan – instead of forcing my way through the Fetteresso Forest, I go over Mount Keen, down Glen Mark to Tarfside to spend the evening, and stay over-night, at the hostel.

Only a couple more days now, firstly following the River North Esk to Edzell, down three miles of rocky gorge cut by the river, definitely one of the highlights of the entire walk. I camp for the last night at North Water Bridge, followed by a long half-day's walk to the coast at Ararat, then along the faint shore path to finish at Johnshaven.

So I complete my 21<sup>st</sup> crossing of the Highlands. I've spent eight nights camping, and two nights each in bothies, hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation.

Each crossing has been different, with different routes and different experiences. I've even ascended a few needed Munros. This year, 2023, the conditions were good, though, as expected in Scotland, there've been crossings in gales, constant rain, snow, burns in spate etc. But overall, Scotland in these conditions, and despite the wind turbines that

have sprouted up over the years, is still a fine place where it's possible to get away from the crowds and enjoy solitude in wild country.

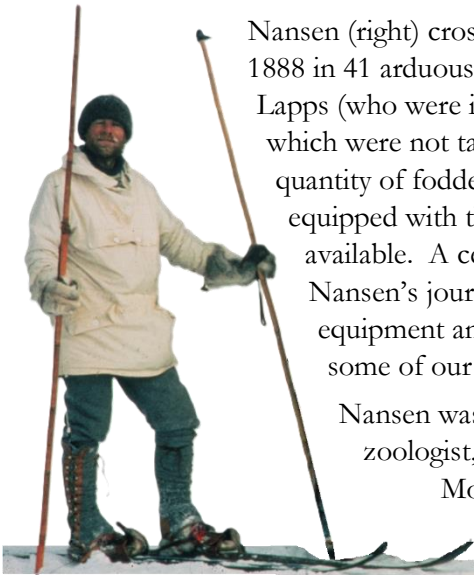
The first person to ascend all the Munros in a continuous walk, Hamish Brown, stated many years ago that the best things in Scotland are not all above 3000 feet, and with respect to Hamish, I think over the years I've confirmed the accuracy of his observation.



*Lairig Ghrù*

# Crossing Greenland with Nansen's Equipment

Nils Hagen



Nansen (right) crossed Greenland's 600km-wide icecap in 1888 in 41 arduous days. His team of three others plus two Lapps (who were initially hired to look after the reindeer which were not taken on account of the unfeasible quantity of fodder they would have needed) were equipped with the best equipment and food then available. A century on, four of us repeated Nansen's journey using practically the same equipment and clothing. This article describes some of our experiences when using that gear.



Nansen was a very determined man, a polymath, zoologist, Nobel laureate, skier and hunter.

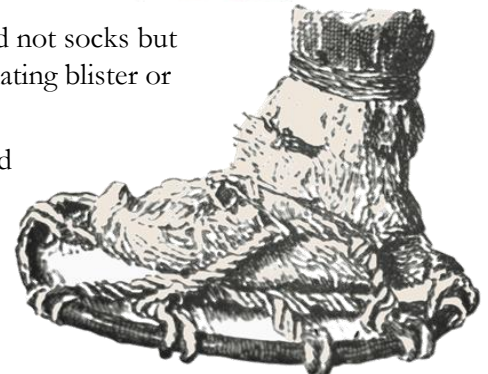
Modern synthetic materials were not then available so his, and our, 2.2m long candle-waxed skis were made of ash with leather strap bindings and poles of bamboo. We found the ski gear all performed well. Especially useful in getting up onto the icecap were the solid metal spikes at the base of each ski pole.



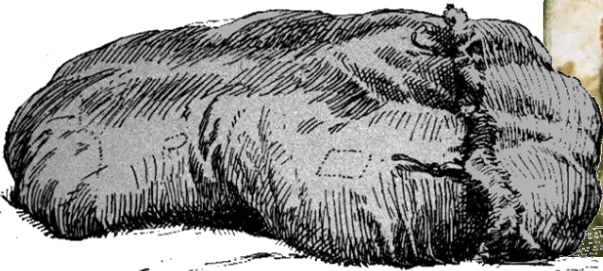
On the high ground in the coldest conditions, we used not socks but traditional Sami reindeer-skin boots stuffed with insulating blister or bladder sedge which soaked up the sweat.

There were places where ridged ice meant we switched from skis to snowshoes. These were effective and closely matched Nansen's sketch of the originals.

As for clothing, our anoraks were made of cotton and other clothes were woollen. The double mittens



had wool inners and a windproof cotton or reindeer-skin outer. These kept us warm in the cold dry



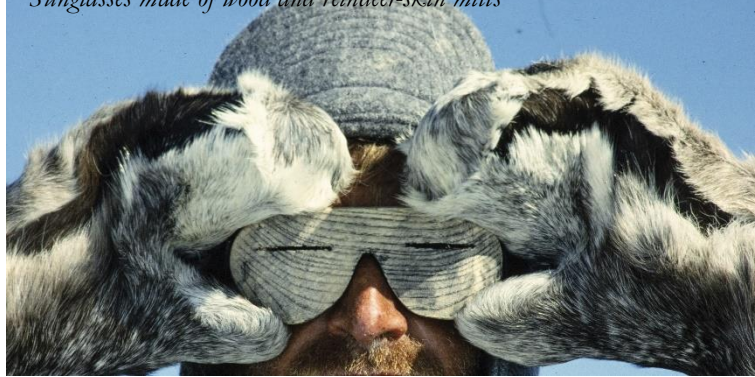
conditions on the icecap. Our wool caps were almost wind-proof.

Our large, two-year-old female reindeer-skin sleeping bag took two men and they were cosy with the top laced up and sharing body heat.

Our food was biscuits, chocolate, Knorr soup, crispbread, cheese, pemmican, and dried meat. The cooker had a double, methylated spirit flame in the bottom. Nansen had an idea that gear should have two functions to reduce weight and make it more useful. The cooker, for example, had two containers being heated at the same time; one for warming water and one for preparing a meal. A pipe leading the heat through the lower container to the higher one. Nansen warmed water in the upper one and heated meals below but we did it the other way around. After some practice we made it work, but thought that Nansen's two-functions idea was not the best for cooking.

The tent was of the Nansen-type. While he used five separate large pieces of tent cloth (to be able to use pieces as sledge and boat sails), ours were sewn together to reduce snow blowing into the tent.

*Sunglasses made of wood and reindeer-skin mitts*





We had better weather conditions than Nansen suffered. Our trip was shorter, only 27 days on the crossing compared to his 41. Plus, of course, we were moving through known territory whereas Nansen was heading into the unknown. A sign of his determination to complete the crossing was that he went east to west – from the barren wild coastline towards the inhabited west coast – so there would be no temptation to turn back and every incentive to keep going.

Our wood-frame Nansen sledges were roped together for flexibility and ease of repair. At the outset on the east coast, their loads were 100kg each. As an aid to navigation, a deviation from Nansen’s original sledges was the addition of a trundle wheel to the back of one of the sledges.



Throughout each day in the featureless landscape of the icecap, we used compasses for navigation. At noon if the sky was cloudless, every second day we used a sextant - the same type as Nansen used – to establish our position. Sextants usually need a view of the horizon but on land, the horizon may not be horizontal. So, the usually a tray of water with a little oil on top acts as an artificial horizon. Mercury is used in polar areas both because of its lower freezing point and its much greater density.

I presented a more detailed account of these reflections together with some details of the crossing as a lecture, part of the YRC 2023 Annual Dinner Weekend.



# The YRC, Pen-y-Pass YHA, Cloggy and Everest

Michael  
Smith

Vincent Murphy (see reviews in this issue) draws to our attention the group photograph below taken at Gorphwysfa, Pen-y-Pass, during the Easter of 1913 and related to a Snowdon gathering mentioned in the review. You may have already come across some of these characters. O'Brien you can read of in that review.



Gorphwysfa was a regular gathering place for a number of climbing and literary luminaries. It is now the YHA's Snowdon Pen-y-Pass hostel with a café called Mallory's.

George Mallory, known for his "*Because it's there*" response to "*Why climb Everest?*", was lost on Everest's Northeast Ridge in 1924 only to be found again 75 years later in a location which had been identified earlier by YRC member Frank Smythe. Frank gave lectures to the Club in the 1930s on his Kanchenjunga and Kamet trips. His son, Tony was also a

member. Mallory's daughters, Clare and Berridge, in 1937 camped under nearby Clogwyn Du'r Arddu with honorary member David Cox when he led the first ascent of Sunset Crack. Cox gave Dennis Armstrong (president 1984-86) his first Oxford tutorial, in 1949. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, then president of the Climbers' Club, organised several of these the Pen-y-Pass gatherings which advanced both rock climbing and climbers such as Mallory. Injured serving in the Friends' Ambulance Unit he lost a leg but still climbed the Matterhorn in 1928. He was influential in the formation of The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Outward Bound and the BMC.

W<sup>m</sup> Cecil Slingsby was an early leading light in our Club and its second president. He was a notable alpinist and held by Norwegians to be the 'Father of Norwegian Mountaineering.' Alizon married Cecil in 1882. At the 1911 gathering, their daughter, Eleanor, made her first 'real climb' with her brother and Geoffrey WY. She later married Geoffrey and as 'Len' Winthrop Young co-founded The Pinnacle Club becoming its first president. The Pen-y-Gwryd, down the road from Pen-y-Pass hosted that club's inaugural meeting.

Geoffrey Keynes, who often climbed with Mallory, became a surgeon after serving with the medical corps in WWI. He gave Virginia Woolf life-saving treatment after she overdosed on pills, besides being a co-founder of the London Blood Transfusion Service. He also wrote biographies of literary figures including Siegfried Sassoon and Jane Austen

Geoffrey Madan was, I believe, then about to go up to Balliol and later would perhaps be best noted for his fine, aesthetic writing style and as collector of aphorisms including "*The cat which isn't let out of the bag often becomes a skeleton in the cupboard.*"

The gathering lasted from March 8<sup>th</sup> to April 17<sup>th</sup> though not all were there throughout. Fifty-two attending signed the Gorphwysfa guest book which has a marginal note that the weather started with snow and storms later turning very mild.



Easter 1913 March 18 - April 14  
S M T Revels

W R Reade.

W R Reade  
H. S. Barrod.  
F. A. Baddley.  
W. H. Baddley  
J. F. Millington  
D. C. Grant  
Vincent Baddley  
F. W. Co. Speyer  
G. Finch  
H. H. Lunn  
D. H. Zallcott  
T. Pictor.  
Norman Chauce.  
E. L. Huxley  
A. L. Huxley  
H. Lammere Slingsby

Raymond Bicknell.  
Geoffrey Bartum  
Mr G. Bartum  
Miss Shadbol  
A. Chaden  
Edith in Appd -  
B. Reade.  
Githan Blozam -  
Claude Shillit.  
Korah Lawrence  
Trevenen Huxley.  
E. L. Dila.  
Concuba, Va Brian  
K. J. O'Brien  
S. H. G. T. Butler

Norman Young

G. Winthrop Young

W. G. Fletcher.  
G. G. Clark  
J. S. Huxley  
Alizon Slingsby  
Wendell Slingsby  
Eleanor Pearl Slingsby

R. W. Fletcher  
S. W. Huxford.  
C. J. Crawford. April 6.

April 10-14

George Mallory  
Robert Mullery  
Hugh Heber Percy  
Geoffrey Keynes

April 9 to 15  
April 9-18  
L. G. Baker. (Capt.)

H. L. J. Porter  
R. E. E. Richards

The Gorphwysfa guestbook page for Easter 1913 reproduced courtesy of YHA (England & Wales) and the Winthrop-Young / Weidlich families

# Reviews

## Conor OBrien, Sailor Extraordinaire by Vincent Murphy

This short book captures the life of Irish intellectual, Republican, architect, sailor, and ship designer Edward Conor Marshall OBrien, 1880-1952. It is well worth reading and can be found in Lowstern's Club Library.

The missing apostrophe is deliberate and is how he signed his name. He never suffered the lack of it being questioned by today's word processors. Wikipedia ignores his preference.

Three boats he designed and sailed have interesting histories. *Kelpie* was used for gun running to supply 600 rifles from Germany to the Irish Volunteers in 1914. By 1921 she was effectively OBrien's home and ended her days grounded on rocks near Portpatrick as he returned from a climbing trip to the Cullin of Skye. The working ketch *Ilen*, a Falklands service ship, which he sailed there himself. Last but not least, 13m long engineless *Saoirse*, which OBrien commanded with three crew, to circumnavigate the world. This was in 1923-1925, long before Sir Francis Chichester and Sir Robin Knox Johnson became household names. He was the first in a small private yacht to circumnavigate west to east taking the Clipper Route which stays in the Southern Ocean all the way, south of Cape of Good Hope, south of Australia and south of Cape Horn.

OBrien planned to climb Mount Cook on that trip but arrived in New Zealand too late in the season. Shades of HW Tilman and Matthew Botterill in that approach. He did though climb Snowdon with Geoffrey Winthrop Young, Eleanor, Robert Graves and George Mallory (the centenary of whose death on Everest is 2024).

OBrien considered wearing shoes of any kind at sea was an affectation. He also climbed barefoot claiming it meant he could then get his toes into smaller cracks.

The 2018 restorations in the same boatyard, of both the 60-year-old *Ilen*, recovered from the Falklands, and the frames for *Saoirse*, prompted author Vincent Murphy to find out more about this interesting chap. His research revealed a



*OBrien and his sister Kitty on Kelpie, 1913*



connection to the YRC. Sailing off Scotland's west coast in 1924, OBrien spotted the yacht *Molly* owned by Matthew Botterill (member 1907-1960) whom he persuaded to climb with him. The log book of Molly describes an ascent of Askival on Rhum. Three members of the Botterill family (two of them YRC) were regular crew on *Molly*.

An interesting read, this book does though focus on the round the world trip rather than OBrien's mountaineering exploits. We have several experienced sailors in the YRC who will find it fascinating. (WAL)

Conor OBrien, *Sailor Extraordinaire* by Vincent Murphy. 44pages.

Paperback. ISBN 978-739-8589-1-9. £7.50 from [flaglane.ie](http://flaglane.ie)

See also regarding Matthew Botterill in YRC Journals:

Mountain and Sea, 1921 Vol.V, No.14; 1922 Vol.V, No.15; 1923 Vol.V, No.16.

Gaping Ghyll in 1904, Vol.V, No18, p309.

Obituary, Vol.11, No.8.

## New Journals in the Lowstern Library

### **The Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa, 2021**

166pp with 18 articles covering a wide range geographically and by outdoor pursuits: an informal account of the exploration of Slabbergat Caves, a Steve Craven with a Table Mountain song, Patagonia, Pakistan, mountain rescue, canyoning, and in the Alps there are Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc.

### **The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal 2023**

392pp with over 80 of them outlining the year's new routes in Scotland. Dennis Gray details Belgium's claim to being the only country with a king who died while climbing. There's climbing at Wolf Slock if you are returning to Galloway and surveying in the Cullin in the 1930s, South America's Ayacucho, Quito and take-away roast guineapig from 1977.

### **Craven Pothole Club Records 2023, Numbers 149, 150, 151 and 152**

Each issue 50-16pp. Lots on local caves both history and the latest developments, but also sea kayaking, digital surveying, Yugoslavia, 1973 and a review of Sid Perou's new book. See behind the scenes on this year's Gaping Gill winch meet.

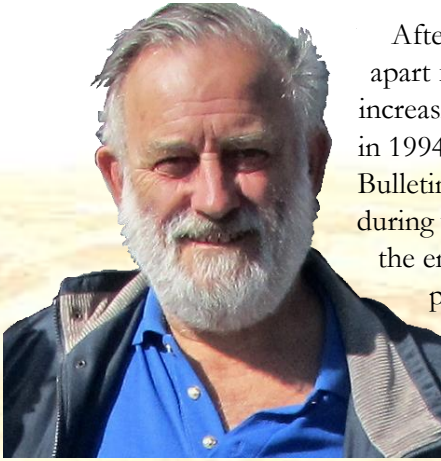
### **Grampian Speleological Group Bulletin October 2023, 5<sup>th</sup> series, Vol.4, No.5.**

48pp. The Editor make a plea for members to not only post their activities and discoveries on ephemeral social media and messaging, but to report them to him by email for inclusion in this formal record lest valuable information is lost to those that follow. A sentiment the YRC Editor feels too. The GSG has evolved from regular club jaunts to places such as the Yorkshire Dales and a greater tendency for individuals to operate in their own localities. While Scotland's caves are the main focus, caving in India, and the 1973 origins of Sofa Rugby are covered.

### **Grampian Club Bulletin 2023, Issue 70**

95pp with a report on Inbhirfholain Hut for those heading to Glen Etive in 2024, plus Rum, Lofoten, Telford's roads, Annapurna, and a sobering account of an accident on Ben Avon

# Retiring Editor's Valediction Roy Denney



After many decades of YRC Journals, published roughly annually apart from during world wars, from 1979 onwards there were increasing gaps between issues. To address this unfortunate lapse, in 1994 Michael Smith introduced a less formal, A4 six-monthly Bulletin which included meet reports. He edited that for ten years during which time I wrote a series of articles mostly on wildlife and the environment and when Michael said he was giving it up I was pressed into taking over in 2004. Since 1899 the publication has remained a record of Club meets and members' other activities.

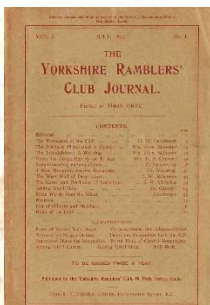
Since the early days of Michael's home publishing of the Bulletin, easy interpersonal communication, readily available online information, and desktop publishing have all moved on considerably. I introduced full colour, a switch back to a bookcase-friendly-size and a return to calling it a Journal.

The demographics of the Club and profiles of members and as a result their activities, have changed over the decades. What was originally the preserve of professional males has seen females and, increasingly, couples, join. The once standard round of walking, climbing, camping, and caving meets has evolved with members tackling, for example, via ferratas, mountain biking, sailing, snowshoeing, and pulking. There are now more frequent overseas trips and a wider social mix among the membership.

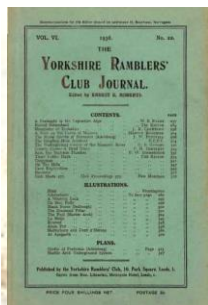
This has been my 20th year of publishing the Journal and I was in the process of producing my 30th edition but, unfortunately, health issues have caught up with me and I have to give it up. Michael has picked up the baton again and I wish him smooth running.

I look back at my trekking in the Himalayas, crewing ocean-going yachts, snorkelling off the outer barrier reef, crawling around in mud underground, and facing the daunting Collie Step on Scafell, but wandering along a ridgeline in splendid solitude in the high country of the north of England is what I miss most. I can enjoy my memories though and look forward now to reading of others' similar experiences in future editions of our Journal.

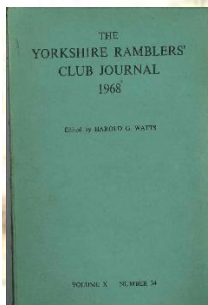
After walking with the Club for 56 years I have a lot to look back on and be grateful to the Club and its members for.



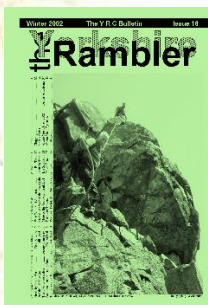
1899



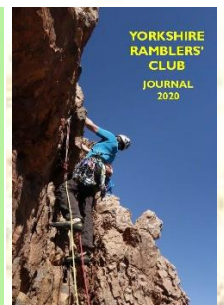
1936



1968



2002



2020

# Club Proceedings

## Yorkshire Ramblers' Club 131st Annual General Meeting

At the AGM, held at the Settle Social Club before the Annual Dinner, our President took the Chair with 40 members present and held a minute's silence in memory of Raymond Harben, Roger Dix, David Tetlow, Robert Middleton, Ken Aldred, Derek English and Derek Smithson who had died since the last AGM. Becca Humphreys in her first Presidential address noted the year's challenging meets including a joint meet with the Gritstone Club, thanked the Club's officials for their tireless efforts in keeping our finances, huts, meets, bookings, members, journal and information flow in good order.

With four resignations, and six deaths (Derek Smithson's death being after the accounting period), we end 2023 with 158 Members. John Varney, Dave Booker-Smith and Dorothy Heaton have resigned, and as we have lost contact with Roy Pomfret and John McClean they are deemed to have resigned. Having attained 35 years membership, John Colton, Mike Godden and Dave Martindale are now Life Members. New Members Stephen McCain, Jennifer Tennant, Peter Tennant, Rebecca King and Mark Rothwell were welcomed. We have six new Prospective Members since the last AGM, making sixteen in all: Naomi Hogg, John Thurston who have attended a meet, and yet to attend their first meet, Helen O'Hanlon, Ryan Allport, Kim Richards and Thelma Pickard.

Roy Denney was thanked for his long stint as editor of the journal and Michael Smith thanked for stepping in to produce the current issue.

Officers and other post holders for the coming year are:

President	Becca Humphreys	Membership Secretary	Helen Smith
President-Elect	Ged Campion	Meets Secretary	Tim Josephy
Vice-President	Conrad Tetley	Editor	Michael Smith
Hon. Treasurer	Martyn Trasler	Librarian	Arthur Salmon
Hon. Secretary	Mick Borroff	Archivist	Alan Linford
Huts Booking Secretary	Richard Josephy	Hon. Auditor	Richard Taylor
LHG Wardens	Ali Renton/Ged Campion	Tacklemaster	Ged Campion
Lowstern Warden	Richard Sealey	Webmaster	Andy Syme

Elected committee members are:

Helen Brewitt, Robert Crowther, Harvey Lomas, Rory Newman, and Helen Smith

Membership subscriptions for 2024/2025 are set to increase from £45 to £65 in line with inflation since the last increase in 2008. Currently, £45 barely covers combined cost of providing the Journal, Handbook and paying BMC subscriptions for members. Members can opt to have the Journal and Handbook provided in electronic format only.

A question was raised regarding using Club funds to help develop the skills and experiences of the members and promote more unusual activities, including in the greater ranges using the Special Development Fund. The President reported that the committee is actively discussing the issue and will get back to the membership fairly soon with a policy.



# Chippings

## Forgotten Paths

In 2000 our government gave us 25 years to register all paths and they created new processes to do it. That deadline remains 23 years but Councils still await the enabling order to do the work. Recently a Minister was minded to remove the deadline but at best it may just be pushed back under pressure from landowners wanting a limit on claims for the reinstatement of historic paths. Ministers come and Ministers go, adding to the uncertainty. (RD)



*Cecil and Algy pose in their garden at Beech Hill, Carelton-in-Craven a couple of years later*

## 150 Years on

Our second President, William Cecil Slingsby, made his first visit to Norway in 1872 inspired as a youngster by reading Miss Martineau's tiny book, Feats on the Fjord. Cecil and his companion Christopher Sidgwick intended reaching North Cape to use burning glasses to scorch holes in their hats at midnight. They failed to get that far north but Cecil was inspired to make a return trip. That winter he sprained an ankle while skating outside edge backwards making an 1873 visit inadvisable. In 1874 though he and his cousin Algy Dewhurst made their first mountaineering trip to Norway walking up past Vetti Foss, reaching the Riingsskar col and crossing a glaciated pass. Now the summer of 2024 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that trip and Club hopes to mark the occasion with an event in the same area. (MS)

## The Editorship

Elsewhere in this issue, Roy Denny addresses his twenty-year spell as editor of this journal and the changes it has seen. Thanks Roy, you have moved the Journal on and have an unparalleled record of service as editor.

The outdoor activity world in which the Club operates has certainly changed since Roy attended his first meet in 1968. Clubs in those days were where one learned and developed one's craft guided by the more experienced, found others with similar interests and, at least in the case of caving, accessed the necessary equipment. Fellow members became firm friends one has known for decades. Nowadays, it is more typical for a newcomer to

outdoor pursuits to sign up for a guided course or be taken out for ‘an experience’ and often that is the end of the matter – box ticked.

Club huts, as *the* affordable, informal and available accommodation in mountain areas, have been out-stripped by bunkhouses, and a variety of rented accommodation readily booked online all without the need to turn out now and again to repaint, clean or repair one’s club’s hut. Less commitment is needed. Mountaineering and hillwalking clubs face challenges as a result of these and other changes.

Club journals have a role to play in encouraging members’ participation. They let newcomers know what they are missing. They remind members unable to get on meets what remains in store for them should they return and what their friends are up to.

Our online meet reports are already succeeding in attracting prospective members and those images and text form the basis of much of the Journal content. Add in the reports from individual members and our AGMs completes a hopefully readable, formal record of the Club’s activity which is also available to browsers and researchers alike besides being lodged with the British Library. (MS)

### **Hagg Dyke 25 years ago**

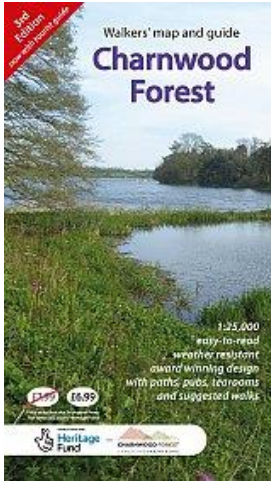
That date is approximate but the occasion is fixed in Derek Bush’s mind. Like 2023’s December Hagg Dyke meet that one was wet. Very wet on the Friday. Derek drove up Wharfedale and was moving slowly through a deeply flooded section below Kilnsey Crag when an oncoming vehicle failed to wait for him to rise from the water and instead came through with little slackening of speed. Derek’s saloon car was swamped and the engine stalled and would not restart. There was nothing for it but to call for help. Frank Platt, whose obituary is elsewhere in this issue, came to the rescue and towed him out. They then went to the nearby Tennants Arms for a cuppa and a chat before giving up and heading home. Thankfully, this year’s meet had no such problems. (DB)

### **Member awarded prestigious RGS Founder’s Medal**

The Royal Geographical Society has awarded a Founders' Medal most years since 1832. It is their most prestigious accolade and requires Royal approval. Past winners include the Duke of Abruzzi, David Livingstone, Sir Martin Conway, Dr Tom Longstaff, H.W. Tilman, Wilfrid Thesiger, Sir John Hunt, Jacques Cousteau and Sir Chris Bonington. In 2021, to that roll of honour was added the name of YRC member and ex-BCA president, Andy Eavis for his contribution to exploratory caving. Andy has caved in Borneo, China, and Papua New Guinea among many other countries.

Digging around also turned up that Andy had published a chapter in 2010 book, *The Great Explorers* edited by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, in which *Finding New Worlds Underground* which starts with an Édouard Alfred Martel epigraph from 1898, just three years after Martel descended the main shaft of Gaping Gill, beating the YRC to that honour. It is unusual for cave exploration to be recognised in compendia of exploration, nor by geographical societies.



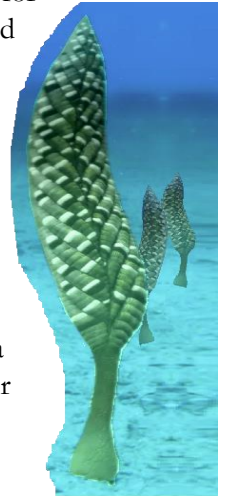


## Charnwood Forest map

Midway between Kegworth and Leicester Forest services on the M1 is Charnwood Forest. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the weather-resistant, 1:25k, *Walkers' map and guide -Charnwood Forest* is now available from Cordee, [www.cordee.co.uk/cmo046](http://www.cordee.co.uk/cmo046) £6.99. Roy Denney was one of the team revising the guide bringing to the table his extensive local knowledge of places of interest, geology, eateries and watering holes. He ensured all the teahouses, pubs and permissive paths were included. The reverse of the map is covered in brief descriptions of various features, walks, and geopark locations including Morley Quarry, Shepshed, near the M1's junction 23, making it a convenient stop-off for a breather if you are on a long journey. This would certainly help plan such a visit.

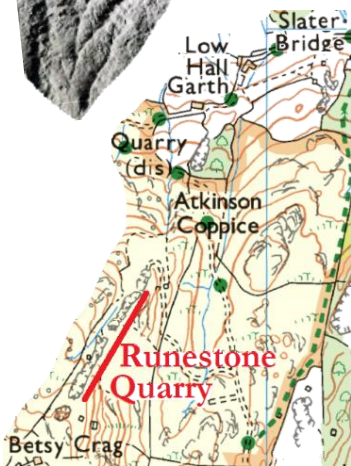
## Leicester: a cradle of animal life?

That location mentioned above, Morley Quarry, is of particular note. It includes the fossils of one of the earliest known sea-floor animals, *charnia*, from c550 million years ago. The creature is named for the area where it was first found in 1956 by a schoolgirl. Her teacher dismissed the idea of it being a fossil as the rocks were considered to be far too old for fossils. Despite looking like a fern, *charnia's* two stages of growth suggest it is an animal. (RD)



## Campions Champion Runestone

The full trio of Campions, Ged, Imogen and Aaron, have between them, contributed several new climbs in Runestone Quarry just the proverbial stone's throw from Low Hall Garth. This quarry climbing has been developed recently and there is a FRCC guide available to download free from [tinyurl.com/RunestoneQuarry](http://tinyurl.com/RunestoneQuarry).



If you are not climbing then you can peer into the quarry and marvel at these routes while walking past it on the way up towards Wetherlam. However, beware of loose rock.

## Snowshoeing in the Jura

YRCJ2022 contained a brief description of a snowshoeing trip to the northern Jura. Mick Borroff adds further details for anyone thinking of a winter visit.

*The snowshoeing photos here are from the 2017 Jura meet*





The French half-term is a good time to go to the Jura as the hills are quiet mid-week. Villages around the minor ski resort of Mont d'Or are good bases for exploring the ridges further north-east, with

accommodation cheaper than Swiss prices. Since the Club meet in 2017, snowshoeing has continued to develop in the Jura, and every Swiss and French *ski de fond* centre now has a range of waymarked raquettes routes, mostly short and easy. However, these can often be combined and extended to make longer outings. Their car parks are usually large and by roads regularly cleared of snow, though some levy a charge to use the marked trails.

The two French guidebooks (*Escapades Hivernale* by Jean-Luc Girod - 70 routes; and the new edition of *Balades a raquettes dans le Jura* by Olivier Deconinck - 30 routes) have a limited overlap, with the former better for exploring the northern ridges into Switzerland. These can be easily augmented with raquettes trails downloaded from route sharing sites with appropriate checking of slope angles and applicable avalanche forecasts.

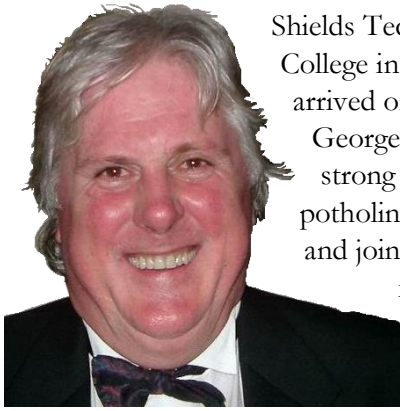
In two weeks, Mick did the following 12 routes in a wide range of conditions: Mont de l'Herba & Champagne Chalet from Les Hôpitaux-Neufs; Croix de Chatel from Col de Mollundruz; Circuit from Chez Liadet near Mouthe; Tour des Citernes & Gouffre de La Glaciere from Le Gounefay; Monts des Cerfs from Ste-Croix; Aiguilles de Baulmes from La Gittaz; Roches Sarrazine from Les Fourgs; Grand Cunay from Col de Marchairuz; Mont d'Amin from La Vue des Alpes; Mont de l'Herba & Bois de La Ravette from Les Hôpitaux Neufs; St Sorlin from Cerniebaud; & Le Morond & Mont d'Or from Montbief.



# Derek English 1945-2023

Member 1997-2023

Obituary



Derek was born and bred a son of Jarrow. After attending South Shields Technical College, he gained a place at Bingley Training College in the late 60s which led to our paths crossing when he arrived on teaching practice at Aireville School Skipton, where George Spenceley and I worked. The school was developing a strong outdoor pursuits side: fell walking, climbing, camping and potholing, and Derek, a Queen's Scout, pitched in on graduation and joining the staff as art teacher. In 1974 he left to promotions, first in Middlesbrough, then to Conyers School, Yarm, where he remained until retirement, latterly as head of the art department. During his time at Conyers he ran the London marathon.

It was since he left Skipton that our friendship developed. He returned frequently to meet old rugby playing friends from Skipton and Bingley. We went to the Lakes quite frequently and he to Skye with various school parties. To Europe too: the Picos de Europa, The Pyrenees (Gavarnie), Chamonix, and Zermatt where we walked but never climbed. Skiing played a significant part in Derek's mid-life years but preferring the Alps to Scotland. Derek attended the odd YRC meet and eventually at my invitation he joined. For a while he was LHG's warden.

There was a memorable incident on one of the February Glen Etive meets. We were a party of maybe four descending Bidean nam Bian, unroped but with crampon and ice axes. We had chosen a steep wide gully that looked as if it would 'go'. Derek was 10m directly above me when suddenly there was a shout and he began to slide. I dug my axe in instantly and almost immediately stopped him in his tracks. He always said I saved his life but we will never know.

The only long walk we completed together was from Wasdale Farm, near the A6's Shap Summit, to Wasdale Head roughly following the 09 gridline in 13 hours 20 mins on a perfect day, with 2,750m ascent over 42km,

The highlight of his YRC membership was the 1997 Rolwaling trek crossing the 5,730m Teshi La. Alan Linford reminds me that Derek was the designated first-aider on that trek. Frank Milburn climbing up a glacier snout took avoiding action from a rolling stone, fell over his walking poles. His head struck a large boulder with a crystalline protrusion which was thought to have penetrated his skull. So, lots of blood besides a broken arm. Drawing on his extensive first aid knowledge, Derek skillfully tended to Frank's injuries. Together with two Sherpanis, he cared for Frank during the evacuation over the Teshi La and descent to where helicopter extraction was possible the next day.

Though essentially apolitical, Free Tibet was the one organisation he passionately supported. That Himalayan trip inspired much of his art for years afterwards and several

Club members have his works on their walls. A picture of his hangs in the barn at LHG. He exhibited in galleries in and around Middlesbrough.

Derek was immensely proud of his University of Leeds MA in Fine Art taken at Bretton Hall College. Following retirement, he was appointed, for some weeks, as 'artist in residence' at East Yorkshire's Burton Agnes Hall.

Admired by his students and their parents alike, to be in his classes was much sort after. His personalised Christmas cards often had a mountain theme and were looked forward to.

He remained a lifelong bachelor. Meticulous in all his behaviour he believed that '*There is a place for everything and everything in it's place.*' Derek was a joy to walk bringing a different, artistic, perspective on whatever was to be seen.

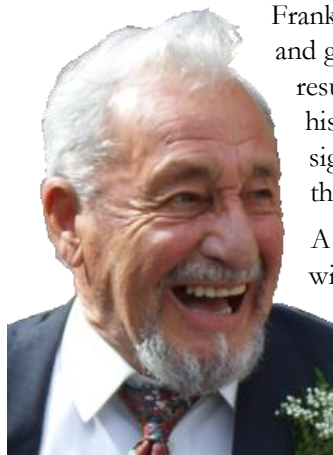
Unfortunately, his later years were difficult. He wrestled with prostate trouble and became inactive though always optimistic when I spoke frequently with him on the phone. His passing followed only a short time of that of Albert Chapman who was a close friend of the two of us. The crematorium was packed to the rafters for Derek's funeral and a fitting eulogy was delivered. He is survived by his sister, Pat, his brother-in-law Derek, niece, Helen, and nephew, Ian. (DH)



# Frank Platt 1933-2023

Member 1997-2014

Obituary



Frank Platt was born 13<sup>th</sup> March 1933, only child of Bessie and James Platt and grew up in Manchester. Encouraging school reports and a talent for art resulted in him studying at the Manchester Municipal School of Art. After his National Service with the South Lancashire Regiment, he worked as a signwriter for Royle & Gemmell. Later, he and a friend successfully ran the business until his retirement.

A keen footballer and Manchester City supporter, Frank took up cycling with the Cheshire Road Cycling Club, fell walking and camping before turning to gardening in later life. To each of these spheres he brought a positive outlook, an eagerness to help others, and most notably of all, laughter. He was not one for brooding over the past. Only in his last few years did he slow down and was diagnosed in 2022 with vascular dementia.

It was in October 1996 that Frank attended his first YRC meet, held at the scout camp below the Ennerdale Water, with member Peter Wood's sons Michael and Alan, all as guests of Harry Robinson, Michael's father-in-law. Despite that wet and windy meet, they were not discouraged and all three were again on the Buttermere Long Walk in 1997, and soon members. Derek Bush proposed Frank for membership.

Frank thoroughly enjoyed his days on YRC meets including Dinners, Brackenclose, the Corbetts, Calpe, Cwm Idwal and Cadair Idris. With Alan, one Christmas he catered for over forty members at Osmotherley, serving the full traditional meal and trimmings. Not only did they do this well but they enjoyed doing it and offered to run other meets. Such sociable, capable, and proactive members make the Club what it is.

He introduced the next generation to camping and the fells. Inevitably they fondly recall adventures: a late return after descending the wrong way off Helvellyn, and sleeping in the car after being flooded out of camping at Wasdale Head.

Frank died, at peace, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 in Wythenshawe Hospital after ninety years of grasping life's opportunities with energy and enthusiasm. He is well remembered by those members who walked with him in the mountains, enjoyed his company at our Annual Dinners or attended the meets he ran.



Frank lived by himself for almost all his adult life but was far too sociable to be lonely. Such a good companion and so supportive to many friends and neighbours, he was rarely alone.

Typical of Frank's lifelong generosity of spirit, Frank remembered the YRC in his will, leaving a substantial donation, and another to the Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team in recognition of their assistance following Alan's fall from Striding Edge. It was this summer, through Michael Wood, now working in Sweden, that we learned of Frank's death. (MS)

# Derek Alan Smithson 1929-2023

Member 1955-2023

Obituary



Derek Smithson joined the YRC in 1955 and except when working overseas, was a regular attender on Lake District, northern England and Scottish meets for fifty years. His 1990-1992 Presidential term included the Clubs centenary for which he devised an innovative successful large-scale meet, the Norsk Project. He relished moving, often alone, through the quieter mountains and sleeping out.

Born in Redcar, Derek attended the local primary and grammar schools before studying Marine Engineering at King's College Newcastle, part of Durham University. Apprenticed to Middlesbrough's Messrs Smiths Dock and Co., he was soon a marine engineer, as was his father, and a Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. In the iron and steel making industry, his rose from draughtman through plant and equipment designer, to sole management of projects in Britain, South Africa, northern Sweden and Canada. Finally, he was departmental manager for project planning, purchasing and inspection.

In the hills, from age 11 Derek was out with the Scouts exploring the wilds of the local moors and subsequently the Lake District. Later, as a founding member of the Cleveland Mountaineering Club, seeking companions for hillwalking, he attended their first meet, at Scugdale, an introduction to rock climbing. He was hooked and bought a hemp rope and nailed boots. Derek soon formed a long-standing climbing partnership with the YRC's Cliff Fielding, known to some as Flash Harry. Cliff had a share in a car, and they went climbing in the Lakes every other weekend, then Scotland on longer holiday weekends, including some snow and ice climbing. There were other outings with climbers from the CMC, then also the YRC and after 1959, the FRCC. Derek became a life member of those last two but his attendance on FRCC meets lapsed in the mid-sixties, though he still used their huts on occasion. All but one summer from 1955 to 1962 saw Derek climbing in the Alps. His last trip to the Alps was in 1972 to the Bernese Oberland with Alan Linford and a very young Duncan Mackay.

Meeting his '*wonderful lady*', Pat in the '60s opened a new chapter in Derek's life – family. Their calm, ordered, married life brought them both fulfilment. Derek took Pat climbing but she was not enamoured of the experience and later had no interest whatsoever in mountaineering. Family and work kept him busy but when he returned to Teesside in 1964, near neighbour Alan Linford made sure he returned to mountaineering through long walks and winter Scottish meets. When children Peter and Gillian were young adults, Derek again took Pat on a trip into some of his favourite mountains – to no effect. Pat was though perfectly happy for Derek to repeatedly disappear for nine days each February into the wilds of Scotland often finishing up at Inbhirfhaolain cottage in Glen Etive for a



YRC meet. With Ian Carr, he used the old, gradually collapsing, cow byre there until there was no longer a dry spot for their sleeping bags.

Those business overseas trips provided opportunities to get into other mountain areas. Besides weekends in the Drakensbergs, Derek was joined there by his family for a week. In Canada, there family walks and weekend canoe trips then, after they returned home, he was out cross-country skiing two days every weekend for three months with work friends. In Sweden it was mainly solo summer trips into the mountains south of their highest peak, Kebnekaise, well inside the Arctic Circle and with tops over 2,000m. He did manage a couple of February weekends skiing and a long autumn weekend around Kebnakaser itself with new snow on the tops and blue skies. Later, Derek joined and thoroughly enjoyed the YRC meets in the Picos de Europa and Iceland.

While introducing his children to climbing with Elspeth and David Smith, and their two children, on what were then called '*Lads and Dads meets*', there were happy climbs on Langdale rock as a rope of seven - goodness knows what the BMC Technical Committee would make of that nowadays. These outings failed to enthuse his children for rock climbing. However, Gillian enjoys hillwalking and Peter, motorcycling and, as Derek himself put it '*at least they know how to camp when it suits them.*'

Building on his mountaineering and cross-country skiing, around the time of his retirement at age sixty, Derek turned his attention to Norway and planning a suitable celebration of both the YRC's centenary and the achievements of our Club's illustrious second President Cecil Slingsby. Having already wanted for some years to climb in Norway, this started a lasting association with the country and individual Norwegians. He skied, walked and

climbed there, going twice most years and recording many of the trips for the YRC Bulletin. With its objective of climbing as many of Slingsby's Norwegian mountains as practicable, the 1992 Norsk Project was the crowning glory of Derek's YRC presidency, but one tinged with grief. Fifty-eight were on the meet spread from the Jotunheimen to Lyngen, enjoying hundreds of mountaineering days. But in Lyngen, Roger Allen fell to his death, while in Sunnmørsalpene, Derek and Derek Bush on poor snow slid 300m down a glacier sustaining injuries. However, it established a lasting link with the Årdal community as the YRC were invited to have a member on the management board of the Slingsby Institute, Derek being the first to serve. This association resulted in the Club participating in 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary ascent of Norway's iconic



*Derek climbing on Store Skagastolstind, also known as Storen*

peak, Store Skagastølstind and involved in planning the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Slingsby's first mountaineering visit to that area. Derek wrote that *'The YRC has been my 'other family,' good company and supportive.'*

It was on Glen Etive meets and winter meets in the Lake District that I first encountered Derek. His unhurried, calm competence when climbing impressed me – he used only a short rope, a few slings and chocks, and natural belays. Through him I learned how to enjoy winter mountaineering. He was an engineer through and through – planning carefully and thinking through problems as they arose. He delighted in introducing me to classic rock routes in the Lakes. Never interested in tick lists, grades or heights, he just wanted good days out in the hills. *'The skills of climbing, camping and eventually skiing were just tools for this joy at being there'* was how he voiced it. The Slingsby Institute with its aim *'to foster good relations between Norwegians and Britons and to strengthen our mutual interest in the wonders of nature,'* matched Derek's philosophy. He sought the quiet backcountry not the bustle of the alpine resorts nor queuing at crags.

For his eightieth birthday, from the FRCC's Birkness hut, we climbed on Grey Crag's Mitre Buttress. Watching himself on video, Derek was annoyed with the deterioration in his climbing technique from his old economical deftness and precision of movement on rock. This October several members climbed at Scugdale, his local crag. Though frustrated at being unable to talk about this, his eyes lit up at mention of it and of plans for a visit to Ben Nevis with Kjetil Tveranger who helped with the 1992 Norsk Project.

Recent years saw his health decline following a stroke in 2021, and a series of further problems. He did though keep up his mountaineering vicariously by reading settled in his favourite armchair at the Nunthorpe Oaks

Care Home. Derek died there on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, four days short of his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday, only a few hours walk from his birthplace. He outlived his two brothers, and wife, Pat, who died three years ago. Peter and Gillian carry forward their father's interest in the outdoors. The funeral was attended by eight members who had all enjoyed outings in the hills with Derek. (MS)



# Bernard Hugh (Frank) Walker

1944-2023

Member 2002-2023

Obituary

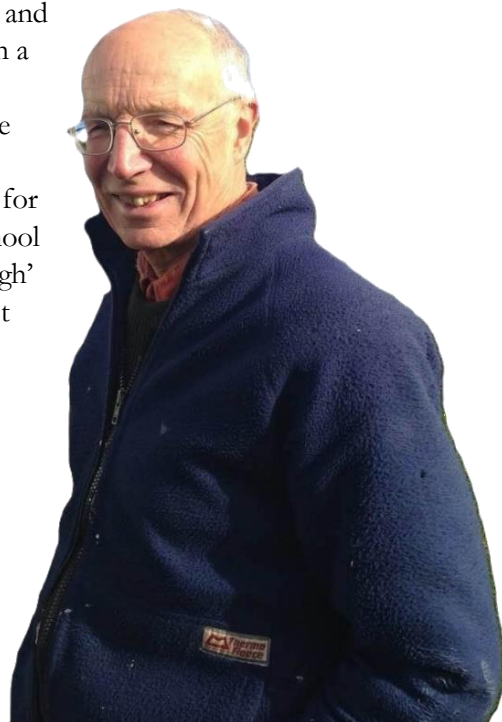
Frank was born in 1944 in Cape Town, South Africa, and christened Bernard Hugh Walker. His father had been a District Commissioner in Nigeria but his mother returned to the UK with her children at the end of the war in a naval convoy. Initially the family lived near Ross on Wye and Frank attended Monmouth School for Boys. It was at this time that a senior pupil at the school insisted that he looked more like a 'Frank' than a 'Hugh' and so the title has stuck with his friends ever since. It was at Monmouth School where he began to excel in sporting activities: rowing, rugby, and cross country running. It was also where he first developed an interest in underground exploration visiting the old lead mines in the Forest of Dean.

After achieving A-Levels he was offered a place at Manchester University Medical School where he joined the Mountaineering Club, explored the crags of the Northwest, winter climbed in Scotland and made friends for life. He always joked with his patients that if, initially unsure of a diagnosis, he must have missed that lecture due to having been too busy out climbing. It was at a party in Manchester that Frank met his wife to be, Wendy. A very happy marriage with three daughters followed until Wendy's early death in 2000.

After qualifying and spending a year in pathology, Frank decided to follow in his grandfather's footsteps and become a General Practitioner. Thirty-two busy and happy years followed being a full-time GP in Bentham, Ingleton, and Austwick. He had lived at Higher Westhouse, Ingleton since 1971 where he was a keen gardener between his activities on the Fell.

During his working life and retirement Frank was always active. Based in the Dales, he had a talent for balancing his work and family time with his activities. Trips to Greenland, skiing across Iceland ice cap, visiting Antarctica, and returning to Cape Town to see where he was born.

Stories of Frank's underground exploration are legendary. Throughout his time living in the Dales, he became part of the highly secret Thursday night and Sunday digging team along with others who were either members of the Northern Pennine Club or the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club. Their discoveries were truly prolific, especially the work on Fountains Fell with Gordon Batty and Eski (Harry Hesketh). The advent of new technologies in caving such as light weight drills with enhanced battery capability, the use of chemical persuasion, scaffolding and shuttering skills, all made progress more rapid.



They made significant discoveries that would help piece together the highly complex jigsaw of the Fountains Fell Master Cave. Notable discoveries included, and these are not exhaustive, Dale Head Pot, Logan Hole, Thunder Pot, FOUL pot, New Pasture Cave, extensions to Gingling Wet Sinks and the hard fought for technical masterpiece that is Strangle Pot.

Frank was also an active climber. He was involved in the development of Robin Proctor Scar in 2003 as a major sport climbing venue. Those who have climbed on the crag will have probably done 'Dr. Frank(enstien's) Nightmare' a quality route put up by Frank under the supervision of Alan Steele. Frank climbed on many occasions with a Leeds group visiting Sardinia and Spain.

I first met Frank in 2003 when I moved up to the Dales and was duly anointed to join the team which at that time consisted of just Frank and Eski. In non-medical terms, Frank explained, they needed new blood. The first projects included solving the mystery of the downstream section of Great Douk Cave below the impressive chamber at the end of the cave and later Bargh's Pot both of which proved inconclusive. But Frank wanted to return to Fountains Fell where he truly felt at home, above Rough Close and the extensive dry valley that cuts a swathe between Out Fell and Dick Close. I spent six years with Frank and Eski working on the Dick Close Pots, extending Wall Hole, Rose Pot and we even became the architects of an underground sculpture - Split Pot which must have taken more explosive than any previous discovery on Fountains. You really get to know

someone well lying together in the closed confines of a narrow, half submerged passage waiting for the fumes of an explosion to filter past you. As the gas would build up, Frank would always remind me that asphyxiation by carbon monoxide would be relatively quick and painless.

But Frank's hunger to discover the upper section of Fountains Fell master cave took us back to the Strangle Pot area which had already proved it potential for vertical development. With the promise of discovering caverns measureless to man, Frank persuaded me to join him and Eski on opening a little known shakehole only stone's throw from Strangle Pot, this became known as Curtain Pot because of the 12m plastic sheet hung down the second pitch like a shower curtain positioned to help avoid the waterfall pouring



*A younger Frank having lunch in Gingling Wet Sinks*

down the shaft. Arguably, Curtain Pot was Frank's *opus magnum*, a very deep, beautifully decorated cave, punctuated by clean shafts and huge passages which just kept revealing their secrets every week. It is now considered one of the top ten caving trips in the Dales but the rewards of such a spectacular find came at a heavy price and that was losing Eski who fell whilst descending a pitch deep in the cave. Frank, with all his experience as a cave rescue doctor, stayed with Eski to try and make him as comfortable as possible and give him reassurance whilst I returned to the surface to get help. Despite all Frank's efforts and those of the CRO, Eski died only metres from where he had fallen.

As a digging team we never really recovered from losing Eski although we never admitted it. I returned to my climbing and Frank headed up a new team to revisit Silverdale Gill Pot, whose secrets had eluded him many times over the years. Perched directly above the Fountains Fell Master cave, a breakthrough at Silverdale would have been the crowning glory of a spectacular caving career but it was not to be, as he was cruelly taken from his team too early after battling a short illness against cancer.

Frank died on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. He was still a very active 79-year-old. Those in the climbing and caving communities will recall the determination, energy, and enthusiasm with which he tackled every project, his interesting conversation both serious and witty, and his astute anthropological observations of people and events both in and outside the caving world. His long-standing membership with the CRO Clapham and his active participation in various community initiatives spoke volumes about his commitment to the well-being of the larger community. For example, he was a member of the Ingleborough Archaeology Group through which he was involved in the dig to unearth the Norse longhouse at Kingsdale Head.

His friendship with Albert Chapman brought Frank into the YRC. Frank contributed to this journal with personal account of the exploration of Curtain Pot (YRCJ 14.3, p204) and attended Annual Dinners. In Albert's difficult last few years, Frank was a regular visitor to Albert's Ribblehead home, Scar Top.

The Funeral Service to honour the Frank's life was held at St. Oswald's Church, Thornton-in-Lonsdale, followed by interment in the churchyard, where he was laid to rest alongside Wendy. He is survived by his daughters Lucy, Emma, and Sarah and his grandchildren. Members represented the Club at the funeral. (GC)



*One of the archaeological digs at Kingsdale Head*

Let a writer Frank enjoyed, T.S Eliot,  
have the last words:

We shall not cease from exploration.  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started,  
And know the place for the first time.

From '*Little Gidding*', *Four Quartets*.

January, Snowdonia



February, Glen Clova



Portugal, April



March, Norway



December, Dales



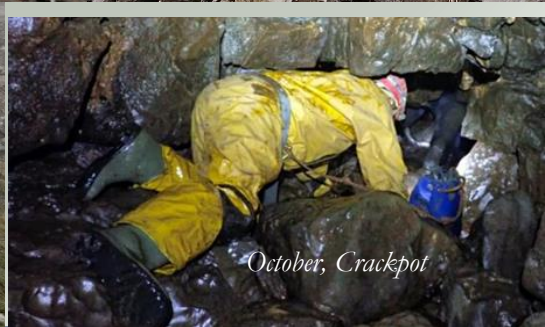
June, Rhinogs



October, Snaledale



October, Crackpot





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Low Hall Garth, Little Langdale,  
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## The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club

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