

A hiker wearing a white helmet, a light-colored jacket, and dark pants is climbing a rocky cliff. The hiker is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame. The cliff is composed of light-colored, layered rock with some sparse vegetation. In the background, a vast blue ocean stretches to the horizon. A large, flat-topped island is visible in the distance under a clear blue sky.

**YORKSHIRE  
RAMBLERS'  
CLUB**

**JOURNAL  
2025**

## Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal, Vol. XV, No.2, 2025

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Front Cover: Tim Josephy on Toix Ridge, Calpe, April

Back Cover: Nick Crapnell departing Almscliffe Crag, May

# Alpine Meet, Ailefroide, Écrins, France

26 July -  
9 August  
2025



*Guide Tim Blakemore with the Barre  
des Écrins & Dôme de Neige*

By popular demand we returned to the French Alps where Ailefroide village in the Pelvoux-Vallouise valley near Briançon in the Écrins massif proved to be a rewarding choice. The campsite was surrounded by dozens of accessible crags offering trad and sport route galore. It is also well placed for alpine ascents in the eastern part of the massif. The steep rugged valley sides provide attractive mountain and valley walks. Ailefroide buzzes with a climbers and mountaineers and had small shops supplying all our needs.

Six members were on the huge and friendly campsite plus four in an adjacent chalet. Appreciated by the former were the latter hosting evening meals in the luxury of the chalet. One evening we barbecued for everyone plus Craig Laurie from the Ochils MC.

Acclimatisation activity among most of the more mature members, and canine companion Nikko, included walking up to the picturesque Saint-Hippolyte chapel on the way in from Briançon, and a steep up east of camp to the pleasant 2093m Tête de La Draye. Michael and Kjetil continued towards the 2781m Cime de Paillon before being turned back by increasingly unstable rock. They met later starters, the Richards, at the Tête de La Draye



*The campsite  
between crags,  
looking north*

for a joint return to camp.

West of the camp, the 2504m Refuge du Sélé was a popular outing. for further acclimatisation, Steve and Wendy went up the 120m precipitous, cable-protected scramble at the end of the valley to the refuge for lunch. Their view made the stark realities of glacial retreat abundantly clear, with the Sélé Glacier now far away

and split into lower and upper parts. Later in the first week, Michael, Helen, Richard, Toby and Conrad followed in their footsteps, this time spending the night in the small, friendly refuge. The following day saw the party on a pre-dawn, tricky route up the difficult moraine, before Richard, Toby and Conrad pressed on across the Glacier du Sélé, to reach the headwall below the Col du Sélé, a worthy objective and a chance to practise skills.

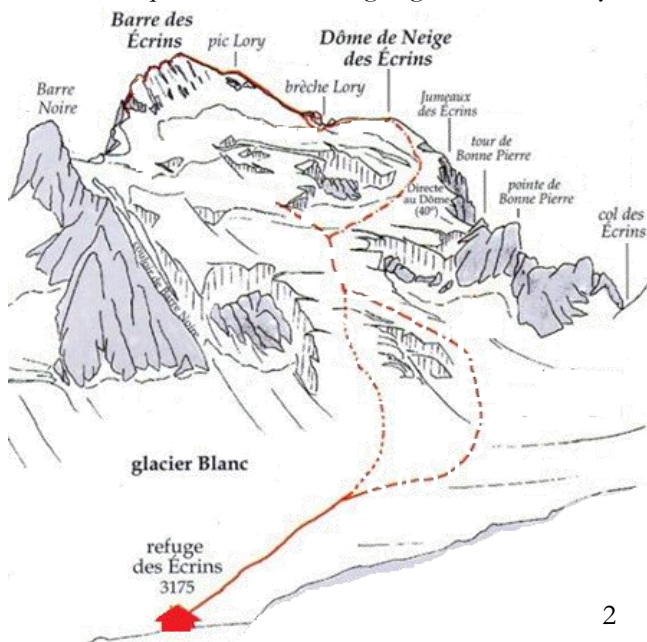
Before arriving at camp Solvig squeezed in a night's acclimatisation at the 2083m Refuge des Bans, also west of the main Pelvoux/Vallouise Valley, below the collection of peaks known as Les Bans.



*Route to the Sélé but.  
Chamois were on the snow.*

Heading north from camp to the head of the valley was another outing with the possibility of refreshment there at the Pré de Madame Carle, and a return bus which most resisted.

An innovation for an alpine meet were two consecutive three-day glacier and alpine training courses provided by British Mountain Guide Tim Blakemore. First to go were Toby, Conrad and Richards starting from Pré de Madame Carle to toil up the zig-zags to the Refuge du Glacier Blanc, 2542m, dumping kit for further ascent to practise glacier safety and crevasse rescue. In poor weather with a light coating of new snow, at four the next morning they headed for 3364m Pic du Glacier D'Arsine, at a fast pace to give time to tackle the northwest ridge. Richard returned to the refuge to enjoy a morning coffee whilst Tim led the others through loose grade 3 scrambling then across the ridge in icy conditions. Beyond the summit, the easier southwest face gave a mixed descent back to the glacier and refuge. In the final day's better weather, they practised rope and anchor techniques before moving together on nearby outcrops and returning to camp.





The following day, the same course was repeated for Wendy, Steve and Solvig. In better weather on the second day heading up to Pic du Glacier D'Arsine, they enjoyed a true alpine dawn before moving together to the summit for breathtaking views, from Mt Blanc, across Switzerland to Monte Viso in Italy. Then on to the busy 3161m Refuge des Écrins for views across the glacier to the Barre des Écrins and Dôme de Neige des Écrins. Next day a dawn trudge up the Glacier Blanc took them up steep snow to

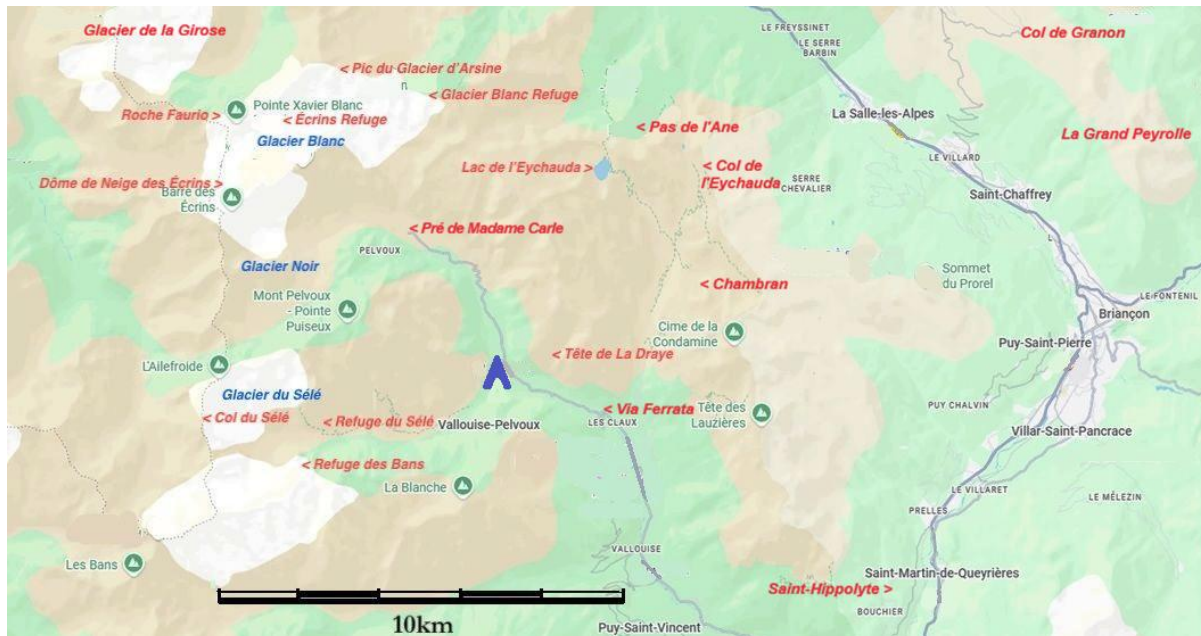
3677m Pointe Xavier Blanc with its two-pitch climb sensational finish onto the small summit. After an abseil, they retraced their steps over softening snow and toiled down the glacier to the Refuge de Glacier Blanc and a welcome brew. Solvig remained at the hut to meet Romain, an aspirant guide for the next day, whilst Tim, Steve and Wendy descended sunbaked back to the campsite, where Tim bade everyone farewell. As the week ended, Solvig spent her last climbing day, completing a multi-pitch rock climb, the Cineastes Traverse set above the Glacier Blanc Refuge. The route busy but enjoyable with Romain.



Rest days and non-alpine days across both weeks saw various walks and ascents around the area. The valley walk through Pelvoux down to Vallouise was delightful, with a visit to the high hamlet of Puy Aillard giving a step back in time into chalets and narrow streets. That village also served as a stepping off point for the rocky 2953m summit of La Blanche, with its panorama into the eastern Écrins. Its summit scramble proved easy, Lac du Puy Aillard, tranquil, and the high alpine meadows, picturesque.

Michael, Helen, Ann-Karin and Kjetil completed a circular route above Briançon, taking in one of several of the UNESCO World Heritage Vauban fortresses that overlook the town.

Another day, north of Briançon, they drove the many zigzags up to Col de Granon, before walking the pleasant ridge of La Grand Peyrolle, accompanied by the shriek of marmots, and spotting choughs, snow finches and ravens. Closer to Ailefroide, they separately took scenic mountain walks including the turquoise Lac de l'Eychauda. The Smiths took in three cols l'Eychauda, l'Ane and des Grangettes. Mostly on pleasant paths but with some steep and slippery ground and a few cables to negotiate.

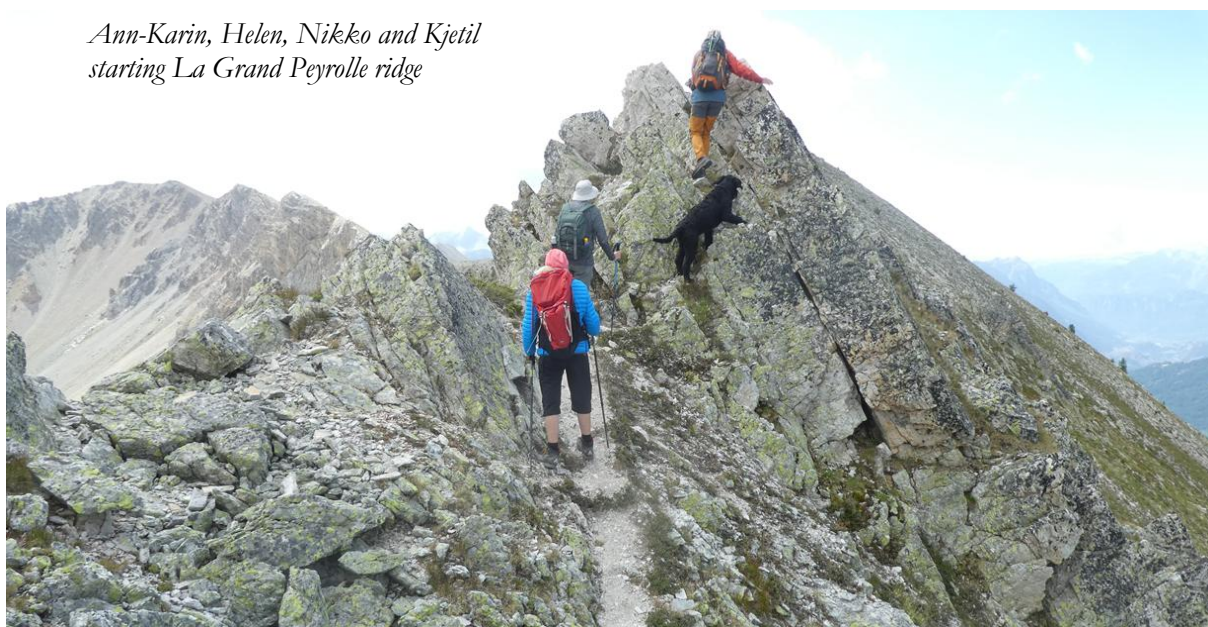


The Col du Lautaret and the resort of La Grave gave Kjetil and Ann-Karin another enjoyable day, taking the cable car up to the Glacier de la Girose top station (3200m) and enjoying the walk back down with Nikko.

The Barre des Écrins and Dôme de Neige des Écrins loom large over the head of the Glacier Blanc. At 4015m, the Dôme is a serious alpine climb, riddled with crevasses. Although popular, it requires serious care with its steep slopes, significant seracs and some daunting exposure high above the glacier. It was a challenging objective and with the weather remaining good for the second, bookings were made at the Refuge des Écrins.

Everyone headed up to the Refuge du Glacier Blanc where after a quick lunch, Helen and Ann-Karin headed back down. The rest continued up the glacier to the Refuge des Écrins. After a typical night in an alpine hut (big meal and interrupted sleep), all had a 0300 breakfast. Michael intended to return to the valley later and at 0400 the rest walked steeply down to the glacier. Dismayed to find he ended up with someone else's crampon Kjetil was unable to continue, remained behind with Richard and went back up to fail to find his crampon then wake Michael for a return to the valley. Steve, Toby, Wendy and Conrad

*Ann-Karin, Helen, Nikko and Kjetil starting La Grand Peyrolle ridge*





*Barre des Écrins and Dôme de Neige des Écrins*

headed up the glacier through a superb alpine dawn and cloud inversion on the Dôme's lower slopes. After crossing some large crevasses, they made an airy traverse under the high rock slopes of the Barre des Écrins before the final steep steps onto their summit, reached in under four hours. A short break then they started the descent, the exposure more obvious going down the snow softening on one of the hottest days of the meet. A detour under seracs avoided the steepest section and elated, though strained, the team reached the relative safety of the glacier. A snack stop below the Refuge des Écrins meant the round trip took just over seven hours. As Toby and Conrad roped up for their walk down the glacier and back to camp, Steve and Wendy tackled the slope up to the Refuge.

The next morning, Steve and Wendy headed up to the popular peak of Roche Faurio. Near the top, a crevasse crossing was followed by mixed ground leading to a final ridge narrowed to give exposed climbing. With several groups criss-crossing the final stretch of

*Kjetil, Richard and Michael avoiding crevasses on the Glacier Blanc*



the ridge and having reached the highest point, 3730m, they opted to down climb before the descent became too dangerous in the softening snow. A final trudge down the Glacier Blanc and a hot descent to the valley finished their two days of challenging but highly satisfying alpine adventure.

Back near the camp and spoilt for choice for rock faces a short walk away, Steve, Wendy, Michael and Kjetil tried the shorter sport routes on the 'Sous La Fissure' section of the 'La Fissure' crag, closest to the campsite and chalet. The rock proved pleasant but with less friction than expected. The Richards returned for some of the longer routes, but by then the crag was crowded as several crags on the opposite side of the valley were closed due to a small forest fire.

A short distance down the valley, five members completed two of the three Pelvoux Via Feratta routes. They took over an hour to finish the exposed but enjoyable traverses over the roar of the Torrent d'Ailefroide.

The fortnight in Ailefroide provided ample choice of suitable activities for all and without long drives to starting points. Everyone departed looking forward to further alpine meets. (SR)

Attending: Solvig Choi, Toby Dickinson, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Taylor, Conrad Tetley, Ann-Karin Tveranger (G), Kjetil Tveranger.

### Further Information

Ailefroide campsite had all one could need close by including supplies and gear shops. Close by are opportunities and guides if required for alpinism, rock climbing, kayaking, mountain and valley walking, and winter ski-touring. More information can be found on the online version of this meet report.



# New Year Meet, Low Hall Garth, Little Langdale

17-19  
January  
2025



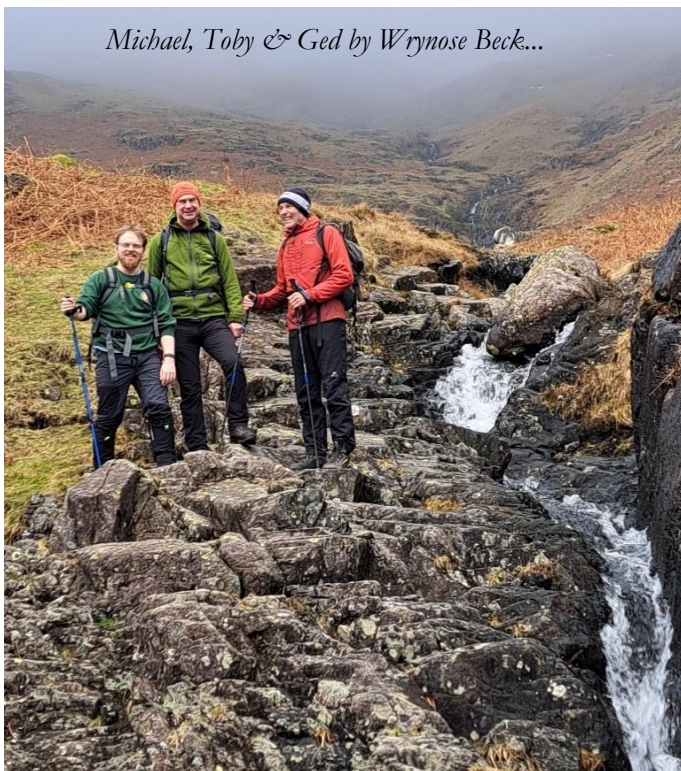
*Robert and Michael*

This is the 75th year of our meets at Low Hall Garth so all but most recent of members are familiar with the local fells. This year conditions in the Lake District were wet underfoot, cloudy, cold and windy with greasy rock.

This did not deter early arriver Mark who traversed the Helvellyn range as far as Stybarrow Dodd on Thursday and Jack's Rake to Pike of Stickle on

Friday. Martyn walked the Tilberthwaite circuit. All Friday's arrivals checked out the Three Shires Inn before returning for jacket potatoes back at the cottage.

Steve and Wendy, the following morning's arrivals, met the hardy pre-dawn bathing parade heading for the River Brathay. Three of the most senior went through Baysbrown Wood into Elterwater Quarry returning via Skelwith Bridge. Two other groups set off for higher ground in the hope of emerging into sunshine or finding some lingering snow. One group passed the Three Shire Stone, Wrynose Beck and Red Tarn to reach Pike of Blisco. Their hopes were not realised. They scrambled down greasy rock and found soft snow on their return.



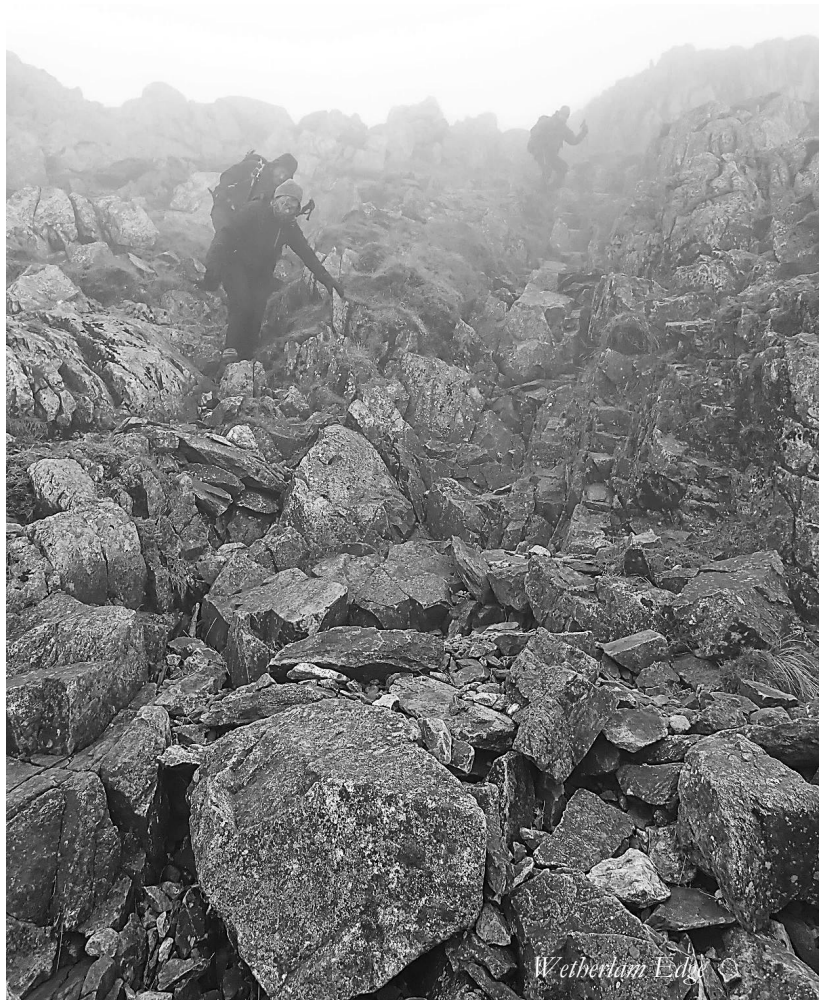
*Michael, Toby & Ged by Wrynose Beck...*



*... and with Robert and Michael in descent*

Conrad, Mark R, Wendy and Steve reached distinctly cold Coniston Old Man heading back over Wetherlam. Wetherlam Edge, down the North East Ridge, was tricky. Then Mark challenged Steve to navigate the OS-marked non-existent path to Birk Fell. Back at the cottage, John Jenkin had tea and Eccles cakes waiting. A further navigational challenge which proved difficult was for Conrad to reach the Three Shires for a pint with Mark.

Alan and John J fossicked around the valley near the hut and kept the home fires burning. This was appreciated by the six sleeping in the barn. So comfortable was it there that it attracted a steady flow of visitors to see how the other half live. President Ged rounded off the meal with a rousing address.



The wild swimmers were out early again before preparing breakfasts. Even gloomier weather had arrived so Ged set a party to work emptying the old drying room across the alley from the barn.

The meet was packed to capacity and got another year off to an active start. (NW, GC)

Attending: Ged Campion, Alan Clare, Michael Crowther, Robert Crowther, Dan Curtis, Toby Dickinson, John Jenkin, Mark Longmore (PM), Steve Richards†, Wendy Richards†, Mark Rothwell, John Sutcliffe, Conrad Tetley, Lizzie Trasler, Martyn Trasler, Neil West (PM), Carol Whalley, John Whalley. † Saturday



# Llanberis, Snowdonia, North Wales

7-9  
February  
2025

Eight gathered on Friday evening at the Karabiner Mountaineering Club's Ty Pwdwr in Dinorwig across Llyn Padarn from Llanberis. A rough track leads to this sturdy building where explosives were stored for use in the slate quarries.



Earlier, the Smiths had dropped

steeply down to Dolbadarn Castle and across the rough intermittent path across the slope above the Nant Peris road. The footbridge below the Vaynol Arms was damaged and closed, but still useable. A diagonal walk up through the vast slate quarries back to the hut completed their round. Meanwhile, Mark set off to scramble up Crib Lem to Carnedd Dafydd. He soldiered on in the relative shelter of Cwmglas Mawr but as soon as he reached the ridge he was met with a wall of wind so strong that he could not let go of the rock. He returned to the car.

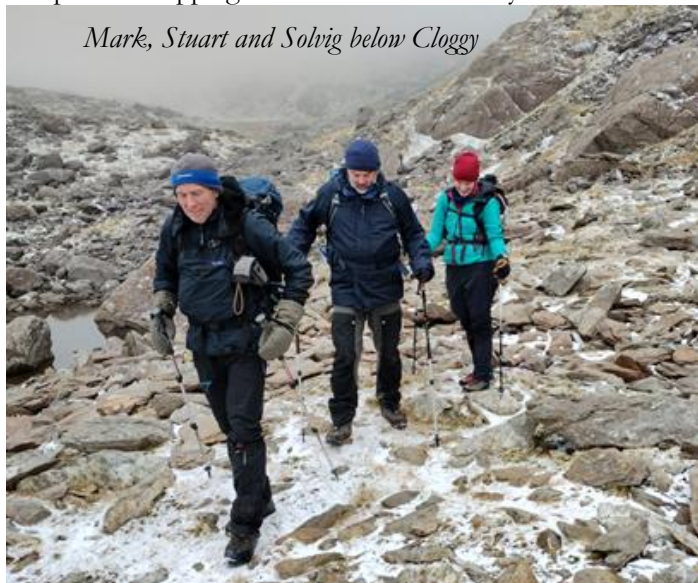
A Saturday 17km round from Llanberis by Helen, Mark, Michael, Solvig and Stuart started up the popular route. They met scores of young people descending from the clouded summit with frozen hair having failed to see a sunrise – presumably inspired by some TikTok

post. Avoiding that cloud, on reaching Clogwyn Station, a right turn took them under “Cloggy,” the crags of Clogwyn D’ur Arddu, on iced-over paths. Dropping down to the shore of Llyn Du’r Arddu made for faster going to the col at the head of Cwm Brwynog and over Moel Cynghorion. The walk back to Llanberis via Maesgwn was straightforward.

Harvey walked to Llanberis via Anglesey Barracks then investigated the slate mines’ paths.

Tim and Peter set off from the hut heading for Elidir Fawr via the Marchlyn Mawr reservoir. Elidir means “discretion and reason” in modern Welsh. However, the hill very discreetly and unreasonably re-located itself so craftily that they ended

*Mark, Stuart and Solvig below Cloggy*



up avoiding the lake and reached the top in cloud more directly via Elidir Fach's southern flank. The summit traverse took patience and careful clambering with the thin dusting of slippery snow. Their descent skirted Foel Goch to the south and an



increasingly steep grassy path existing mostly in the mapmaker's imagination. At Nant Peris a refreshed pair made the re-ascent across the Dinorwic quarries in the gloaming. Tim then set about preparing the evening meal.

Mark gave Friday's route another go on Sunday given the reasonable weather forecast, albeit with the wind gusting a full gale. After making quick progress up the Afon Llafar valley, he decided the walk up Mynydd Ddu ridge to Carnedd Dafydd would be a better option. However, wind-blasted on reaching the col at Cwm Moch with snow and verglas, good judgement dictated a retreat.

Michael and Helen departed early to walk in sunny La Gomera. While Solvig and Harvey headed home, Tim cycled a circuit around Llyn Elsi and Llyn y Parc from Betws y Coed.



*From Cloggy to Moel Cynghorion*

On the Llŷn Peninsula's north coast, Peter and Stuart followed a winding path down to Nant Gwrtheyrn. This remote village once quarried granite but is now home to a thriving Welsh language school and interesting heritage centre. They completed a round following the picturesque coastal path.

Ty Pwdwr is a large, well-appointed hut which made a convenient and comfortable base for the meet. (SD)

Attending: Peter Baker, Solvig Choi, Stuart Dix, Tim Josephy, Harvey Lomas, Mark Rothwell, Helen Smith, Michael Smith.



# Inverardran Cottage, Criarlarich, Scotland

27 February  
- 2 March  
2025



*Michael tops out on Lost Valley Buttress*

This proved to be a popular meet with full attendance in the well-appointed Ochils MC hut.. Victualling virgin Tom had his work cut out feeding all sixteen but coped admirably delegating to Jonathan preparing the now traditional haggis. In the evenings we were joined by an OMC member who shared snowboarding experiences over whisky.

Arriving from Glasgow airport Fiona and Toby wasted no time in heading to Glencoe to scramble up snowless Pink Rib to the snowy summit of Beinn a' Chrùlaiste for view of the conditions on the lower slopes of both Buachailles and on Creise. The tops were in cloud. Mick and Conrad climbed rocky Ben Venue (729m) in the Trossachs on the way north.



Tom's Friday short walk turned into quite an adventure with Imogen, Jack, James, and Johnny. Lost Valley (left) to Stob Coire Nan Lochan took seven hours for the 10km with 1080m ascent, with favourable conditions and practice with crampons and ice axes.

Fiona and Toby's plan to climb at

Cam Chreag was switched on seeing the condition of the crag to a traverse of the Tarnachan Ridge. They were joined there by Andrew, Conrad and Mick. Mountain hare were in evidence but only through their tracks as they walked the crest to Meall Garbh and down to the top of the ice-free Grade 1 scramble which needed crampon before reaching Beinn nan Eachan.



*Tom*

*Toby and Fi carefully crampon down the scramble on Meall Garbh*



Ian and Michael heading for sprawling Graham, Beinn Donachain in Glen Orchy, found their intended access bridge removed but found a replacement 2km up the road. Above the forestry they had views of Beinn Challuim, Lui and Ben Cruachan, before sheltering from the chilly wind for lunch. Next, they followed the ascent route without detour back to the car, with views towards the Bridge of Orchy Munros.

Anca and David wandered up two Munros on north side of Glen Dochart, Meall Glas and Sgiath Chuil. The swampy approach gave way to decent snow on tops. A scattering of ravens kept them amused and they enjoyed great views to Campsie Fells and further.

Solvig arrived on Friday in time for the meal and everyone planning for Saturday.

Jack and Imogen aimed for a 6am start for Glencoe's Aonach Eagach, however, Imi's Garmin sleep-monitoring watch decreed a rest day so they opted for the distinctive Pap of Glencoe.

Hearing that Stob Coire nan Lochan was in condition, Fiona and Toby headed in the same direction but the forecast freeze didn't materialise. That and Toby's rucksack suffering a shoulder strap failure prompted a retreat from the corrie lochs. Consolation was found in the Clachaig and a short walk from there to the mound where Hagrid's Hut once stood in the Harry Potter films (top right).





*On the West Buttress*

The other Aonach Eagach (or notched ridge), on Stob Ghabhar west of Loch Tulla, was in cloud which thankfully lifted just in time for Mick, Conrad, Andrew, and Johnny. to pick out the easiest line up onto the start of the ridge. They descended the southeast beside the Creag an Steallaire waterfalls.

Ian and James walked from several miles southwest of the Ochil's hut, along a track up Lairig Arnan to zig-zag Beinn Damhain,. The track ascended steeply in a series of zigzags passing concrete hydro catchments, branching off to the lochan then via entertaining knolls and outcrops over a false top for a final short steep section to the summit. The only signs of animals were ptarmigan and deer droppings and tracks.

Anca, David, Tom and Matt intended doing West Buttress III on Beinn an Dothaidh. It depended on either good ice/snow or frozen turf to take axe placements. What they found was unfrozen wet turf, slushy snow, and falling icicles. This is a terrible combination, neither summer or winter and insecure. The saturated turf offered little or no resistance, axe placements slice through. The previous day would have been better with freezing level at 900m.

Into the Lost Valley searching for snow able to support their weight went Solvig and Michael. They found it in Left-Hand Gulley (I) on Lost Valley Buttress with a hint of a cornice to finish: Solvig's first winter ascent. After Bidean Nam Bian's views over Glen Etive to Bens Starav and Cruachan, the steepening narrow blocky descent took them to its 1000m col with Stob Coire nan



*Solvig in Left-Hand Gulley*

*On the way north Michael walked through deep heather close by a herd of reindeer on 710m Carn a Gbille Chearr, the historic county top of Morayshire, north of Boat of Garten.*



Lochan. Stepping southeast off the col required faith in the snow. They faced into the slope for the first 20m and kicked steps with axe shaft planted and a hand jabbed into the snow. Only as they joined their ascent path at 600m were they off the snow.

On Sunday, Mick and Conrad drove home via the Ochils to take a short walk up Dumyat from Pendreich Forest car park. This is a deservedly popular outing and the summit is a splendid viewpoint over Stirling, Wallace's Monument and the Central Belt with several Bens in the distance.



*Tom starting up  
Stob Corie nan Lochan  
with Jonathan set to follow*

Before dropping Fiona off at Glasgow airport, the Smiths continued Michael's quest for county tops and stone circles with a walk up the 4000yr old burial mound Cairnpapple Hill, the historic county top of West Lothian, 312m. They continued on to The Knock, an outcrop and two faux stone circles dating from 1998, and Bathgate Hills where they searched for crinoid fossils, on Ian's advice. (IS)

Attending: Jonathan Bird (PM), Mick Borroff, Imogen Campion, Solvig Choi, Matt Clark (PM), Toby Dickinson, Ian Hawkes, Andrew Jarman, David Large, Anca Pordea, James Smart (PM), Fiona Smith, Michael Smith, Tom Spencer, Conrad Tetley, Jack Turner (G).

*Conrad, Jonny and Andrew on the Aonach Eagach ridge of Stob Gabbar*



# Seathwaite, Duddon Valley, Lake District

21-23  
March  
2025



*The Bakers with Don Crag in the background*

After a week of spring sunshine members arrived under grey skies with a forecast of weekend rain. After Saturday's breakfast despite many tops being under low cloud there were signs in the west of more promising weather on the way.

Four crossed the main tops of the eastern side of the Duddon valley initially up the Walna Scar track, with others, then headed south to the slate quarries. Misty White Pike's ascent was steep, followed by gradual descent to Stephenson Ground. The bridleway skirting Raven's Crag took them up to Stickle Pike. On Caw, Stuart

impersonated ravens' calls. Head torches allowed inspection of long-abandoned Caw Quarry. Passing Seathwaite's Newfield Inn they called in before heading back to High Moss.

The others took the track up to Seathwaite Tarn towards dark clouds while Brown Side Fell was in sunshine. So they the latter and along to Grey Friar with fleeting views of Scafell and Mickledore.



*Conrad, Toby and Stuart  
at Walna Scar Quarry*

In sunshine they then proceeded to Swirl How, The Old Man and then Dow Crag and back to the hut for a cuppa in the evening sun.

The senior trio visited Seathwaite Tarn to enjoy the surprisingly warm weather, bird song and the spring flowers. Their return was over a boggy fellside.

Stuart's evening meal over, some headed for the pub while the rest sat by a fire putting the world to rights.

Once again after a grey start Sunday turned into a warm sunny day. Up the

valley from the Froth Pot car park yesterday's four traversed Harter Fell east to west returning skirting the Dunnerdale Forest and past Birks, a farmhouse now a hostel run by the Grove School.

Aiming for Black Combe via the attractive Whitecombe Beck, Tim continued as the Bakers peeled off back. The well graded old pony track reached the moor above leaving a rather dull trudge to the summit followed by a broad track down to the car at Silecroft. (I)

Attending: Carol Baker, Peter Baker Mick Borroff, Toby Dickinson, Stuart Dix, Tim Josephy, Conrad Tetley, John Thurston, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.



*Toby, Conrad,  
and Stuart on  
Harter Crag*

# Calp, Costa Blanca, Spain

5 - 12  
April  
2025



Since the Club's first meet on the Costa Blanca, Calp has sprawled outwards and, near the harbour and Penyal d'Ifac, skywards too. However, everyone managed to locate the Villa Mandarin in the middle of a large complex of winding lanes and dead ends. One wonders how anyone could ever have found it before satnavs. A few visits were made to a popular restaurant bar within walking distance called Grizzly's. A couple of times returning parties had to phone the villa for directions.

The weather was warm enough for everyone to get out as much as they wanted. Outings were so many and varied that rather than try to describe them all this report presents a selection.

The most convenient sport climbing was across the bay to the west at Toix. Wendy, Steve and Tim made the steep loose scramble up to Toix Placa to avoid the weekend crowds below. Driven back down later by the strong sun they found Toix Far Oeste much quieter. Michael and Kjetil, and the Richards climbed on Toix Far Oeste another day amid a contingent of York students. Route of the Week Award though goes to Tim and Steve for the Toix Ridge (5c \*\*). In glorious sunshine and a gentle breeze, they climbed the five pitch Espolon Arta, to a pleasant scramble to the Mirador.

Weaving through camera-clicking tourists, they clinked and rattled along the road to the TV masts for the rough descent to Toix Placa. Next, three pitch Alistair took some finding and was easier if a bit scrappy at first. The final pitch was spectacular: easy climbing on a narrow exposed ridge to the summit, requiring calm nerves and full concentration. An easy scramble took them back down to the TV masts and the finish. Highly recommended for a great day out.

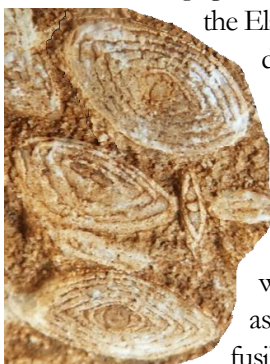
Three hiked up Aitana from Font de Partagat. Confusion over initial routing took them on a lower than planned path that necessitated a loose scramble up scree slopes to rejoin the intended route just below Penya Mulero. A delightful walk past almond groves in full blossom was recompense for their extra effort. A quick diversion up to Penya Mulero gave views north and east, with the Balearic Isles just in sight. The route continued traversing easy ground to the summit of Aitana, with extensive views all round. Finding the short scramble off the summit proved tricky, but persistence paid off and the squeeze through 'Fat Man's Agony' was found hidden amongst the boulders. A short scramble led down to gentler ground back to their start point .





Two large parties drove to Quatretondeta aiming for the El Recingle Alt (1359m) via the Els Frares pinnacles scramble. After following a track up to the Font del'Espinal, scree took them to the lower tier of limestone pinnacles.

Then a thin cairned path led steeply up to thread through the taller towers and a straightforward scramble to gain the Serrella ridge track and views. This track was followed to the manned fire watch tower on the main summit and a rocky ridge descent to Alt del Alt and the terraced path back to their cars. On the descent a 6cm long red-striped oil beetle was spotted lower down, photographed but not touched – just as well really as they squirt poisonous caustic goo if disturbed. Just below the ridge fossil fusilina (extinct wheat grain-sized shelled protozoa) were found in profusion.



Another large party drove north to Fleix to traverse the Cavall Verd ridge. The route led past terraced groves of almond trees and up the onto the Serra del Penyo ridge followed by a rocky ridge leading to Cavell Verde. A short protected down climb led to the col below the steep buttresses of the Penya Roig with views of the distant Segaria ridge and Montgó massifs.

An atypical round took in Sanchat above Sella. The 4km newish approach road was (officially) only permitted to forestry and emergency service vehicles. The walk's lower sections were through pine woodland winding between towering limestone cliffs. A Buddhist retreat then a traverse made beside a cliff. Soon after a family group of goats was encountered, an exposed scramble up to the 1148m Sanchat's top gave plenty of entertainment. This impressed a German couple who

followed us up, then again for some kilometres of rough ridge heading south, narrow in places. A track wound down back to the car (right).





The newly constructed 'sport' Via Ferrata, *Penya Llista* (graded K3) close to the *Coll de Rates* has a vertically stemmed 40m first pitch complete with a slightly overhanging bulge part way up. After gearing up, several members had a go and managed the initial less steep section, then finding the overhand too strenuous on the arms, climbed down. They agreed with online commentators in suggesting it is really K4. By way of consolation they did a shortish walk down towards *Xalo* to the *Negre Barranc* and onto the rocky summit of the *Penya Talai*.

On another occasion too, not everything went according to plan. Intending to link together two modest walks above *Tormos*, a decades old description led a party into what was clearly the wrong direction. Backtracking from the digression, *Ann Karin* stumbled, landing head first on a protruding rock which struck the brow of her nose. The injury needed stitches so the *Tverangers* retired hurt. A shorter excursion following a *Guru Maps* marked was then decided upon. This got wilder and fainter until *Bev* thought it not worth continuing. A subsidiary top within sight and immediately above us, 660m *Puntal del Morrut East* top, lured *Andrew* and *Michael* to attempt a *directissimo*. Fearing a descent too risky, they traversed the top and tried a pleasant looking clearing between trees. The clearing was covered in deep bramble briars on scree. Bloodied but not bowed they returned to waiting *Helen* and *Bev*. *Ann Karin* was black-eyed for a few days but out partying in *Oslo* four days later.



*Wendy at Toix*

*Mick*, *Conrad*, *Andrew* and *Wendy* made a circuit of the *Almadic Ledge* starting from *Benigembla*. This went around the valley on a ledge above the cliff line with views of the *Cavall Verd* ridge and the *Penya Roig*. After passing some bath tubs, it ended at an emergency firefighting airstrip. where they lunched beside the helicopter on its pad. On the way down, an attempt on the minor summit of *El Mirabo* was thwarted by their lack of machetes.

*Kjetil*, *Helen* and *Michael* completed the *Fonts de Pedreguer* round, a 12 km circuit of four valleys with plenty of ups and downs, crossing high cols and plateaus then descending to wells. They heard a nightingale by the crag at *Font d'Axia*, a spot where *Tim*, *Adrian Bridge* and *Michael* had climbed on a previous visit to the *Costa Blanca*.



*Tverangers scrambling*



*Andrew and Wendy on the ledge*



*Helen and Kjetil at Font d'Axia*



*Richard and Rebecca, scrambling*

The Sierra de Bèrnia attracted a party of four who tackled it from the north side via a steep gully, joining the scrambling route at the major col below the final top. They returned by the fort. The mountain's eastern end was visited on a windy day but were forced to retreat beyond the col for fear of being blown off.

The Montgó Massif was

traversed by a party of five, starting up a well-engineered ascent path led them up through a vertical flower garden to a top overlooking Dénia. They forsook the path to follow the fractured limestone ridge paying close attention to foot placement to reach Montgó other summit, the Creu de Dénia. A steep descent joined a balcony track along the north side of the mountain to complete the circuit.

Steve (right) and Wendy started the week on El Puig Campana. At the end of the week, the Tennants completed a circuit of the Puig also reaching the 1408m summit, all on good paths with fine views. The following day, when a storm delayed planes taking off from Alicante for a while, the Smiths remained dry walking a surprisingly undeveloped section of coast from Villajoyosa to the Roman ruins at Tossal de la Cala, overlooking Benidorm.



This latest meet in a series of visits to the Costa Blanca was blessed with good weather. Several new areas were visited and the familiar local rounds saw fewer visits. (SR)

Attendees: Mick Borroff, Beverley Eastwood, Andrew Jarman, Tim Josephy, Rebecca King, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Conrad Tetley, Richard Taylor, Jennifer Tennant, Peter Tennant, Ann-Karin Tveranger (G), Kjetil Tveranger.

*On the Cavall Verd ridge: Jennifer, Peter, Ann-Karin, Kjetil, Richard, Conrad, Bev, Andrew, Mick*



# Hebden Hey Scout Hostel, Hebden Bridge, Calderdale

25- 27  
April  
2025



The Scout Hostel, nestled in the wooded valley above Hebden Bridge has plenty of bunk rooms and a kitchen, all off a large communal room.

Helen and Michael had walked a Todmorden Stoodley Pike round, chancing to meet Mark R cycling on his way in. He'd had a reasonably easy three-hour canal-side ride in from Bury (43km, 340m ascent, three hours) with still enough energy left to cycle down into Hebden for fish 'n chips then face the 4km, 180m climb back up the hill above the hostel.

Steve and Wendy Richards arrived early in the afternoon at Hebden Hey, allowing time for climbing later at Heptonstall Quarry. Disappointed at the intimidating feel of the glass-shard-littered quarry, they settled on shorter climbs on the Right-Hand Outcrop. Both found it a tough, challenging afternoon of climbing.

After Saturday's continental breakfast it was off for a dry cool day's activities. Beverley was with the climbers Nick and Conrad at Widdop's rounded and green Mystery Buttress. There, Nick top roped the first 12m of Birtwhistle's Crack (VS 4c), hand jamming the vertical offset crack.

Steve and Wendy walked around the remote-feeling Gorpel, Widdop and Walshaw Dean reservoirs on the moors above the hostel. A lunch time detour took them to Widdop where Conrad was high

on Ordinary Route and about to start the 'belly crawl' along the ledge under a very low overhang – the only way forward for this part of the climb according to the guidebook – impossible to do elegantly. The Richards returned through the early bluebells of the Hardcastle Craggs valley with the cuckoos' calls.

Even strong cyclist Mark R had to dismount and push on a particularly steep hill out of Hebden Bridge before reaching the rolling hills to Sowerby Bridge, through Halifax's outskirts, Mount Tabor, Wainstalls then along Withins and Cold Edge road to the masts and windmills at



Withins and Warley Moor reservoir to enjoy the relatively relaxing coast downhill to Oxenhope and onto a busy Howarth. Returning the same way he faced more climbs out of Oxenhope and back up to the hostel. A hard 4½hrs, 56km and 1272m ascent.

Helen, Michael, Steve McC, Richard and Stuart walked a tortuous route linking local OS-map-marked 'visitor attractions'. From the hostel



*Hardcastle Crags: Helen, Steve McC, Stuart, Richard T*

they first they went up to the Wadsworth war memorial above Midgehole. Then north to Lumb Hole waterfall, south by Crimsworth Dean up to a post-medieval marker stone called Abel Cross, down and west to Gibson Mill, to pass through woodland for a scramble along Hardcastle Crags. After spotting John and Carol way below they crossed Blake Dean bridge and went south to Standing Stone Hill. That stone is now a trig point. The Pennine Way took them Heptonstall where SteveMcCain went in search of Hell Hole climbing quarry. The rest descended to the hostel's 'local', the Blue Pig, to join Carol and John for a beer at a table outside.

Martyn, Neil, Robert and Mark L made a route from the hut that developed as the day went on, first circling the hut twice at different levels before locating a track to Gibson Mill and Hardcastle Crags. After Walshaw Woods, in Black Dean they found remains of the area's industrial past before re-crossing the water and to reach King Common Rough. Up and on the Pennine Way they passed Clough Head Hill, Green Hill to descend to High Gate. After refreshing themselves at the café they were set up for the walk down to The New Delight at Jack Bridge where stronger brews

were taken.

On next to Heptonstall via Eaves Wood with its British Bluebells, to meet Steve still looking for Hell Hole Quarry. They then joined Conrad, Beverley and Nick in The White Lion and back to the hostel.



*Neil, Mark and Robert*



In the evening, once Richard had reappeared from listening to Bretagne musicians performing at the Blue Pig, Bev and Conrad produced a chicken chilli meal. After a desperate-sounding sales pitch, at long last Martyn managed to clear the few remaining stocks of YRC fleeces.

Clearing and cleaning after breakfast on Sunday was quickly seen to and everyone was ready to journey onwards or seek further local activities.

While returning the keys we spoke to the current volunteer wardens at the Hebden Hey camp area which includes the Scout Hostel. They remembered our member David Bull who was warden there for many years and very familiar with the local climbs.

Sunday's return to Bury looked like it might be the hardest day for Mark R— back via Cragg Vale from Mytholmroyd, supposedly England's longest continual ascent, nigh on 300m of up in under 9km but with a great descent into Littleborough, to rejoin the Rochdale canal and home. A total of 43km with 482m ascent in 2½ hrs

Michael, Helen, Richard, Nick, Conrad, Bev, Steve and Wendy all drove up to Widdop Reservoir for a short walk on the sunny north side to set about climbing at The Scout (or just Scout in some guides) opposite Widdop crags. Helen departed for a solo walk amongst noisy cuckoos leaving them to the



*A couple of gargoyles in Heptonstall*

typical gritstone problems and views for belayers of distant Stoodley Pike. Bev was pleased to complete Grey Buttress Chimney, whilst Pulpit Route, Gargoyle Chimney, The Big Crack and The River provided lead, second and top rope challenges. Relatively new to trad climbing, Nick took the plunge and completed the tough looking 'Block and Arete'. Geriatric climbing members could barely remember their joints flexing as much as demonstrated by Nick on that climb. 'Akala's Boil' finished the day, the climb's name being a fitting end to a stay at the Scout Hostel and climbs on Scout Buttress. The route's essential and eponymous protruberance elicited ribald comments but at least a large hex could be wedged against it.

Two Rucksack club members had earlier arrived at the crag but sans rope. They borrowed Michael's and arranged to drop it off at Lowstern. In fact, one of them came running off the moor with it perfectly coiled to return it to him by the reservoir as he approached his car.

The group dispersed for their journeys home with Nick detouring for an abseil down Mystery Buttress to retrieve a missing piece of protection left behind the previous day.

The location, social climbing and good weather all made for a memorable day. (MT)

Attending:  
Nick Crapnell (PM),  
Robert Crowther,  
Stuart Dix,  
Bev Eastwood,  
John Jenkins,  
Mark Longmore (PM),  
Steve McCain,  
Steve Richards,  
Wendy Richards,  
Mark Rothwell,  
Helen Smith,  
Michael Smith,  
Richard Taylor,  
Conrad Tetley,  
Martyn Trasler,  
Neil West (PM),  
Carol Whalley,  
John Whalley.



# Portnalong, Isle of Skye

11-18  
May  
2025



*Wendy  
on the  
In Pinn*

The Croft Bunkhouse's main hut on the Minginish peninsula supplemented by three of their wooden huts provided our base for exploring Skyes climbing, mountain walking, cycling and paddling attractions. A week-long dry spell had left rock and bogs dry.

A cyber-attack on the Co-op a week earlier left all their supermarkets unable to restock. Members, reliant on the Broadford Co-op, hastily filled their cars with staple foods before arriving on Skye. Thankfully, the situation steadily improved throughout the week. All were well nourished.

Most Club members broke their journey to Skye en route to take advantage of other parts of Scotland: the Cairngorms, Ben Nevis, Glencoe, Torridon, Arran, Glen Arnisdale, Moy and Blackadder Water in the Borders. On the way in the Tennants ticked off three Grahams above the Kyclerhea ferry landing and in Coire Uaigneich Toby took a short scramble up An Stac beneath Blabheinn, or Blaven to unreconstructed Sassenachs.

**The Cuillin ridge** was as attractive as ever: The speedy Campions climbed Pinnacle Ridge descending the west ridge of Sgurr nan Gillean to the corrie below Bealach a Basteir, passing three guided teams.

Encouraged by their report, The two Richards and Richard also took that grade 3 ridge, with a few difficult moves and an abseil, made it a proper mountain day out. They followed the longer southeast ridge in descent, an airy grade 3 scramble

Fiona and Toby bivvying by Loch Coir a' Ghrunnda had cooled off after reaching this lofty spot, ate and had a wee dram before turning in and sleeping soundly. A morning scramble up Sgurr nan Eagg led to a view of Rhum and over Sgurr a Choire Bhig to Gars-bheinn, the ridge's end. Retracing their steps it was down to luxuries: ice creams, showers and mattresses. Steve McC had seen them that morning before following much the same route the out and back route to Gars-bheinn finding it slow going in the heat and was down as the sun set, to the relief of the others.



*Richard on Knight's  
Peak, Sgurr nan Gillean*

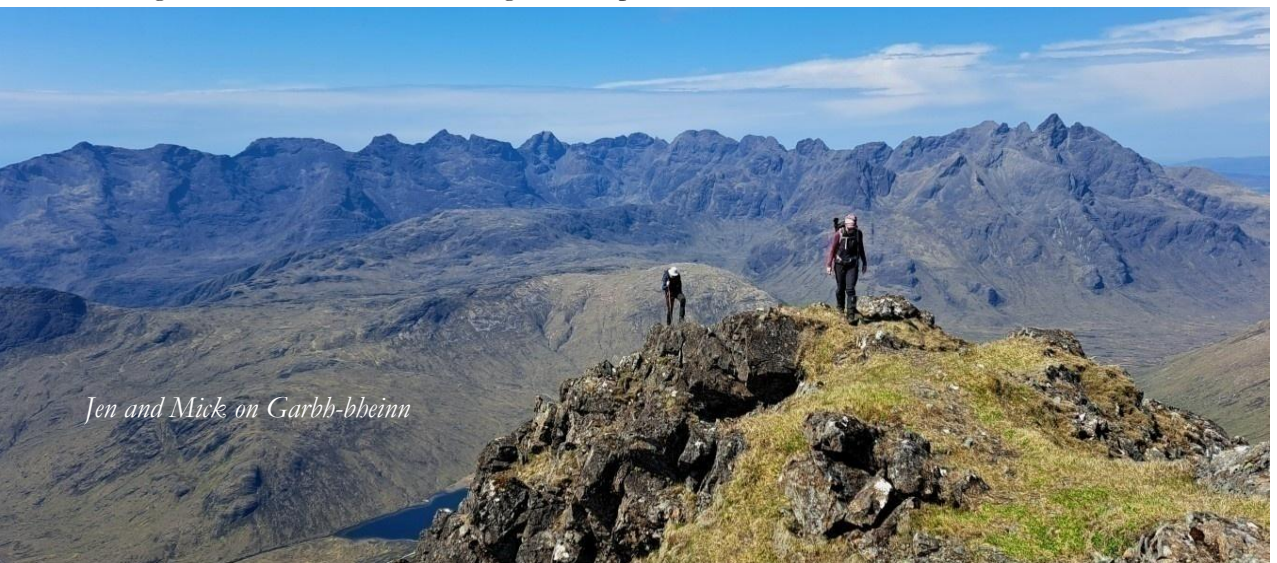
From Sligachan, Fiona, Toby and later Stuart scrambled up the north east ‘finger’ of Bruach na Frithe and along the ridge to Sgurr a’ Bhasteir to drop directly into Fionn Choire to take a cooling dip in an Allt Deag Mor plunge pool.

The Inaccessible Pinnacle just *had* to be climbed. The Richards approached it via Coire na Banachdich, pleasantly surprised to find practically no queuing, the only others were guided parties. Wendy tackled the narrow exposed west ridge ascent with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. With them but seated on Sgùrr Dearg were their camera party Helen and Michael, recording their elegant abseils. All descended by the west ridge, scrambling down to midgy Glenbrittle.

The **Cuillin outliers** Garbh beinn and Belig, north of Blaven, provided some easy and enjoyable scrambling on gabbro along the narrow ridge, from the head of Loch Ainort. From Luib on the other side, Toby made a way up the north ridge of steep-sided Glas Bheinn Mor.

The **Red Cuillin** gave an anticlockwise ridge up Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach and round to Beinn Dearg Mhor, descending scree to Bealach na Sgairde, and more pleasantly, Teanga Mhór, for a dip in the burn and back to Sligachan. Also from Sligachan, the more northerly round of Beinn Dearg Mhor and Glamaig was taken by two parties, one including An Coileach, the eastern top. Jen, Peter and Stuart made the steep ascent of Marsco’s pathless north ridge for the views. On another day on Marsco, Mick found a meadow pipit’s nest with three brown eggs in it and saw another brave meadow pipit mobbing a cuckoo.

A round of the **Red Hills** took two determined peakbaggers over Beinn na Caillich and Beinn Dearg Mhor from Old Corrie, starting with steep ascent across a boulder field.



Away from the Cuillin, the **Trotternish** ridge gave a good easy linear walk mostly on dry slopes with short grass, excepting the scrambly ridge up to the Storr, but needed a long drive to the Quaraing end. Four walked it northwards, then two went southwards adding Sròn Vourlinn at the start and went all the way to Portree (36km with over 2400m ascent in 13 hours) encouraged at the outset by having a ring ouzel for company. Others walked up to the Old Man of Storr or made a circuit of that section.

Towards the end of the week Mick explored around the **Quiraing** landslip and its pinnacles then climbed Leac nan Fionn (Fingal's tomb).

**Climbing:** The Campions found Elgol's Suidhe Biorach sea cliff crowded with climbers even heading up the abseil route's line, so switched to the harbour's loose and overhanging Schoolhouse crag for one route before a consolation pint at the Sligachan. Departing the meet they stopped at Bennie Beg crag near Crieff for four routes on hot basalt.



**Other activities:** Close to our base, the tip of the **Mingish peninsula** provided rough walking with scenic views and sightings of coastal wildlife, mainly north of the River Talisker but also south to a broch and the dolerite columns of Preshal Beg. Talisker and Fiskavaig Bays kept the three paddleboarders happy even if the sea was a little choppy in places, with Fiona rounding Ardtreck Point to Portnalong Pier. Another two went swimming with jellyfish while others visited Dun Ard an t-Sabhail broch. The tidal island of Oronsay at the mouth of Loch Harport together with Ullinish chambered cairn and Dunvegan Castle gave gentler outings on 'off days' – though these were few as the weather remained dry and sunny. Taking a more circuitous route, Steve McC cycled to Glen Brittle using forest tracks south round to Eynort to reach Talisker Bay.

Distant views of Healach Mhòr and Bheag, known as MacLeod's Tables, suggest easy strolling, but Helen, Michael, Steve McC and Stuart found the approach crossing the Osdale river rough going until the ridge was reached (below). Between the tops, deer scattered ahead of them.

Southwest of Broadford, Mick walked a headland passing two villages cleared to make way for sheep and peering down at Stac Suisnish and the long tidal rock pavement.



Two walked down quiet Glen Sligachan, between the Cuillin ridge and Blaven, past the Bloody Stone into an even quieter Harta Corrie, for lunch beneath imposing Am Basteir.

For Richard and Felicity with infant Vincent it was their first time on Skye. Despite Skye's reputation for challenging terrain, they discovered plenty of suitable outings. The popular tourist sites, such as the Old Man of Storr, Fairy Pools and coral beach, all had good facilities.

However, it took three determined adults to get the loaded pram to the Fairy Pools.

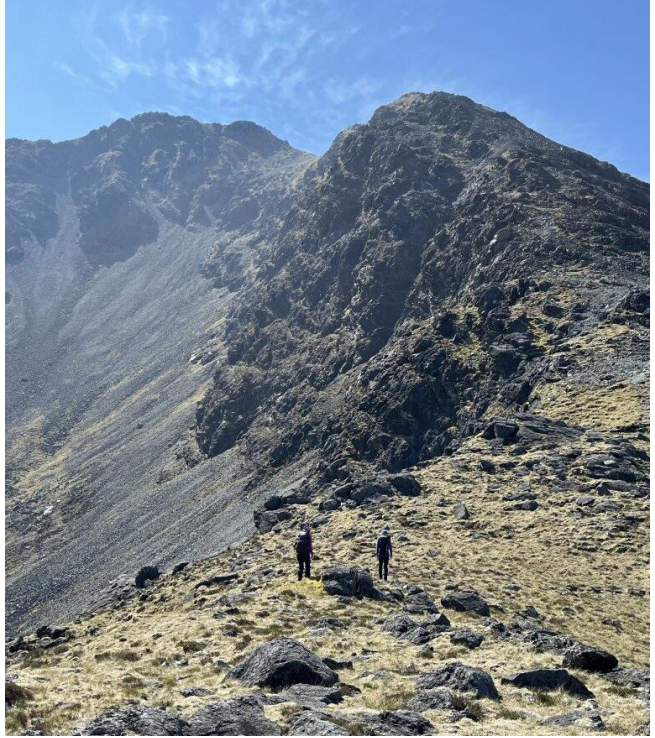
After the meet, Steve experienced Talisker Distillery's whiskys. Then he and Wendy camped at Staffin, to explore The Quiraing, search for some elusive dinosaur footprints, and visit Duntulm Castle on Skye's northern tip.

On his way home, Mick met up with Inverness-based Bob Peckham and climbed Little Wyvis. Having ticked off all Skye's Corbetts and Grahams this week, Peter and Jen turned their attention to Gairloch.

Despite initial concerns regarding the remote location of the meet's base, Portnalong is only a 20-minute drive from Sligachan and 45 minutes from both Portree and Broadford: with the exception of the north end of the Trotternish Ridge, most objectives are relatively close by. The weather allowed us to make the most of each day and the hut's large communal space meant we could enjoy other's company in the evening: sharing stories, tips and experiences while planning the next day's outings. Everyone made the most of their time on the meet, without coming close to exhausting the delights of Skye.

(ID)

Attendees: Mick Borroff, Aaron Champion, Ged Champion, Toby Dickinson, Stuart Dix, Steve McCain, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Felicity Roberts, Fiona Smith, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Vincent Smith (G), Jennifer Tennant, Peter Tennant.



*The Tennants heading for Garbh-Beinn's north ridge*



*On cliffs west of our bunkhouse. Oronsay on the right, Wiay central and Macleod's Tables beyond*

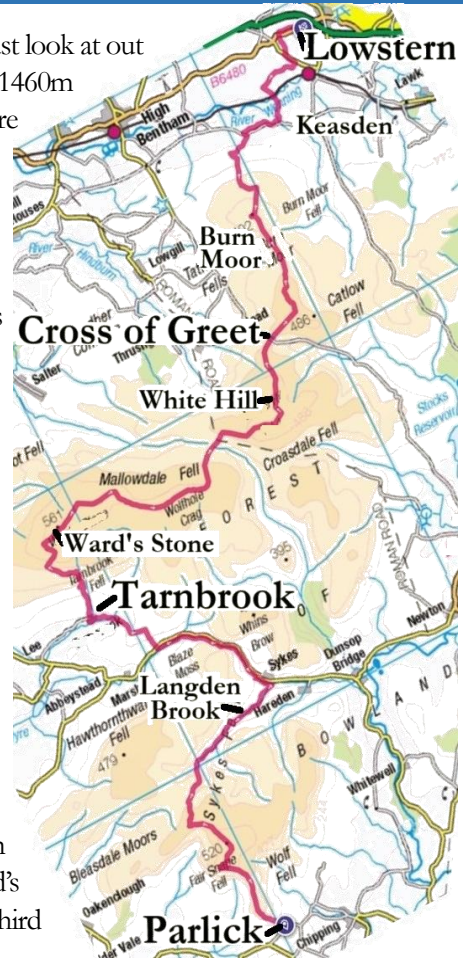
# Forest of Bowland, Long Walk

20-22  
June  
2025

Based at Lowstern, the Long Walk went to places most of us just look at out of the cottage window. The full route was a tough 52 km with 1460m ascent from Parlick to Lowstern. Alternative starting points were offered: Tarnbrook for 32km and Cross of Greet, 15km.

The Smiths arrived at lunchtime on Friday to complete that last option leaving a car at Cross of Greet. The juggling and scattering of cars across Bowland was a feature of the meet. Unfortunately, no car was ever left at Tarnbrook where one was really needed. Their walk back to Clapham was taxing in the heat but there was a breeze and the views of the Three Peaks.

Friday evening's tactics and logistics meeting decided on a pre-dawn departure for those doing the full walk, to avoid the thunderstorms threatened later in the day. Conrad drove to Parlick with Michael, Mark and John, left his car there, and all were underway by 4.10am. Being the summer solstice, and two groups were camped to see the sunrise from the first top.



After a lie in, Ged drove Helen and Mick to Tarnbrook to begin the middle section of the walk. They were walking by 8am. Ged's plan was then to drive to Cross of Greet to complete the final third of the walk, leaving his car there for Michael to pick up later.

All was going to plan until a message from Mark pinged on WhatsApp "...at Tarnbrook, hurt my ankle cannot go on." Mark struggled another 6km to Langden Beck. It then became almost farcical, as Ged driving from Tarnbrook to Cross of Greet, went looking for Mark, saw Michael and Conrad but couldn't see Mark who by now was in the back of a campervan with a chap who had taken pity on him and given him a lift leaving Mark to hobble a couple miles to Tarnbrook in hope of finding a car – he was disappointed. Mick and Helen were only a mile beyond Tarnbrook but only had a car if they finished their section. Mark spent over five hours at Tarnbrook watching the ducks, discussing with farmers sheep shearing, the low price of wool compared to that of wool garments - at least the weather was good and they did find him internet access

Progress on some sections of the route was good with a decent path up to the highest point at Ward's Stone but in many areas, it was trackless and hard going through heather and tussocky grass. One interesting feature was the tower on White Hill which is one of three sighting towers used

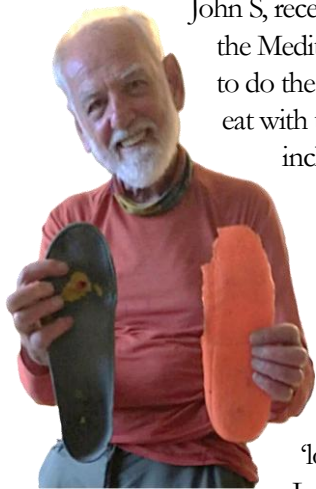


in the alignment and construction of the 10-mile Bowland Forest Tunnel passing some 370m below the summit. The tunnel is part of the Haweswater Aqueduct completed in the 1950s to supply water to Manchester. We were also treated to a fly past by the Red Arrows – who'd obviously heard the YRC were in the area. Almost as deafening was the noise from hundreds of nesting seagulls.

With the weather closing in, Mick and Helen reached the car at Cross of Greet and headed off to rescue Mark. Soon after that, Michael who was always intending to drive back from Cross of Greet, arrived and took Ged's car to Lowstern with Conrad. Ged had completed the walk's last section to Lowstern and was making finishing touches to the tasty three course evening meal, assisted by Bev.



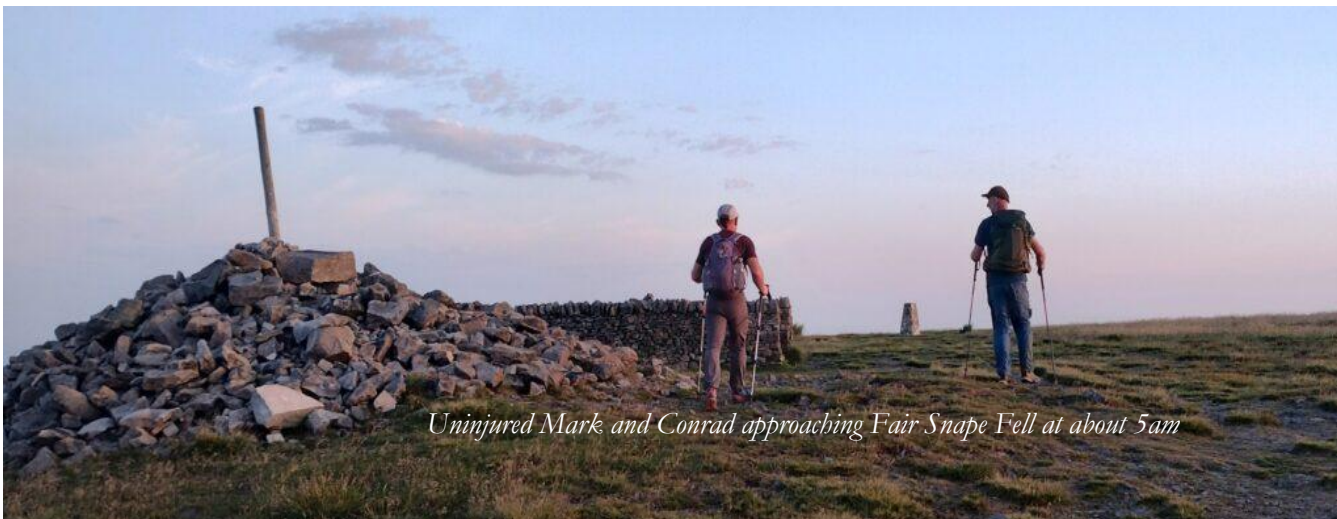
*Mick at Wards Stone*



John S, recently returned from his mammoth cycling trip in France from the Channel to the Mediterranean, and after some vacillating on Friday evening, decided he was going to do the full walk. Moving at his own steady pace, he did not make it back in time to eat with the others who were all anxiously keeping an eye on the deteriorating weather including tracking the thunderstorms. On Burn Moor, John was struck by the full force of the storm. "The lightning in the storm was unimpressive, no rays, just a millisecond of near daylight, but the rain and thunderclaps were amazing, the heaviest I ever encountered in the UK and the phone stayed well under cover, as did my spectacles." John also showed great ingenuity. With his trainers wearing out, inner soles in tatters and with no knife, he tore up his sit mat and then used his teeth to re-shape it to fit the trainers. His walk ended at Hollin Lane near Keasden. Exhausted and technically 'lost' he was offered a lift by a "farming fairy in wellies" arriving back at Lowstern at 9.15 pm having completed some 46km, "a memorable walk."

Things didn't always go to plan, phone signal was intermittent in Bowland which didn't help communication but as ever it was a very sociable meet. Not a late night on Saturday for most, after the 2.15am start. The weather was disappointing on Sunday morning and most headed home. Mark took Conrad to Parlick to retrieve his car.

Attending: Mick Borroff, Ged Campion, Mark Rothwell, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, John Sutcliffe, Conrad Tetley and Bev Campion (visitor).



*Uninjured Mark and Conrad approaching Fair Snape Fell at about 5am*

# The Don Whillans Memorial Hut The Roaches, Peak District

11-13  
July  
2025



Based at Rockhall Cottage, the Don Whillans Memorial Hut built against the rocks of The Roaches, the meet attracted both climbers and hillwalkers filling all available places. The weekend officially designated a heatwave, it was bad news when Paul, Bill and Solvig arrived to find no water from the taps. A plumber restored the supply but it failed again at 4am.

Mick and Bill had a warm Friday walk from the hut to Hen Cloud (middle) down to Roaches House and returned back over Hen Cloud to the hut for cool refreshments. Arriving later, Anca and David got in an evening climb or two making the most of the day until the 2130 sunset while four headed for the pub.

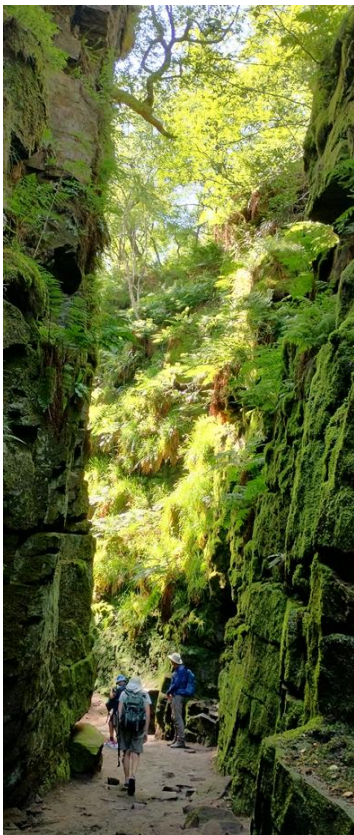
After the morning arrivals of the Smiths, Tim and Shaun, Tim went on a 40km mountain bike circuit from Parsley Hey via Tissington Trail, Dovedale, Milldale and the Manifold Valley. Thirsty work requiring correction at Ye Old Rock Inn.

Mick, Michael and Helen walked along the Roaches crest in the relative cool of the early morning with views of Jodrell Bank on one side, and Ramshaw Rocks on the other. beyond the trig they visited the Hanging Stone. A shady deciduous woodland path took them to Castle Rock besieged by family groups, and up into the cool, damp and green chasms of Lud's Church, a land slip feature with a steady congregation of visitors (bottom). They returned by quieter tracks and paths above the Black Brook valley via Gib Torr and Hazel Barrow.

Paul and Bill picked their way to the Roaches ridge behind the hut and took the ridge path to the decent down to the road at Roach End. The views were clear in all directions. They returned via the road. They found the heat and intense sunlight made the trek exhausting.

Climbers Solvig, Nick, Shaun and James warmed up on a couple short routes before tackling Pedestal Route, Nick's first multipitch climb, and between them, Jeffcoat's Buttress and Black Velvet.

Meet leader, Solvig, then devoted herself to sorting out the water supply. While waiting for the plumber she nipped off to free solo Captain Lethargy trying to retrieve Toby and Conrad's stuck cam, which David Large later retrieved. Visits to the pump lower down the slope resulted in about twenty minutes of restored supply then an admission that it needed new parts unavailable at the time. The hut warden agreed that without water for washing, cooking and flushing a refund of fees was in order. Meanwhile, James lead Saul's Crack with Shaun's encouragement, and Nick following. Conrad and Toby sought something to drink in the local pub.



By then it was too hot, the walkers had returned and it was time to sit in the shade and chat. Harvey arrived stopping off on his way to the Vercors in France.

In the evening, after the meal, the climbers set out again for Maud's Garden and Damascus Crack. Harvey scrambled on boulders. Helen walked over Hen Cloud. Anca and David maintained their tradition of finishing their route just after sunset each day.

Then most headed home to reduce pressure on the severely limited water supplies – mostly bottled and brought from Leek.



*Both pictures are of Nick on Damascus Crack*



Nick and Solvig's final climb on Sunday, Valkyrie, was complicated by attempts to make the route more interesting and another party constructing a belay across Nick at the top.

Tim stopped on the way home in the Clwydian Hills and cycled a 28km round of Moel Famau and part of Offa's Dyke. The extreme windless heat causing him considerable concern for his safety.

The Roaches is a popular crag. It is worth noting that almost all the climbs made on the meet were on the better quality routes.

Despite the curtailment and the heat this was an active meet in an area not often included in our calendar. With a wide range of ages and some faces not seen for a while, it was a chance to renew old friendships and make new ones.

Attending: Mick Borroff, Solvig Choi, Nick Crapnell (PM), Toby Dickinson, Paul Dover, Bill Gibbs, Tim Josephy, David Large, Harvey Lomas, Shaun Penny, Anca Pordea, James Smart (PM), Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Conrad Tetley.



*Helen, Mick, Shaun, Nick, Solvig and James*

**Routes climbed**

- Right Route VD \*\*\*
- Captain Lethargy HVD soloed
- Pedestal Route HVD 4a \*\*\*
- Black Velvet S 4 \*\*\*
- Black and Tans S 4a \*\*\*
- Fern Crack S 4b \*\*
- Damascus Crack HS 4b \*\*
- Right-hand Route HS 4c \*\*
- Mauds Garden S 4a\*\*\*
- Jeffcoat's Buttress HS 5a \*\*\*
- Aqua VS 4b \*
- Valkyrie VS 4c \*\*\*
- Saul's Crack HVS 5a \*\*\*



*Helen looking along the top tier of The Roaches towards Hen Cloud.*

*James in action on Damascus Crack.*

*Conrad in Rock Hall Cottage reunited with his retrieved cam.*



# Towton Battlefield, North Yorkshire

19 July  
2025

Atypically, this was a Saturday meet with seventeen gathering at the Crooked Billet pub in Saxton, south of Tadcaster. In stark contrast to last weekend's meet in the Roaches with no tap water and baking sunshine, we arrived in the rain which continued for most of the day but thankfully without the forecast thunderstorms. Not even the local farmers were pleased to finally see the rain as it was interrupting the early harvest.

Conrad, using local knowledge, devised, suggested and led the ten-mile flattish walk. Seen on the route were the small 14<sup>th</sup> Century 'Lead' chapel, a couple of roe deer, a bridge crossing of the notorious Cock Beck, the site of the Towton Battlefield, and a wedding party at Saxton Church. Taking his guiding duties seriously, Conrad told the story of the battle at points along the route.

Much of the route was through fields and woodland. The final section on a Right of Way through a crop of wheat was scorched by deep wide cracks in the clay soil. Members slipped and slithered about on the wettened surface slowing their progress.

After the walk, a change of clothing then a drink and a meal in the Crooked Billet were in order.

Attending: Mick Borroff,  
Robert Crowther, John Dobson,  
Beverley Eastwood,  
Ian Greatbatch (G),  
Christine Harrison, Ian Hawkes,  
David Hick, Adam Linford,  
Mark Longmore (PM),  
Christine Marriott, Steve Richards,  
Wendy Richards, Barbara Salmon,  
Helen Smith, Michael Smith,  
Conrad Tetley.



## Battle of Towton, 1461

One of the bloodiest battles in the War of the Roses. For an hour, using the strong wind at their backs the Yorkist archers rained arrows on advancing Lancastrian footsoldiers, already blinded by snow blown in their faces. Lancastrian arrows fell short. So the Lancastrians left their defensive positions and ran towards Cock Beck. Pursuing Yorkists, as ordered, gave no quarter. Soon the wounded and dying formed a wide bridge across the swollen Beck. The rout continued for several more hours. The Beck ran red for days down into the Wharfe.



# Introductory Meet, Low Hall Garth, Little Langdale

22-26  
August  
2025



Nick executing a tree rescue

Friday the Chois and the Raines arrived first to claim the best bunks in the barn and cottage. After a quick lunch, the Raines set off on a bike ride and the Chois went to see the Bluebird at the Ruskin Museum. Dora and Arthur did not find the exhibit very interesting somewhat supporting the argument that the Bluebird would be better kept running rather than sitting in a museum. Robert closely followed by Grace and her dad Michael. The children decamped to the tree to be joined by Nick. Others arrived to fill the carpark and James went off for a walk. Becca prepared her customary carrot soup for Friday's repast.

After Saturday's full English breakfast, Simon, Yasmin, Michael and Grace walked up Wet Side Edge powered by the promise of snacks once on the ridge. Almost immediately after resuming the ascent there were calls of "Can we go back now?" To distract them, Robert dangled the next peak as a prize and endured a short-

lived game of 'kick the sheep poo at the adult.' Inelegant, but it kept them moving. Beyond Little and Great Carrs they viewed the Halifax Plane memorial. The children made a final desperate attempt to convince us to turn back, pointing longingly towards the distant road and the Three Shire Stone. With only a small fib, Robert declared it was quicker to continue round the ridge. Surprisingly this was accepted. The girls suddenly surged ahead, shouting back: "Less talking, more walking!" and morale was at an all-time high as lunch was unpacked. Echo games followed before pushing on to Swirl How and towards the saddle with Wetherlam where we decided to make our descent, picking a less-trodden path Greenhow Reservoir for another snack stop. Promise of a shared chocolate bar and the younger members shot off leading the charge back to LHG.

Robert, Nick and Solvig went up to Runestone Quarry taking Dora and Arthur for their first sport climbing routes top roped. Nick completed his first E1.

Jes, Kevin and John climbed Wetherlam, and nearby tops in a 15km round with almost 1,000m ascent.

After a barbecue, boardgames, and Arthur holding out on sleep for 14 chapters of his book, a relatively early night was had by all ready for Sunday's exertions.



Dora, Grace, Yasmin, Arthur, Becca, Solvig, Simon, Robert and Michael went to Cathedral Quarry.

Simon and Yasmin cycled the tracks to Coniston via Tilberthwaite with the track parallel to the road being pleasantly shaded by trees. Returning the same way.

Jes, Kevin and John walked to Pike of Blisco. 12km, 700m in total. We had a swim in Blea tarn. Lovely and warm.

Nick, Eve, Devon and James went to Raven Crag where they climbed Middlefell Buttress. Eve and Devon free climbed the middle two pitches. Then on

to Prometheus (HVS) with a mix of Nick and Eve leading, and Nick teaching Devon about placing gear. Eve was smashing her anchor building

Sunday finished with bolognaise and a competitive round of Uno won by Robert Crowther. The climbers came back around 11pm for their bolognaise.

On Monday, Nick, Eve and Devon went to Cathedral Quarry where Nick led his first E1 Night of the Hot Pies, going around the right-hand edge of the cave mouth, and then up. A brilliantly fun route, and a very exciting first E1. He felt like He was floating above the void when over the cave mouth. They then went to Runestone Quarry for lunch and a few more routes: (Omicron, Bend it Like Becks, and Scartrain. Eve and Devon practiced cleaning and lowering off sport routes. Solvig sat at the top of a route, sketching

(SC)

Attending: Eve Allerston (PM), Kevin Bird (PM), Ged Campion (day visit), Arthur Choi (JPM), Dora Choi (JPM), Solvig Choi, Nick Crapnell (PM), Grace Crowther (JPM), Michael Crowther, Robert Crowther, John Dobson (PM), Becca Humphreys, Jeremy Ince (Guest), Simon Raines, Yasmin Raines (JPM), James Spreadbury (PM), Devon Van Der Westhuizen (guest).



*Robert demonstrating his disco moves in Cathedral Cave*



*Games became more competitive as the weekend progressed with some flexibility regarding rules required of the adults*



*Freshly picked blackberries for dessert get the 'thumbs up'*

### **Juniors' Meet Report for the 2025 Introductory Meet**

Friday - Yasmin and Simon arrived first and found beds in the barn. Arthur, Solvig and Dora got first dibs on bunks in the hut. Then went to the Bluebird Museum. Dora and Arthur found it quite boring. Yasmin and Simon went cycling. Robert arrived and claimed a bed for Grace. Grace arrived with Michael. Becca made a lovely carrot soup for dinner.

Saturday - We all woke up and Becca made a delicious full English for breakfast. Grace, Yasmin, Michael and Simon all set off for a 17km walk. Arthur, Solvig, Dora, Nick and Robert set off for Runestone Quarry for climbing. Arthur Dora and Solvig went to Slater's Bridge. Nick and Robert met up with Ged to do more climbing. When everyone was back at the hut, Becca made a wonderful BBQ with burgers, sausages and chicken.

Sunday - We all woke and Becca made another delicious full English breakfast. Becca, Arthur, Solvig, Dora, Robert, Yasmin, Grace, Simon, and Michael went to Cathedral Cave to explore. We all came back for a quick lunch before going to Slater's Bridge. Grace did some swimming and the children caught and released fish. Grace packed up her things to leave. Yasmin went off for another bicycle ride. Grace left and Dora and Arthur played in the tree. After Yasmin returned, Becca made bolognese for dinner which warmed us all up. At night, Yasmin, Dora and Robert played competitive Uno.

Monday- we all woke up to a divine last meal by Becca. While the adults packed up downstairs, Yasmin and Dora played Uno on Dora's bunk. We all helped to pack up and played with Max and Guna. Everyone started to put things into the cars. We finished cleaning and said our goodbyes.



Introductory Meets work because extra members look after the children who are 'waiting their turn' or need entertaining from time to time. No particular expertise needed. More adults around helps. Increasingly qualified guides are becoming the norm, and meets like this are a rarity. Thanks for helping out.



# Joint Meet at Robertson Lamb Hut, Great Langdale

26 July -  
9 August  
2025



*The last rays of sunshine on the way up to Pike o'Blisco*

This joint meet with the Rucksack Club and ourselves was hosted by the Wayfarers at their Robertson Lamb Hut. There was plenty of interaction between the 15 members present and more serious activity occurred than could have been expected given the wild, windy and wet weather.

The two Rucksackers had missed their club's meet at Beudy Mawr to join us. Our President, Ged, managed the Saturday then jetted off to Kalymnos early on Sunday for some warm rock.

YRC advance guard Stuart stole a march on others by arriving at the crack of dawn on Friday and looping in and out of cloud up Bowfell via the Climbers' Traverse and the Great Slab. Then on to Pikes Esk and Rossett and all the Langdale Pikes missing only Pavey Ark. Later the Bakers visited Stickle Tarn while Wayfarers Bruce and Steve headed over to Ambleside via Chapel Stile, High Close and Rydal, returning by bus for afternoon tea at sunny RLH.

Solvig set off early on Saturday to attempt the Langdale Round. She made it past Pike o'Blisco, Great Knott, Crinkle Crag where she was nearly blown off the Mauvais Pas so went left, before

backtracking on Bowfell to find the most difficult way down. Next up were Ore Gap and Rossett Pike before succumbing to a wind warning, rain and poor visibility to return via the Cumbria Way down by Langdale's Stake Gill and Mickleden Beck

Going the other way, Martyn followed the Cumbria Way to Stake Pass col only to hear warnings of impending thunderstorms and lightning. So he dropped down to the Old Dungeon Ghyll to take advantage of the "Wayfarers rates" on beer prices before walking back to RLH.

Mark and Malcolm set off from Rydal to do Great Rigg via Nabb Scar and Heron Pike and then return via Stone Arthur but extended their walk to complete the Fairfield Horseshoe: wet throughout, windy and quite cold on top: 18km with 1154m ascent.



*Malcolm on the Fairfield Horseshoe*

Opting for a lower level round to Elterwater, the Whalleys were rewarded by spotting a family of otters swimming towards the reeds. Progress towards Skelwith Bridge was slowed as the alternating rain and sunshine were perfect for scenic photography. Back at the Britannia, a pint refreshed them for the field path almost as far as the New DG and thence to RLH.

The largest party, Bruce, Gareth, Stuart, Steve, Carol, Peter, Rachel and Paul headed up to the Old DG keeping off the road to avoid the traffic associated with a marathon event being staged from the New DG. Most traversed Lingmoor Fell anti-clockwise in wild conditions returning via Chapel Stile, but Rachel and Paul went off to Little Langdale's Cathedral Cavern. Brief torrential showers alternated with warm sunshine. One extra heavy spell necessitated seeking shelter in the Britannia.

Walking back along the road, Peter and Carol did not hear until too late an electric mountain bike approaching at full speed from behind. Carol was violently felled to the tarmac by 25kg of bike and over 90kg of rider who only saw her at the last moment and braked too late. Carol was badly shaken but surprisingly escaped with no broken bones and only shock and severe bruising. Luckily, she was able to walk back to RLH without help.

Only Mark braved Sunday's Langdale mists, walking from the hut, north up into the cloud to Blea Rigg via Castle How, dropping down a slippery path below Belles Knott to Easedale tarn then back up to Blea Rigg reconnecting with the outgoing path on the return: 10½km, 781m ascent. On their way home, Gareth, Rachel and Paul found better weather in the Hutton Roof area. (PB)

Attending: Rucksack Club – Rachel Johnston, Paul Taylor;

Wayfarers' Club - Gareth Bloor, Carol Baker, Peter Baker, Bruce Hassall, Steve Crossley;

Yorkshire Ramblers' Club - Ged Campion, Solvig Choi, Stuart Dix, Malcolm Lynch,

Mark Rothwell, Martyn Trasler, Carol Whalley, John Whalley

*Side Pike behind The Band taken from beside Stake Gill*



# Snowdonia, North Wales, Mid-Week Meet

23-25  
September  
2025



This was a very enjoyable meet blessed with fine autumn weather. Nature smiled upon our enterprise with warm sunshine and mainly light winds all week.

On Tuesday, Ian Hawkes stopped off at Ogwen and climbed Tryfan by the North Ridge scramble. Mark Rothwell climbed near Mold with a friend whilst Shaun Penny and Aoto stopped off at Penmaenbach Head near Old Colwyn. In common with many other first time visitors to this limestone sport climbing venue they were well and truly “sandbagged.” The crag has a local reputation of being steep and undergraded.



*Mark on Clogwyn y Person Arete*

By early evening, the seven of us had assembled at the Climbers’ Club’s small and cosy Cwm Glas Mawr hut, about ten minutes walk up the hillside from Ynys Ettws. With a capacity of nine it is an ideal place for a small meet, feeling remote and isolated without actually being so while being surrounded by great climbing, walking and scrambling.

On Wednesday Shaun and Aoto crossed the valley to climb on Carreg Wastad, completing Crackstone Rib, S 55m and Wrinkle, VD 75m. This was Aoto’s first venture into Trad climbing and he was suitably impressed by two classic routes.

Ian walked up to Glyder Fawr from Pen y Pass then traversed Glyder Fach, descending to Pen y Gwryd via the Miners’ track. He caught a bus back to Pen y Pass to shorten the journey home.

Mark and Tim made the steep and unrelenting ascent of Cwm Glas past Cyrn Las and up to the Clogwyn y Person cliffs. They then climbed the excellent three star Clogwyn y Person Arete to the ridge just below



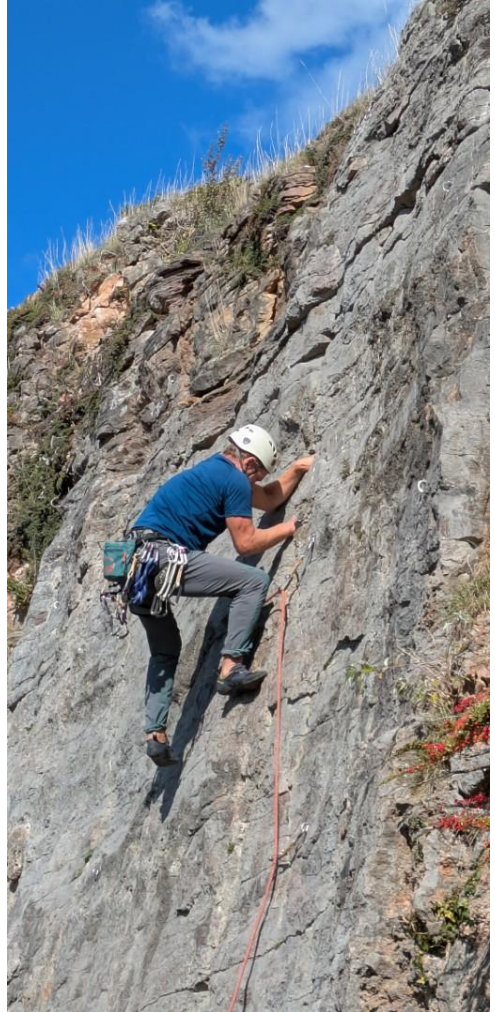
*Tim on Clogwyn y Person Arete*



*Steve sat on Crib Goch*



*Tim on Bwlch Coch, yr W'yddfa*



*Mark climbing at Castle Inn*

Carnedd Ugain. This route involves quite a bit of climbing at a good Diff standard and they found a rope and small rack most useful. The return was made via Crib Goch and its North Ridge. The descent of Cwm Glas requires careful navigation owing to the large crags that abound.

Steve Crossley and Peter Baker also ascended Cwm Glas, bearing left to the North Ridge of Crib Goch. They threaded the pinnacles and paused on Bwlch Coch before mistakenly following a poor path contouring the South side of Crib y Ddysgl. This led eventually to an unpleasant climb up loose scree to the summit of Carnedd Ugain. Sticking to the ridge proper from the Bwlch would have been a better bet. They left Snowdon to the crowds and descended via the Miners' track and round the Llynau to Pen y Pass, where the bus obliged them and conveniently dropped them near the hut.

Shaun provided us with an excellent evening meal of chicken curry, apple crumble and cheese which was accompanied by the usual wide ranging conversation.

On Thursday, after cleaning the hut, some headed for home. Shaun and Aoto planned to stop for a climbing wall session on the way whilst Mark and Steve, later joined by Tim, climbed at Castle Inn near Old Colwyn. (1)

Attending: Peter Baker, Steve Crossley (PM), Ian Hawkes, Tim Josephy, Aoto Morikame (G), Shaun Penny, Mark Rothwell.

# Cheviots, College Valley's Mounthooly Hostel

24-26  
October  
2025



Challenged to place a bunkhouse in England and in “the middle of nowhere”, you wouldn't go far wrong by putting it 8km down a single-track road at the end of College Valley where you will find Mounthooly Bunkhouse nestled beneath the Pennine Way as it descends from The Cheviot. Inevitably approached via a circuitous route, you will also be in an area designated as Europe's largest “dark sky park”.

It was this remoteness, and consequent lack of satnav signal, that almost defeated Imogen and Nick as they navigated “blind” for the last hour of their approach late on Thursday evening. They awoke on Friday for a morning of remote working in both its traditional and more modern sense.

Anyone who was out on the hill on Friday afternoon was both brave and wet. Imi and Nick had planned a 10km round over The Schil and past local crag Hen Hole but retreated early after what Imi summed up as “seven kilometres of... walking through a car wash”.

The biggest “weather-shock” was reserved for Mark who flew in from Spain and drove through rainy, Friday-afternoon traffic congestion. “Welcome back to Blighty, Mark!” Peter and Carol



*Wendy, Richard T, David,  
Helen & Steve on The Schil*

arrived after three showery days exploring the Kielder Dam, Thrunton Wood, long forays up the very military Coquetdale and a circuit of Saughy Hill. Stuart arrived from Glencoe's Lagangarbh Hut from which he had ascended Buachaille Etive Mor and Bidean Nam Bian.

Adverse weather conditions continued to pervade activity on Saturday. Mercifully the clouds had lifted, and

conditions overhead were dry and clear with extensive views all day. However, it was particularly cold in the strong winds on top. All parties reported seeking shelter behind rocky outcrops, various cairns and inside the very hospitable Auchope Refuge on the ridge between The Cheviot and The Schil.

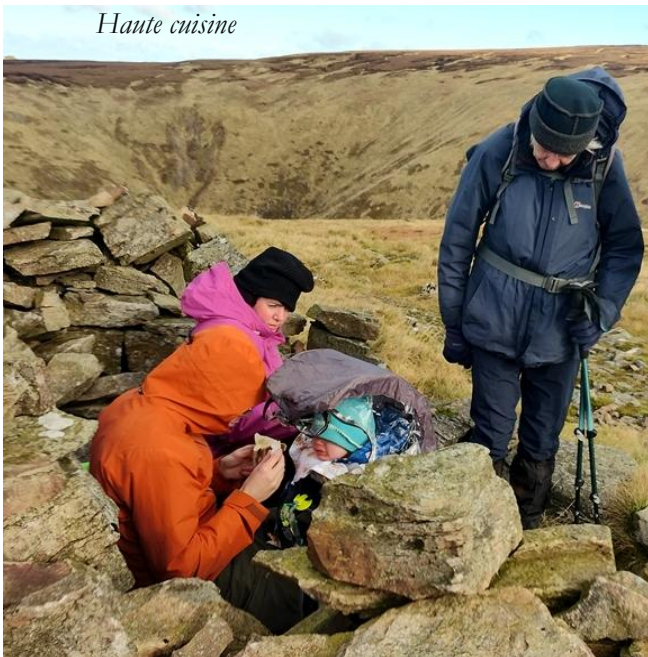
Parties attempting The Cheviot generally did so anti-clockwise by finding the ridge that follows the Pennine Way as it runs from Auchope Shelter in the west to The Cheviot itself in the east. Descents were either direct to Goldsleugh in the Lambden Valley or the lengthier, more easterly roundabout way over Scald Hill and Broadhope Hill. The return route to Mounthooley then followed the valley and crossed College Burn at either a “boots and socks off” ford or via a detour over a footbridge.

The group comprising Michael, Helen, David and Richard T found the Pennine Way ridge at The Schil due west of the bunkhouse. After meeting grandson Vincent being fed by Richard S and Felicity at Auchope Cairn on the way to The Cheviot summit, Michael led the group as they descended via the Goldsleugh direct route. Stopping at Dunsdale, the party pondered the climbing potential of Dunsdale Crag over a snack and a drink. The conclusion reached was that despite its granitic nature, there were no attractive lines across its broken features. A view confirmed by the UKC guide which lists no routes.

Steve and Wendy followed the same route of ascent but then descended over Scald Hill and Broadhope Hill. They met back up with the Smith party for a final stint of bushwacking through brambles and overgrown copse before reaching the bunkhouse.

Peter and Carol made their ascent direct to the Auchope Shelter, peeking into Hen Hole en route. After summiting The Cheviot they intended to take the Goldsleugh direct descent, but after missing their turning, ended up taking a route approximating to the one taken by the Richards party. The misstep, peat hags and overgrown paths made for an arduous return on a day that ended up 3km and two hours longer than intended.

### *Haute cuisine*



With Toby recovering from a shin splint and, more significantly, Fiona having successfully completed her first Hyrox competition (eight repeats of a 1km run followed by 1km ski machine, 50m sled push, 50m sled pull, 80m burpee broad jumps, 1km rowing machine, 200m kettle bells farmers carry, 100m sandbag lunges, and 100 wall balls) the day before, ambitions were calibrated accordingly. Scrambling up the southern side of Hen Hole, they exited to gain the ridge west of Auchope Cairn. They then followed the Goldsleugh descent. Having forded College Burn, they ascended north and west to gain the northern ridge of The Schil and summited to enjoy views towards Roxburgh. A swift descent by the same route took them back to the hut just before the sun dropped behind the ridge.



Mark summited via Hen Hole, then descended direct to Goldsclough before fording College Burn and returning up the valley to Mounthooley.

Stuart joined Ian and Steve McC eschewing The Cheviot summit for an ascent of The Schil via Hen Hole and the Auchope Refuge. Progress north on this clockwise route along the Pennine Way was hampered by numerous detours to avoid desperately boggy sections. Past Black Hag the terrain became much more pleasant and grassy and Steve and Stuart raced each other to the summit of White Law - a draw. From here the view north and west was spectacular and Ian pointed out the three tops comprising the Eildon Hills near Melrose, the starting point of St Cuthbert's Way. Shortly after, the party took a right turn off the Pennine Way onto St Cuthbert's Way themselves. They followed the path gradually downhill to the east. Time gained by the swift ascent of White Law afforded a relaxing "third lunch" in the valley, where the main topic of conversation was favourite varieties of apple. The party's leisurely pace was facilitated by Steve's overnight brain-wave of leaving a car at the Hethpool car park, enabling a swift return to Mounthooley.

On Steve McCain's recommendation, Nick and Imi headed east by car to Lowick to scout out Kylvoe out the Woods, an impressive crag with some mean, punchy routes. Nick was boldly undeterred and led the pair up some impressive pitches in what felt like sub-zero temperatures. Routes completed included Bird's Nest Corner (VD), Parity (HS 4b), Trinity (VS 4c) and Saint's Progress (S 4b).

Tim had spent part of the day at the coast and on his journey down the College Valley spotted a large raptor on a fencepost - possibly a goshawk, a rarity in this country. Disappointingly, other than grouse that had escaped "The Glorious Twelfth" and the odd smaller bird of prey, there had been very little other wildlife on show for the rest of us.

However, on Saturday evening the stars were out in Europe's largest dark sky park and the Milky Way made for a wonderful spectacle. In a strange moment, David and Steve were both convinced they had spotted a UFO as they observed a bright light seemingly moving erratically high above them. Binoculars showed that this was not the case - it would be nice to blame the beer, but Steve insisted he had only had one can. Perhaps they fell prey to the moving object phenomena (the autokinetic effect), whereby after staring at a bright stationary object for too long at night, the brain becomes convinced that the object is moving. That was Steve's excuse anyway!

Sunday's forecast was poor, but with the weather looking more promising further East, Fe and Toby opted for a relatively early departure to enjoy a coastal walk. Although rain was forecast for around midday, north-westerly winds usually give a more pleasant experience on the Northumberland coast than winds whipping in off the North Sea. So, parking in Beadnell, they took the coastal path south, enjoying the views afforded by the relatively clear weather. They

reached Dunstanburgh Castle just before the drizzle arrived. Returning, they stopped at the Joiners Arms in High Newton for Sunday lunch before continuing back to Beadnell and the drive south.

Similarly, Steve and Wendy headed for the coast. Driving to Alnmouth, they enjoyed coffee and toast in a cafe before walking up the beach and coastline to Boulmer and back.

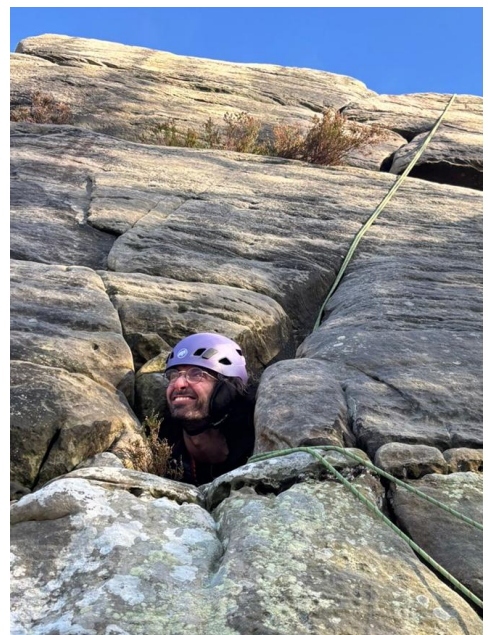
Mark headed off early up The Schil via the hut then along and over Black Hag, dropping down to the nice valley of Trowupburn. A wet walk up and over Saughieside and Blackhaggs Rigg ended in a soggy return up College Valley to the bunkhouse. He decided to stay on and on Monday ascended Yeavinger Bell then over the Torrs in fine sunny weather, dropping down for a poor walk along an overgrown path down the College Valley and back to the Hethpool car park.

For the Smiths, Felicity and Richard T, Sunday started with clearing the thick frosted car windscreens. The inclement forecast called for a short outing. From the Hethpool car park, they headed up by Elsdon Burn to turn south, by Little Hetha to Great Hetha, both of which have the remains of forts. They were afforded a sheltered descent east to the valley road and their return.

Imi and Nick decided to head to Hadrian's Wall, hoping to sneak in a few climbs at the iconic Crag Lough. Sadly, attempting any climbing would have been sheer folly in such wet conditions, but they did consider it a location that warranted a return at some future date.

On Saturday evening Tim had served us a fine meal of spaghetti Bolognese and apple crumble (courtesy of Steve and Wendy) from the small kitchen. The Monthooly hostel provided comfortable accommodation for what was an enjoyable meet.

Attending: David Anderson (PM), Carol Baker, Peter Baker, Imogen Champion, Nick Crapnell (PM), Toby Dickinson, Stuart Dix, Ian Hawkes, Tim Josephy, Steve McCain, Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Felicity Roberts, Mark Rothwell, Fiona Smith, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Vincent Smith (G), Richard Taylor.



*Above: Nick hiding on (or is that in?) Saint's Progress, on Klyoe Crag*



*Left: David Anderson, Wendy Richards, Steve Richards and Richard Taylor nearly back at the hostel after crossing College Burn*

# 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner Weekend Falcon Manor, Settle

14-16  
November  
2025

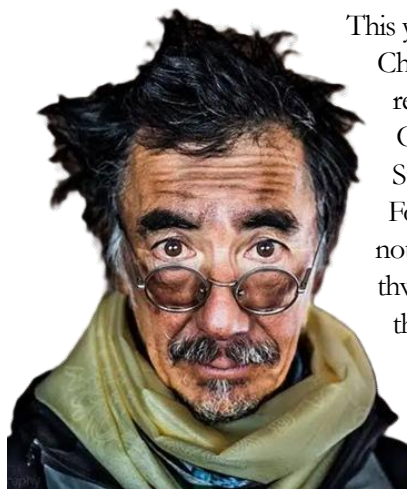


This year's Annual Dinner Weekend made it the tenth based on Lowstern and the Falcon Manor Hotel, and following the same format: Saturday afternoon Annual General Meeting, immediately followed by an illustrated lecture by a principal guest, then gathering at the hotel for a formal meal including a couple of guests from Kindred Clubs, a social walk on the Sunday followed by meeting up at Lowstern for a chat and refreshments.

First to arrive from Norway and Sweden respectively were Knut and Henning Tønsberg. In the build up to next year's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our second president, Cecil Slingsby's ascent of Støren, these two Norwegians, with family links across three generations to climbing with members of the Slingsby family, chatted to members about the opportunities for visits there next July.

More members arrived at Lowstern on Friday though most joined us on Saturday. Twenty-nine stayed at the Falcon Manor Hotel itself with at least a dozen others lodging in other local hotels and pubs. Friday's heavy rain had discouraged outings but some walked above Clapham on Saturday.

The 4pm Annual General Meeting and the follow-on lecture were not at the Settle Social Club as usual but at St John's Methodist Church where the acoustics and seating are better. However, it is at the opposite end of Settle to the hotel where we later gathered for the meal.

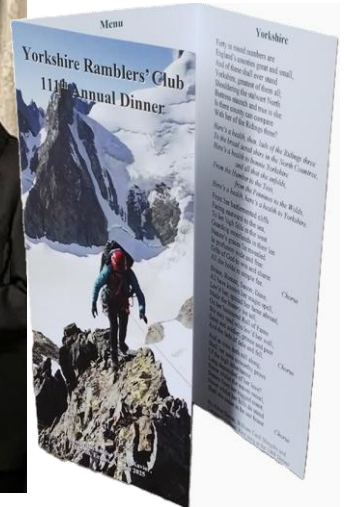


This year's principal guest was Victor Saunders who flew in from near Chamonix on the Saturday and arrived in Settle at noon on a diverted replacement train service. His lecture entitled "Still Trying to Grow Old Disgracefully" drew on his several decades of climbing. Starting with alpine climbs, then putting up The Shield with Mick Fowler in 1978, the first grade VI on Ben Nevis, through their notable 1987's Golden Pillar route on Spantik to their recent, often thwarted, attempts on other new Himalayan lines. Victor highlighted the unifying effects of climbing, bringing together individuals with contrasting backgrounds and beliefs in a combined effort to achieve a goal. He kept secret from the sixty or so present at the lecture, his intended plans for mountaineering next year but encouraged us all to continue to explore new ground.

Member John Lovett's daughter, Judy Lovett, attended the lecture as a guest as did six others who responded to a few local posters and a short article in the Craven Herald about the YRC, the lecture, and the Annual Dinner.

Seventy were seated for the meal where the Kindred Clubs were represented by Andrew Dyson of the Gritstone Club and Hilary Lawrenson of both the Climbers' Club and Pinnacle Club.

After the meal, the singing of Yorkshire was lead by the 'choir' of Peters Baker and Chadwick, Trevor, Nick, Conrad Salmon, Malcolm (hidden), Knut, and David Hick, accompanied by Helen at the keyboard. Other members and guests joined in for each chorus and gave an especially rousing last one before the final toast to 'Yorkshire.'



Sunday's social walk provided another opportunity to catch up with old friends' news and compare experiences with the guests from the Grits and the CC. Starting at 10am from Settle were sixteen but only ten were still with the party on their return. The others had branched off on various alternative routes. John Sutcliffe had again come up with a light-touch geological walk so we walkers now hopefully know more about the Craven Fault. Two others intended to lie in wait part way round the route and join us but missed us and made their own way round.

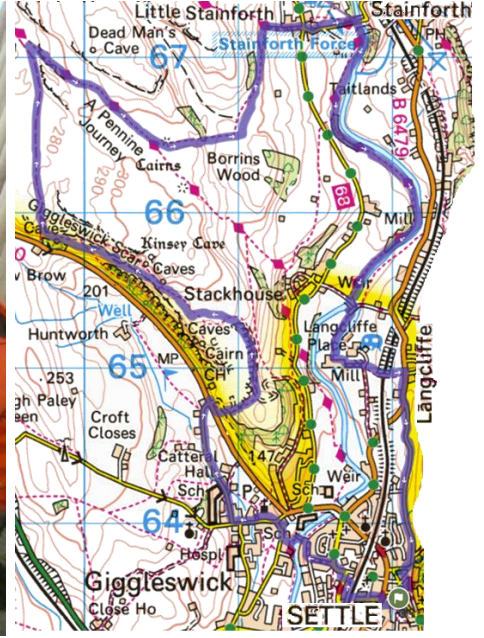
Two dozen gathered later at Lowstern for tea, Wendy's home-made scones, raspberry jam and clotted cream at Lowstern, where conversation flowed freely for an hour or more. Long enough for the missing pair from the walk to arrive in time to claim the last of the scones.

*The quarry was clearly most interesting*





*Tea, scones and chat at Lowstern*



Besides the walk, the younger contingent, or 'young gang' as our President calls them, went bouldering on and under the Cheese Press Stone high to the west above the Kingsdale parking place for Thornton Force. They also walked down to and behind the impressively thundering Thornton Force itself. Further east the Andersons walked from Ribbleshead.

Most had headed home by Sunday evening though four stayed on at Lowstern.



*Above: Nick, Alan, James and Imogen  
Right: Tom and Nick atop the Cheese Press Stone*

Having been taken to Sheffield, on Monday, Victor Saunders and John Middleton, went to the impressive 'Awesome Walls' there. Victor warmed up on one 6a and followed that with some 6bs. He then went on to three other climbing walls. He and John were climbing together again on Wednesday.





*Nick under the Cheese Press Stone – Bouldering without risk of falling?*

Back at Lowstern, the Bakers walked the Howgills, then after an early cold spell arriving from the arctic, Crummackdale in a decent covering of snow.

Attending: Alison Anderson (G), David Anderson (PM), Carol Baker, Peter Baker, Mick Borroff, Derek Bush, Aaron Campion, Beverley Campion (G), Ged Campion, Imogen Campion, Peter Chadwick, Solvig Choi, Nick Crapnell, Robert Crowther, Toby Dickinson, Tony Dunford, Karen Dyer (G), Andrew Dyson (G, Gritstone Club), Andy Eavis, Lilian Eavis (G), Iain Gilmour, Sarah Gilmour (G), David Handley, David Hick, Alan Hinkes, Becca Humphreys, Jason Humphreys, Suki Humphreys, Andrew Jarman, John Jenkin, Tim Josephy, Alan Kay, Debby Kuhlmann, Geraldine Lally (G), David Large, Hilary Lawrenson (G, Climbers' Club), Harvey Lomas, Malcolm Lynch, Steve McCain, Duncan Mackay, Nicole Mainaud (G), Christine Marriott, John Middleton, Valerie Middleton (G), Conrad Murphy (G), Rory Newman, Shaun Penny, Anca Pordea, Alister Renton, Iona Renton (G), Jane Renton (G), Neev Renton (G), Steve Richards, Wendy Richards, Felicity Roberts, Ann Salmon (G), Barbara Salmon, Trevor Salmon, Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Vincert Smith (G), Tom Spencer, James Spreadbury, John Sutcliffe, Gail Taylor (G), Richard Taylor, Conrad Tetley, Henning Toensberg (G), Knut Toensberg, Martyn Trasler, Carol Whalley, John Whalley, Charlie Wilkinson (G), Frank Wilkinson.

The following ticketed guests attended the lecture: Dot Atkinson, Phil Coleby, David Crutchley, Hannah Evans, Chris Heald, Judy Lovett, Paul Magson.



*Knut, Henning and Alan Hinkes*

# Christmas Meet, Boarshurst Centre, Saddleworth

12-14  
December  
2025



Run by Saddleworth Outdoor Pursuits Association, this is an Independent Hostel in Greenfield which we last visited in 2021. Until 1974 it was in Yorkshire's West Riding, but was then Greenfield was redesignated as Greater Manchester.

Whatever one calls the area, there's always been rock climbing around but the cool, wet and windy conditions did not encourage the climbers this weekend. The best weather was probably on Friday afternoon when, on the way to the meet, the Smiths took the opportunity of walking up Black Hill from the north rather than their usual south.

The cloughs and edges above Dovestones reservoir were the main attraction on Saturday. Five walked from the hostel, skirting Alderman's Hill to work their way clockwise round the reservoirs to scramble up Birchen Clough then follow the edge south before dropping down to the sailing club and taking the back roads to Boarshurst. On first gaining the edge they spotted the other party of six approaching. They had parked by the Dovestone Reservoir dam and scrambled up Charnel Clough to head anticlockwise along the edge. Pleasantries were exchanged before moving on. After descending Birchen Clough the latter group also walked to the hostel. Inevitably, both groups sent people to surmount the Trinnacle rock to be photographed.



Tim out on his eMTB cycled tracks first south along the east side of the Tame valley, diverted east to Tintwistle and back, then round the valley's head to return through Stalybridge to Diggle for its eponymous Jiggle (don't ask) as a finale.

Harvey walked southeast beyond the Chew valley and reservoir and headed towards Laddow Rocks in the Crowden valley but was turned back by the flooded flats before the watershed.

Other outings included the Pots and Pans and the moors behind them, meeting up with friends at the Cross Keys, and Becca managing a run ticking off virtual orienteering controls around the Dovestones reservoirs before setting about preparing the evening's meal.

*Our President Elect, David Large, atop the Trinnacle semaphoring a Y for Yorkshire. Below that, Charnel Clough.*

That festive meal was accompanied by the usual chat and banter and followed by our President welcoming the two new prospective members and a guest, then unaccompanied songs from Roy, Carol and Harvey before Michael showed footage of a Svalbard pulking trip and outlined the possibilities for activities on the 2026 Norwegian trip.



*The Pots and Pans outcrop above the Centre gave a popular short walk*

Fortified by a Sunday cooked breakfast full of undoubtedly unhealthy ingredients, the climbers Helen B and Tim headed off to Wythenshawe's Big Depot climbing wall for some indoor routes graded up to 6a+. Four walkers headed straight up from the hostel to a very windy war memorial, the Pots and Pans and part of the Oldham Way being blown north then returning past Pobjreen and into the teeth of the increasingly wet weather. Those activities would have burned off some of the calories accrued over the weekend.

Most though had decided enough was enough and set off to attend to other Christmas preparations. November and December are not often the best months for outdoor activities but this gathering made a good impression on the newcomers.

Attending: Mick Borroff, Helen Brewitt, Ged Campion, Robert Crowther, Roy Denney, John Dobson, Christine Harrison, Jim Harrison, Becca Humphreys, John Jenkin, Paul Jepson (G), Tim Josephy, Geraldine Lally (PM), David Large, Harvey Lomas, Aurore Sansinena (PM), Helen Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Taylor, Conrad Tetley, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.



*Birchen Clough*



# Low Hall Garth and Lowstern Working Meets

June &  
October  
2025



## Low Hall Garth

Those arriving on Friday afternoon found Martyn already hard at work strimming the grass and weeds around the car park. Simon was equally industrious replacing the wooden panels at the base of the entrance porch which had certainly seen better days.

Peter and Carol B headed out for a walk before beginning their work on the barn, while Martyn, finding strimming such thirsty work, wandered down to the Three Shires for refreshment. Alister and Iona produced a light evening meal much appreciated by all.

Up bright and early on Saturday everyone was ready to get stuck in. Creative John J worked on wooden steps to go down to the new storeroom, making them looking truly fit for purpose, before tackling plaster repairs to the bathroom wall.

Meanwhile, electrical expert Alister fitted new guttering at the front of the storeroom and later replaced the old strip light in the bathroom with a LED one.

Electronic engineer John D was not dealing with electrons quantum tunnelling in semiconductors but sort of tunnelling behind the drying room digging out a French drain and installed a soakaway with the assistance of Iona and Yasmin – that's backbreaking work through stony ground in a constricted trench.

Carefully working at height, Peter, Carol B, and Alister fitted battens to the barn ceiling in preparation for large plywood panels to be installed later in the year.

Carol W took on probably the least glamorous task and deep cleaned the toilets and shower room, including bleaching the shower curtain. Patient John W stained all the wooden shiplap boarding in the window recesses of the sitting room and the kitchen – the latter being especially awkward to reach. Behind John, Martyn, Iona, and Yasmin carried out a thorough clean of the rest of the kitchen.

Time ran out before they could insulate the drying room so that job that was left for next year.



Alister and Iona again produced an evening meal eaten before a good fire for a cosy night of wine, shared stories, tales of past adventures, and plans for more to come.

Thanks to everyone involved in keeping our Lake District cottage looking good, safe and in even better condition. That includes members who use the cottage and invariably leave it in a better condition than they found it. Special thanks to Alister who masterminds all this work as Hut Warden. (CW)

Attending: Carol Baker, Peter Baker, Robert Crowther, John Dobson, John Jenkin, Simon Raine, Yasmin Raine, Alister Renton, Iona Renton, Martyn Trasler, Carol Whalley, John Whalley.

### Lowstern

Our Hut Warden, Richard Sealey, has been busy. Earlier in the year the old log store was emptied and demolished. Following the laying of substantial concrete base there a metal hut was installed. This can now house hut users' bikes. The old sluice room's gardening tools and mower have also been moved into the metal hut so that the space is cleared ready for future conversion into a drying room. An enormous commercial heater, blower, dehumidifier has been delivered ready for installation.

The gas fire in the dining room has been reconnected following a clean bill of health for the chimney draft and the removal of innumerable spiders webs holding accumulated dust. It is now fully operational.

Having exhausted our current stock of library keys back in March, the Committee decided to change to a coded combination lock in an effort to make access to our book and journal collection more readily available, particularly for new members when visiting the hut. A new push button combination lock has just been installed and the old lock removed. The lock code is available on the Members' Information page on the website, along with our other key box codes.

Additional fire exit lighting has recently been installed. A PIR light has been fitted on the front of the new metal shed and a PIR switch will shortly be installed inside. The provision of additional mobile phone charging points in the two smaller bedrooms is also planned.

A hut painting meet planned for November has been postponed to next spring pending completion of the planned refurbishment work on the washrooms. (MB)



*John's storeroom steps*

*Peter's batten work*



# Western Langsua Ski Tour

Kjetil Tveranger

Three weeks before Easter fellow members again join me in Norway for a ski tour, in the part of the Langsua National Park beside the Jotunheim. This winter's snow was deep but a warm early spring greatly reduced its depth, closing some backcountry tracks before the Easter holiday.

Flights into Oslo and buses brought the English contingent to Beitostølen by 8pm. Two newcomers to lifting-heel Nordic skiing rented equipment and by 10:20 we off, taking prepared tracks over the lowest col to snowplough down to frozen Vinstre lake. Crossing that at greater speed helped by a following wind we reached the private cabin by the seasonally closed Haugsetter restaurant. Then the first problem: we had a cabin name and a keycode. But no cabin matched the name. We guessed the nameless one must be ours. Then the keycode didn't work but safebreaker Smith tickled the tumblers and found it on the 16<sup>th</sup> attempt. Wood burning stove lit, kettle on the gas burner, last-night's stew leftovers reheated and we were settled for the night. In the morning, Nils had to return to Oslo for another commitment.

North east to Oskampen DNT hut was relatively flat and with a following wind though the snow was wetter. With our DNT key we were quickly in. After a few mugs of tea, spaghetti bolognese was prepared from ingredients brought in the large pulk.



*Michael, Malcolm, Kjetil and Peter with frozen stew in the Spar bag*



On the way to Storhøliseter the next day, a brisk cold wind blew across Øyangen lake forcing us to take our lunch break in the lee of a small ridge with silver birches. We used their fallen wood and papery bark to light a fire by our feet in a snow pit.

The slope up to Storhøliseter hut after crossing the partly



snow covered river was tough going through dwarf juniper and bilberry. A guided Belgian party and two Brits were already in residence and it took some negotiation to secure one half of a cabin for ourselves. Cooking was in the other half with the welcoming tolerant Brits.

Overnight warmer conditions meant heavy going especially under trees heading for Skriurusten. Slanting uphill over the soulder of Storhøpiggen was an improvement until we headed south and lower. On the last descent to the hut, Becca and Malcolm went to the rescue of Michael trapped under his pulk. It had landed up against his knees when his ski tips descended under the snow into the vegetation, pitching him forward unable to reach his bindings. He was confident of rescue as he had the only hut key.

Minus six Celsius overnight crusted the snow for the fourth day giving a lovely steady pull up Langsudalen to the col at 1,170m, seeing herds of reindeer along the way. Heading down to arrive at tiny Plankebue hut for lunch we arrived at the same time as two dog sledges. Their drivers had seen the poor snow conditions on our intended route for the next day down to Beitostølen and advised against it. We switched from heading to the next hut and instead aimed across a wide plateau for the Yddin parking area and arranged for a taxi to meet us there. A 19km day with cloudy spells giving a flat light which made keeping balance harder.

That change gave us a spare day which we used skiing various circuits below Kjetil's cabin and towards Bygdin. That evening Kjetil produced a grand celebratory meal of reindeer steak, mash and broccoli followed by cloudberries and icecream.

The two newcomers to Nordic skiing took to it readily – they certainly experienced a range of unhelpful snow conditions. A couple of the old hands rather envied their energy levels.

If you are wondering why this is a members' trip report rather than a meet report, it is because some huts have so few bunks that the size of the party must be limited. Newsletters invite anyone interested to contact the organiser well in advance. A Telemark pulking and camping trip was held in 2007 followed by similar trips to Svalbard and Greenland. The current style of trip has now been running for a decade.



Attending:  
Peter Chadwick,  
Nils Ulrik Hagen,  
Becca Humphreys,  
Rebecca King,  
Malcolm Lynch,  
Mark Rothwell,  
Michael Smith,  
Kjetil Tveranger.



My previous boat experience was mainly on a pedalo as a child plus a few hours kayak paddling more recently. So, when my partner Tom and two of his friends invited me to their Finnish canoe trip, of course I said yes, but with some apprehension. They'd both canoed in Finland before but assured that me this was going to be an adventurous but fairly easy trip.

After a couple of days in Helsinki getting supplies and discovering the city (watch out for seagulls stealing your ice cream!) we took a train to Mikkeli and the bus to Anttola. A small lake shore village with a coffee shop and supermarket, Anttola is the Wild Canoe's rental who provided our canoe equipment, the maps and the local knowledge of a suitable route and camping spots for a seven-day trip. We chose the Remoteness Route, and had our camping kit, food and whisky supplies for evenings by the fire, and three spare compasses – essential for navigation around the isles and easy to drop into the lake.

Lake Saimaa is a labyrinth of waterways and innumerable islands, so good navigation skills are essential. The region is also the home of the Saimaa ringed seal, the world's most endangered seal species, and we were told we'd be incredibly lucky to spot one. We were not! Finland's "everyman's right" gives everyone the freedom to camp and roam everywhere in nature, without disturbing wildlife and keeping a reasonable distance from homes. We



**Lake Saimaa:** Finland's largest lake covers an area of 1650 sq.miles, Average depth 17m  
**Equipment:** Indian canoe, Paddles, Watertight barrels, Life jackets, Map and compass, Camping equipment, Supplies of food and beverages  
**Route:** Of the 177km Remoteness route we canoed 150km from Puumala to Anttola

camped at designated camping spots, which saved us the trouble of looking for tent placements on the shores of the myriads of islets encountered on the way. The designated spots had a few tent spaces (we were mostly alone, or with one other tent), a fireplace, often a stash of wood, an axe, rubbish and recycling bins, and a very welcome compost toilet. All of which contributed to us having minimal impact on the place.



Canoeing in open lake water is fun, especially in Finland, where you can drink straight from the lake when you feel thirsty.

We were spared high winds for most of the trip, though we did experience a deluge of rain on the second day: we were surrounded by water in the tents, then under the boat (of course!), in the boat and falling on us from the sky, teaching me the importance of bailing.



I slowly learned how to manoeuvre a canoe close to the shore, how to safely moor it during lunch breaks and how to secure the barrels with a rope.

We canoed for three days from Puumala to Rokansaari (●), a good-sized island with a famous café and wild sauna. The 'café' was actually a room in a lovely lady's house, where we could buy Finnish beer accompanied by crisps, much to the delight of my English friends.



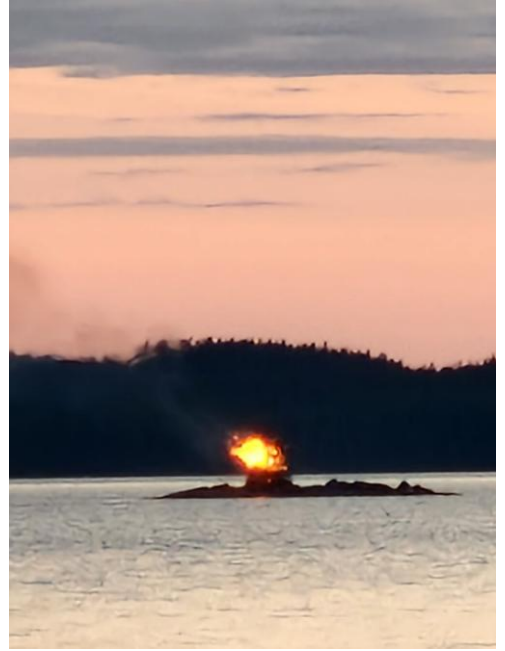
There we got to chat with local tourists. Finns are quiet, reserved

people, but once they warm up to you, they are very intrigued and kind; they were impressed that a bunch of foreign tourists (apparently a rare sight) came to enjoy this remote and beautiful part of the world. We stopped on the island for the midsummer celebrations, to watch bonfires being lit on the islands all around us and people gathering on the beaches to watch them burn. A truly amazing experience. The next day, we experienced a genuine Finnish sauna: naked and jumping in the (oh so coooold) lake afterwards! Seriously refreshing.

During the next days, we discovered how easy it is to mistake a dead end cove for an open ended channel, how difficult it can be to portage canoes over a road at the end of a tiring day, and how great it can be to watch a sunset from the boat at 10 pm, whilst not yet having found a campsite yet. Luckily, when nighttime means at most two hours of dusk, you can manage by camping at eleven and having dinner at midnight.

On the last day of the trip, I was promoted to canoe captain and got to steer from the back of the boat, on the windiest day yet. The canoe did not capsize and I was chuffed.

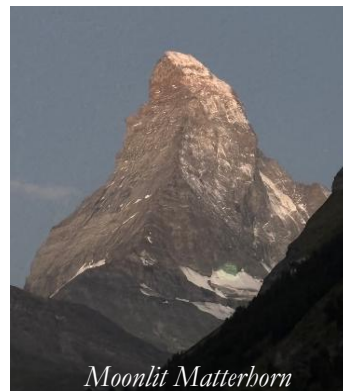
Returning to the canoe base at Anttola, tired and longing for a cold beer and a barbecue, I think we were all dreaming of the next canoe adventure. I know I certainly was. Finland was a great discovery for me, its people are lovely, and its nature is extraordinary.



## Three members' extension to this year's Alpine Meet

At the end of the two-week alpine meet, with railway and lift passes arranged for the next few days, and having had enough of hut dorms, toilettes à la turque and alpine starts, Toby, Conrad and Richard headed off to a valley base near Zermatt.

The next morning, they were on the 0630 cableway up to the Klein Matterhorn and the trudge across the Breithornplateau at the head of the Kleinmatterhorn gletcher. The popularity of this Facile route meant the subsequent ascent of the south face to the Breithorn's fine 4160m summit was busy (below). The views were superb though which made up for the slog.



After a couple of rest days with some lower altitude explorations, the trio walked from the top of the Gornergrat lift to the summit of the 3532m Stockhorn. This peak involved a longish day on rock requiring care with significant exposure, but the reward was views of Mont Blanc, Grand Combin, the Weisshorn and Monte Rosa (right).

These few days were an enjoyable extension to the main meet which left us fired up ready for another alpine meet.



# Fountains Fell's New Year Pot: Rediscovery, History and hard-won Progress

Ged  
Campion

Perched high on the western flanks of Fountains Fell at an altitude of 504m, New Year Pot occupies an interesting position both speleologically and geographically. It's just 300m northwest of Curtain Pot, an extensive system explored and extended by the YRC in 2019. New Year Pot is a fascinating system containing a very old phreatic tube more than three metres in diameter with a deep vadose trench in the floor and at roughly 480masl, probably the highest phreatic tube in the Yorkshire Dales. As Waltham (2017) notes, this feature represents cave development that is either ancient or was within perched aquifers when active. However, the lower part of the cave, below the second pitch, soon degenerates into a shattered passage ending in a intimidating looking boulder choke.

New Year Pot was first recorded by the YRC in 1911 with the understated heading 'Recent Pot-Hole explorations'. The entry reads:

'On Fountains Fell – New Year Pot: 150ft. Two single ladder pitches April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1911. Barstow, Dalton, RF Stobart, EE Roberts.' (Roberts, 2012)

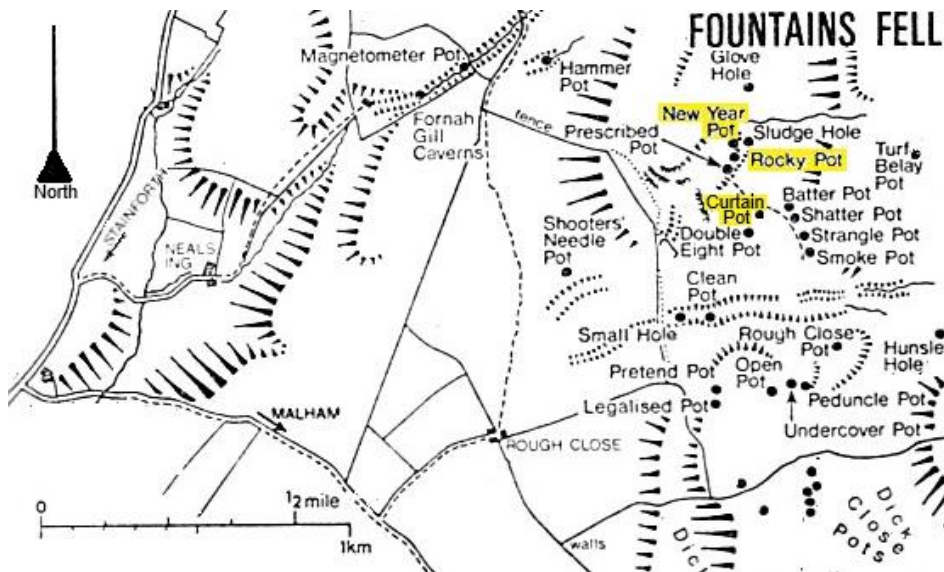
Curiously, no explanation was given for the name 'New Year Pot' despite the descent taking place in April. Later reminiscences by Roberts (1962) describe that on the first descent of the second pitch a false floor gave way resulting in Roberts, held by Stobart, falling and swinging violently into the cave wall but fortunately he was not injured.

After this brief mention, nothing more appears to be recorded until 1936 when Roberts, by then editor of the YRC journal, reported that the Northern Cavern and Fell Club had rediscovered and descended it:

'Fountains Fell Pots (above Rough Close, alt about 1,700ft.). New Year Pot 150ft in all, has been rediscovered and descended by the Northern Cavern and Fell Club (NCFC). The opening is now obvious. Rocky Pot, a few yards south, is an open pothole, easily climbed into, with a short climb in darkness down a narrow rift.' (Roberts,1936)

The NCFC, a group formed in 1928 were described as 'working men' whose common interest was to enjoy the outdoors in contrast to the more 'established' YRC. Their reputation earned them the togue-in-cheek name the 'Northern Tavern and Hell Club'. (Craven, 2008). The two clubs at times found themselves in friendly competition, most notably in the exploration of Penyghent Long Churn where two YRC members had been defeated in 1912 by an excessively tight rift and were unable to complete the exploration. The NCFC pushed further in 1935 but only a few feet. It took until 1963 for the sump to be reached by the Bradford Pothole Club.

Key figures in the NCFC at that time included Cliff Downham and Norman Thornber. Bizarrely, the NCFC did not admit novices into their ranks and following the Second World War the club faded away. Downham joined the YRC in 1950 and helped establish the Cave Rescue Organization (CRO) after the infamous Gingling Hole rescue and Thornber went on to compile the guidebook 'Britain Underground' in 1953 and the iconic 'Pennine Underground' in 1959 - perhaps a missed opportunity by the YRC.



The NCFC's 'rediscovery' of the 'lost' New Year Pot, revived interest in a possible connection with the nearby Rocky Pot. Their description

of Rocky Pot was vague and it wasn't until 1970 that Manchester University Speleological Society (MUSS) explored the furthest extremities of the pot to identify a sight connection which was later enlarged to make a possible link (Mills and Grey,1970).

After finishing the exploration of Curtain to a terminal sump at 138m. In 2019 Frank Walker Simon Latimer and I and decided to return our attention to New Year Pot, this time by the Rocky Pot entrance. Despite previous enlargements the connection squeeze remained tight and the passage just past the entrance was awkward.

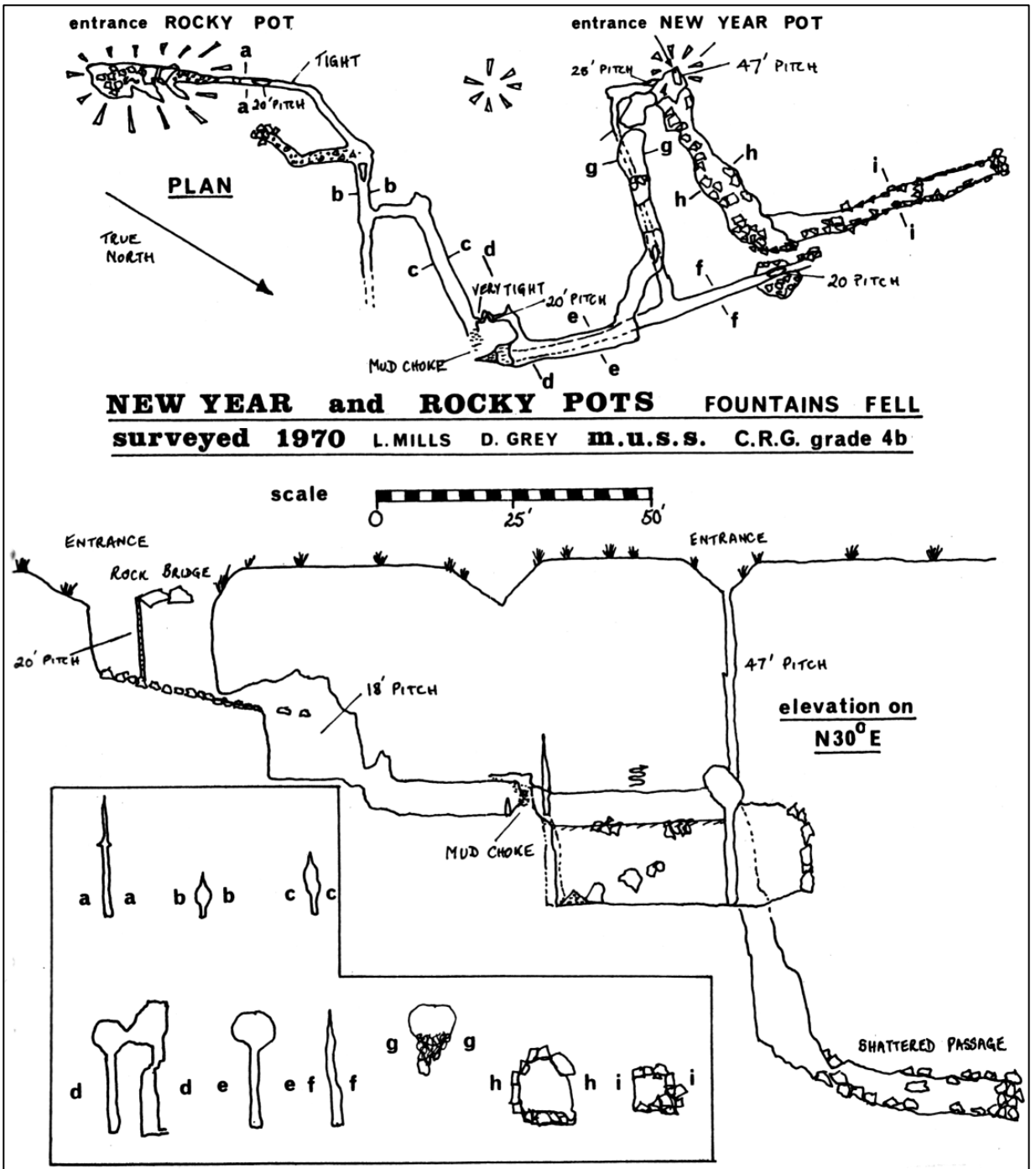
If we were to tackle the boulder choke at the end of New Year Pot, we needed a more practical route to get the equipment through. The 23m shaft entrance offered the best solution but Frank still found the upper section of the tight shaft a struggle. So we enlarged it with the help of chemical persuasion. It also helped with lowering scaffold poles. Two-thirds of the way down a landing on loose debris required stabilizing before descending the final 4½m. At the bottom a fine scalloped window leads directly to the second pitch which drops cleanly to the start of the shattered passage leading to the boulder choke.

The choke was intimidating. We found some old gas pipe propping up boulders which we believed had been used by the MUSS back in the '70s - tackling boulder chokes is probably the most challenging part of new cave exploration, but over many years the YRC has become increasingly skilled and adept at this. Scaffold cannot guarantee safety but gives the illusion of safety much like poorly placed runners on an unprotected climbing route.

However, fixing scaffold in this very constricted space was exhausting and unnerving with barely enough room at times to turn the spanner whilst lying flat out beneath what felt like 100 tons or so of hanging death above. After the very low section with scaffold in place it was possible to wriggle upwards to what felt like a relatively spacious rift and the sound of a stream. We were through and despite more shattered passage with fractured walls, a solid looking slot at the bottom of the rift was clearly visible.

Being the slimmest I was sent to have a look first. I wriggled flat out in slot with the stream flowing underneath me, conscious I was building a human dam with my body I had just enough room to lift my weight and allow the water to release underneath me. It was one of those passages you don't want to have to reverse. Sensing more space ahead by the sound of

cascades and luckily I popped out at the head of small pitch with a more spacious and enticing rift ahead. I was able to compose myself, turn round and re-join Frank and Simon who had been shouting for an update on my progress. Back with the others I got the drill, a rope and enough bolts to rig the short pitch. Once rigged we all worked on the slot to make it more caver friendly before descending the pitch. At the bottom, the clean washed passage soon deteriorated into a boulder strewn, partly fractured high level passage with ancient sandy sediment cementing angular blocks together. The stream forlornly disappeared down an impenetrable slot. After about 20m we arrived at another boulder choke as dispiriting as the previous one. Poking about in the boulders did not show any sign of a way forward.



Still, we had gained over 60m of hard-won new passage, not bad for a day's work. Returning through the scaffolded first choke seemed as equally spooky as doing it the other way but once out of the cave and walking back down to Rough Close we seemed to become increasingly optimistic about the prospect of the dismal boulder choke being exploited. This misguided sort of thinking often occurs when you are back out and safe.

Subsequent research about the topography of Fountains Fell and contact with Glyn Edwards, a former YRC and Northern Pennine Club member who had explored extensively with the legendary Gordon Batty (former YRC member) in the '70s and '80s, followed. After describing our new find to Glyn who had visited New Year Pot in the past, it became increasingly apparent that this may not have been new passage at all but a rediscovery of a former discovery! Glyn pointed me towards his write up in an NPC journal (Edwards,1982). Gordon Batty and Glyn had indeed reached the second boulder choke in 1981. He and Batty never returned to the end because of the 'terrifying ordeal' of the (first) boulder choke.

Simon and I were surprised Frank hadn't remembered this episode in the 1980s as he was caving with Glyn and Batty during that time. However, recovering from the disappointment of our lost find, we returned to second choke a few weeks later with crowbar and tools. We made a superficial excavation and unearthed a slight draught, but Frank couldn't squeeze under one of the newly excavated boulders, the size of a large fridge freezer. I did offer to remove it with bang but as Simon said it would probably 'bring the house down.' So that was it, we didn't return despite the encouraging draught and prize location of the system on Fountains Fell. We left my best crowbar down there awaiting my return. Strictly speaking this remains a YRC project and with permission from Billy Logan at Rough Close Farm we still have the digging rights, so if anyone's keen I'd be happy to take you there for a look.

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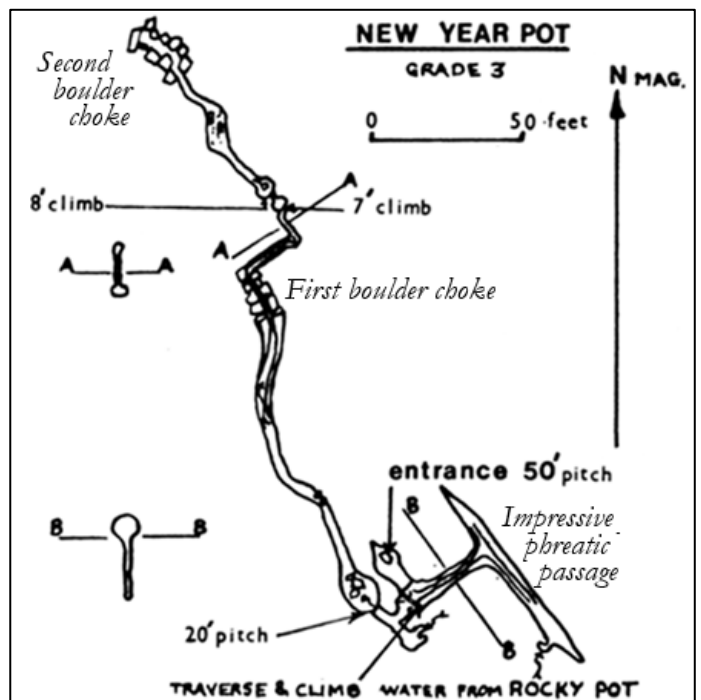
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Climbing the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Skye's Black Cuillin ridge this May marked a significant milestone in my climbing journey - one revived and encouraged through joining the YRC. Back home I paused to reflect on why the climb had meant so much to me.

I learnt to climb whilst studying at Sheffield University, enjoying countless trips to the Peak District gritstone edges and to the university club hut in Grisedale, Cumbria. After a trip to the alps in 1982, walking boots remained in regular use, but the rope and harness rarely saw the light of day. All that changed after a chance meeting on the summit of Ben Macdui in May 2022 and our first Introductory Meet

with the YRC the following August. I was delighted to put on a harness again, even more so to be joined for the first time on a rope by Wendy.

The 'In Pinn' had always been known to me and I knew that one day it might just come into view. But its reputation and blunt 'climb me if you dare' aura places a humble feeling of awe and respect in your heart - would I be up to it? Sitting boldly on the slopes of Sgurr Dearg, perched unapologetically on the narrows of the Cuillin Ridge, the challenge is both irresistible and daunting. Sheer 65m of rock with no gentle slopes or walls of rock to hide the immense exposure. You can read and view articles all you want - nothing prepares you for its vertiginous audacity.

I had no illusions - maybe this year's Skye meet would give Wendy and I the opportunity to test ourselves, but maybe we weren't ready yet. With incredible weather for the visit, we had a taste of the Black Cuillin with Richard Smith and an ascent of the exciting Pinnacle Ridge on Sgurr nan Gillean. Spurred on we joined Michael and Helen for an ascent of Sgurr Dearg and a vague; 'let's go and see what the In Pinn looks like' plan. Well it looked terrifying. But I knew - the east ridge is graded moderate, followed by a straightforward abseil - hold your nerve. So we scrambled down from the summit of Sgurr Dearg, hearts in our mouths and roped up.

The climb starts innocuously up a shallow corner on the south face, onto a small ledge. Unsure of the route, I paused - is this the first stance? Trusting my instincts I pressed on, crossing the ridge to the north side to find a palatial ledge and corner for the stance. Wendy joined me, giving nothing away, as we perched thousands of feet above Coruisk. This was the moment to dig deep - a



reflection of how our personal climbing journeys had brought us to this point - believe in yourself, this is within your capabilities. The way ahead was intimidating - steep and barely twelve inches wide with exposure mocking on both sides. Focus - the holds are there. As I moved up the sheer thrill of the situation swamped me - at last the In Pinn was yielding; I had peered into the deep, conquered my fears and the summit beckoned. Soon there, Wendy joined me and the abseil followed - carefully set up despite the feelings of elation - it's not over until it's over.

Every climber has moments of doubt, when fear leads to a lack of commitment and retreat from a route. The Inaccessible Pinnacle chills you, but my journey turned a corner that day - trust your instincts, all those years of trying, failing and slowly improving brought me to a truly seminal moment. The fear subsided in a sublime moment of concentration and trust in myself - a moment that will inspire me going forward and I hope anyone who reads this - go tackle the In Pinn.



*YRC party heading towards Els Frares, Pic de Serella, during this year's April meet in Spain. (Photo: Mick Borroff)*

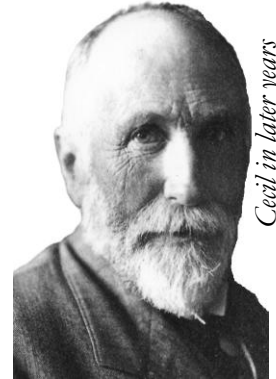
# W<sup>m</sup> Cecil Slingsby - The Man

Michael Smith  
& John Snoad

Cecil as a young man



Our second President, William Cecil Slingsby, was an eminent Victorian alpinist later hailed as the Father of Norwegian Mountaineering. In 1880 he was happily married with a growing family, soon on his way to becoming a successful cotton mill owner, member of three leading mountaineering clubs, and a pillar of the Carleton-in-Craven community. Yet events in 1910 left him feeling betrayed and compelled to move away to live in the Lake District. What brought this about?



Cecil in later years

Cecil, as he was known, owed his position to a century of enterprise by his forebears. The Slingsbys moved from Snaygill and Bradley near Skipton, across the River Aire south of Skipton to the rural village of Carleton in the 1750s just before the industrial revolution. At this time of great poverty many were unable to feed

themselves

properly,

the

Slingsbys

were small-

scale cattle

farmers now living on

the cattle drove route from the

northwest towards the large

markets in the south. Not only were

they better placed than most farmers,

they also had the enterprise to make the

most of this opportunity. The drovers needed

pasture and fodder for their huge herds, and the

Slingsbys used their income from grazing to purchase

land

and

property whenever they could. They

probably drew on the experiences of

other Slingsbys in the extended family

who were larger-scale cattle traders

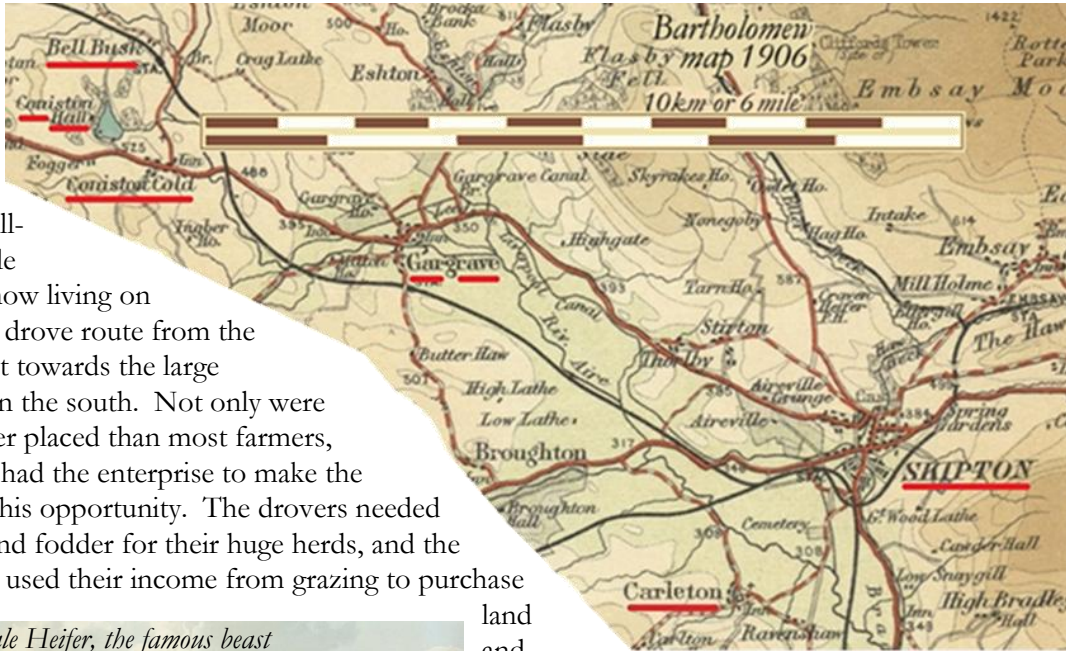
importing beasts from Ireland to fatten

on their own land. This business

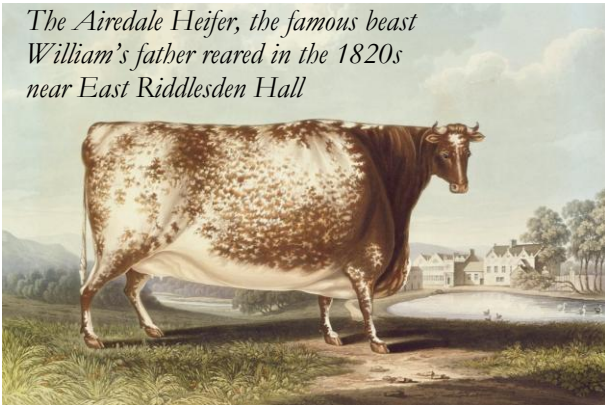
approach proved much more profitable

than arable farming in Craven's rather

harsh climate.



*The Airedale Heifer, the famous beast William's father reared in the 1820s near East Riddlesden Hall*



So, Cecil's forebears prospered and by the 1840s, although rather late in getting involved, they took advantage of Britain's industrial revolution by moving into the cotton industry. They joined the moderately wealthy educated middle-class who could indulge their hobby interests. Ultimately this allowed Cecil to become the first to stand on the summit of Norway's highest rock tower, Store Skagastølstind, and so achieve international acclaim.

	<b>Sarah Eleanor</b> 1847–1906 married 1882 Herbert Todd, 9 children	<b>Katharine</b> 1883–1981
<b>William</b> 1819–1897 married 1843 Mary Ann Dewhurst	<b>William Cecil</b> 1849–1929 married 1882 Alizon Ecroyd, 5 children	<b>William Ecroyd (Billy)</b> 1885–
	<b>Mary Frances</b> 1851–1880	<b>Alizon Mary (Zona)</b> 1888-1980
	<b>Frank Edwin</b> 1853–1920 married Kate Crowther, 4 children	<b>Henry Laurence</b> 1893–1917
	<b>Edith Annie</b> 1858–1935	<b>Sarah Eleanor (Len)</b> 1895-1994
<b>John</b> 1821–1901 married 1843 Helen Robinson	<b>John Arthur</b> 1854–1941 married 1882 Amelia Frederica Morris and 3 other children	<b>Arthur Morris, Charles Stephen Henry</b> and 10 other children

*Three generations of the Slingsby family tree*

Born either side of 1820, Cecil's father, William, and uncle John were young teenagers when their father died in 1834. Being the senior, William inherited the substantial estate of farm buildings, cottages, and many acres of land, though given his age, his mother was still running the farm.

The family also ran a small hand-spinning and weaving operation from the farmhouse and small workshops around the village. Such cottage industry, usually using wool, provided additional income and used labour when there was little work outside.

A cotton mill had been built in Bell Busk several miles away up the Aire valley, by Carleton men Garforth and Hallowell. Garforth's son, James, inherited it and in 1841 likely persuaded the Slingsby brothers go into business together and lease the mill.

Leaving their families in Carleton, William and John moved out to Bell Busk, north of Conistone Cold, returning home at weekends to attend church and be with their families.

Gradually, William and John learned how to operate and maintain the cotton mill's machinery, including the 16hp (12kW) water wheel, with a 6hp (4½kW) steam engine for when the water level was low.

They also learned to manage a workforce which grew to number fifty-nine. As there were only sixty people in Bell Busk aged ten to fifty, they employed practically all the available local labour not already Coniston estate workers, plus others, some children, who walked in the 4km from Gargrave – that's about an hour.





The brothers were remarkably successful and made advantageous marriages. Aged 25, William wed a Skipton mill owner's daughter, Mary Ann Dewhurst in 1843. John wed a banker's daughter, Helen Robinson, from the same town in 1849. By that time, they had invested their inheritances in acquiring and improving a steam powered mill in Carleton. John managed the weaving there while William continued spinning out at Bell Busk.

After a decade or so of flourishing trade, a depression caused by the American Civil War naval blockade of their east coast reduced supplies of raw cotton. Other mills went on to 'half time' but resourceful William arranged for coarse cotton supplies from India. His early practical experience meant he could modify processes and machinery and so keep working. Despite the difficult times, in 1861, the brothers built a second, larger and more modern cotton mill in Carleton. William closed the now redundant Bell Busk mill on May Day 1862 and opened the new mill the next morning. Many of the Bell Busk and Gargrave workers moved into newly built homes in Carleton.

Having the two mills side by side brought the two parts of the business together. William ran new mill's initial processing and spinning while John stayed with the old weaving mill and workshops. Excepting a few lean periods, the mills were in profit for 68 years. W. & J. Slingsby, Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers had an 'edge' over the competition.

Turning from the business to family life, we return to the early years of their first cotton mill with William and Mary Ann living at Bell Busk's Mill House. There in May 1849, Cecil was born into this cultured middle-class family surrounded by books. Cecil's father was not only a practical man, but he was also an accomplished musician who sang tenor in the church choir and the Bradford and Skipton choral societies, wrote hymn music, and sometimes played the church organ. He took his family to concerts and with his wife visited London to hear extravagant massed performances of Handel's oratorios at the Crystal Palace.

Cecil's governess read him stories of Norwegian villagers and pirate raids from Harriet Martineau's 'Feats on the Fiord'. These caught his imagination so later he read widely about Norway and the newly published Modica's 'Golden Age of Alpine Mountaineering'.



**The Industrial Revolution reaches Carleton**

Water-driven mills, like Bell Busk's, had only minor impact on the countryside. Steam powered mills were quite different. Carleton's two new mills needed over 100 tons of coal delivered each day. Roads and bridges were strengthened to take Slingsby's steam driven coal carts. Scores of workers' terraced cottages were built. Carleton's villagers found themselves in a new noisy sooty industrial age.

Living in the Yorkshire Dales, there were annual family ascents of Ingleborough, and young Cecil explored nearby Malham, Crookrise and Rylstone crags, Flasby Fell, Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside, and Simon's Seat. He became a confident cragsman and developed a lifelong interest in botany.

The new mill completed, in 1862 William moved his family into Carleton's Beech Hill, a substantial purpose-built house, but modest as mill owners' homes of the period went. It reflected the family's general character and practical outlook, having a coach house, stables, servants' quarters, landscaped gardens, tennis courts, and a kitchen garden.

Soon after this move Cecil, aged 15, was sent to Cheltenham school for two-and-a-half years to complete his schooling. His working life started early in 1867 aged almost 18 in the family mill's pricing office. He moved around all parts of the mill as his father was determined that he would learn first-hand all aspects of the business. Later, as a young man, he became an overseer, affectionately called 'Mister Ceecil' by the mill hands.

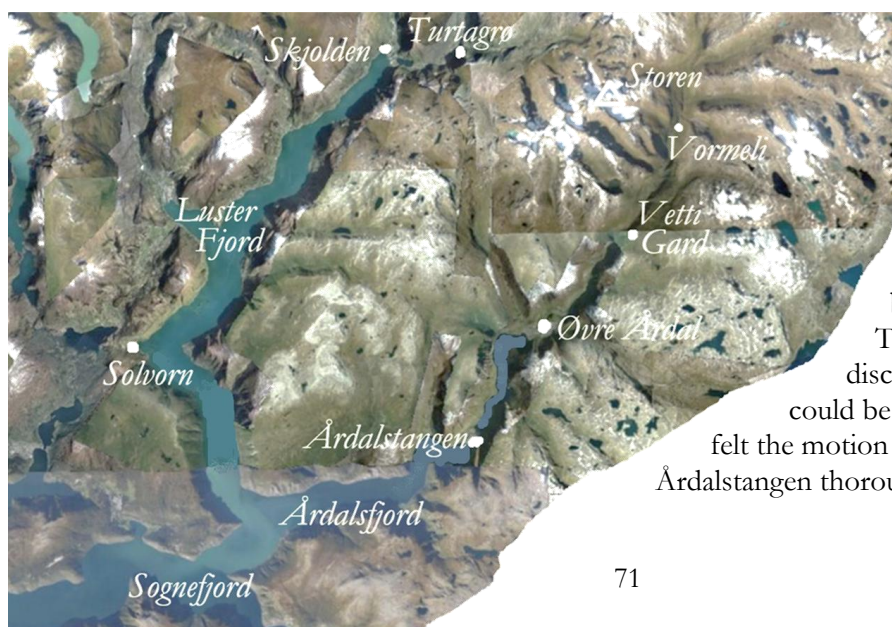
Around Carleton he was well-regarded as he played in local rugby and cricket teams, mixed socially and chatted easily about his adventures, and later became the church's choirmaster. As he moved into his twenty-third year, increasing in confidence, he decided to visit Norway and see if it lived up to his childhood imaginings.

Cecil's mountaineering is not detailed here as it is well documented elsewhere. The few outings included help explain his enthusiasm for Norwegian mountains and culture.

Carrying his botany box, Cecil with his Skipton friend Christopher Sidgwick boarded the Hull steamboat bound for Bergen in 1872. Reaching the Jotunheimen from the east by pony and trap across the Sognefjell Pass to Skjolden at the end of Luster Fjord, they glimpsed the impressive unclimbed tower of Store Skagastølstind (Storen) then rated Norway's highest mountain. Later Christopher fished while restless Cecil explored the fells upstream.

They continued by rowing boat using local oarsmen - no fjord-side roads in those days. The first leg was over 40km to Solvorn – a small village but an important Posting Station

**Young Cecil's library included:**  
 Scandinavian Sketches or A tour in Norway, W.H.Breton, 1835.  
 Views of Norway... in 1848 and 1849, M.S.Bidulph, 1849.  
 Norway and Its Glaciers Visited in 1851, J.D.Forbes, 1853.  
 How to see Norway, JR.Campbell, 1871.  
 Scrambles Amongst the Alps, E.Whympfer, 1871.



where Cecil found a letter from his father already awaited him. Then on to Årdalsfjord requiring a crossing from one side of the fjord to the other before turning east. This was where the lads discovered that fjords could be squally places. Both felt the motion badly and arrived in Årdalstangen thoroughly cold and wet.

Despite this soaking their eight days of adventuring, seeing wonderful new sights and doing just as they pleased cemented Cecil's enthusiasm for Norway. Back home he was determined to return for more mountaineering. It was not to be the next summer because that winter he tried to skate the outside edge backwards and sprained an ankle. But in 1874 he went with his cousin, Algy Dewhurst, better equipped with a Whymper tent and more climbing equipment than they needed. They moved generally eastwards through the Hurrungane using local guides, and with mixed weather climbed Gladhöpiggen, then one of the western tops of the Memrutind. They gained valuable experience in the layout of the range and the difficulties of the terrain. Unfortunately, when they went to get a view of Store Skagastølstind they had no guide or porter so made it a day's outing and saw little because of the poor weather.

Cecil's sister Edith accompanied him on his 1875 visit and they climbed Glittertinden. Then that winter he planned with the Norwegian Emanuel Mohn a demanding 1876 tour. They made consecutive new routes over Torfinnstind, Galdebergind, Uranaastind, Gjertvastind and perhaps most significantly Store Skagastølstind. That last summit he boldly soloed from the col and became the climb for which he is best remembered.

In all Cecil made 15 mountaineering visits to Norway and 12 seasons in the Alps of France, Italy and Switzerland, mostly without guides. His quiet and confident leadership coupled with his skill on snow and ice soon earned him a high reputation. Despite the prevailing view that climbing such peaks without a guide was reckless, Cecil was admitted to the Alpine Club four years later. Subsequently he helped establish the YRC and was, for a decade, its second President. He wrote articles and lectured as President of the Craven Naturalists' and Scientific Association and other societies, even speaking in Turin to the Club Alpino Italiano. He was also: a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society; President of the Climbers' Club and Fell & Rock Climbing Club; Honorary Member of the Rucksack Club, Norsk Tindeklub and Den Norske Turistforening; and member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, New Zealand Alpine Club, Societe de la Speleologie, Paris, and British Association for the Advancement of Science. He was influential and his mountaineering achievements were widely recognised. Leading contemporary climbers and cavers visited his home, and some giving lectures at YRC meetings.

### The Whymper Tent



Cecil (standing) and Algy Dewhurst staged this photograph, supposedly of them cooking at a base camp in Norway but actually on Beech Hill's front lawn. The spoof appeared in Norwegian journals and a 1930s DNT yearbook.



Returning to Cecil's home life, in June 1882 he married Alizon Ecroyd, the handsome daughter of a powerful and wealthy Lancashire mill-owning family from Colne 30km away. The newlyweds lived in Gargrave, four miles from Carleton. Cecil took the country lanes to work, leaving his pony and trap in the Beech Hill stable each day.

Their first child, Katharine, was born the next year and they soon moved next to the old mill, into Dale House, previously Cecil's father's and grandmother's home. That was where their remaining four children, Billy, Zona, Laurence and Len were born over the next eleven years. Inevitably, all were introduced to mountaineering.

In 1897 William died, Cecil inherited most of the estate and moved his family into Beech Hill, Carleton. Now in partnership with his 76-year-old uncle John, Cecil, aged 48, took on the lion's share of running the business for the few years until his uncle's death. It is relevant to see what became of his children before returning to Cecil. Katharine the eldest, taught at Sunday School and supported her father's political interests by joining the Primrose League, a Conservative organisation founded in 1883. Her own real interests, however, lay in the arts.

Billy was a great disappointment. Even his mother, Alizon, found him most unreliable, troublesome, embarrassing, and a womaniser. She believed he cost Cecil the Presidency of the AC. Young Billy was removed from school after pestering a teacher. Then a Beech Hill housemaid was set up with a house and smallholding a few miles away at Cecil's expense. However, he did later serve his country as W<sup>m</sup> Ecroyd Slingsby 75630, enlisting in 1916 to serve in the Fleet Air Arm on Ark Royal and in Gallipoli. Married with children, he abandoned them, packed off to Africa to run an orange farm where in 1939 he enlisted as a captain in the British Army's West African Field Force.

Book lover Zona also helped with the Sunday School and became an accomplished cellist. She married an Italian and lived in southern Italy until the rise of fascism forced a move to London, but they were never as happy as when living in Italy.

A mountaineer cut from the same cloth as Cecil, his younger son, Laurence, was educated at Charterhouse then studied chemistry. He enlisted early and fought on the French front the first month of the war. Twice mentioned in despatches before being badly wounded in the head after six months, he was invalided home. He returned to the Flanders front and was awarded the Military Cross before catching a grenade splinter in the throat. He died two days later from gangrene aged 24. This was a profound loss for Cecil: but his youngest daughter Len was a consolation.



Len and Laurence were more like twins than simply brother and sister. She knew how to enjoy life and idolised her father. Despite her father's and later her husband Geoffrey Winthrop Young's attempts to avoid it, she became an accomplished mountaineer. Her severe modesty on the subject would not allow anyone to call her a climber. Nevertheless,

she climbed extensively in Britain and in the Alps then in 1921 was the Pinnacle Club's first President. She accompanied Cecil to Bergen that year when he met King Haakon in Oslo and on his return journey to Bergen was treated like royalty. Three years before her father died, Len gave him great pleasure by climbing Store Skagastølstind, with Norwegian friends, on the 50th anniversary of his first ascent. She returned to Norway in 1976 to see her son Jocelin and other members of the family including a grandson, and Norwegian friends, make the centenary climb.

Beyond mountaineering, Len had a lifelong interest in the stage and trained at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre. She looked back with greatest affection on that idyllic pre-war period of her childhood, enjoying a carefree family life in Carleton.

This account now returns to just that time, when Len was seven and Cecil is aged 50.

In 1900 at a time of work-related pressures following the death of John and dealing with domestic problems caused by Billy, Cecil started writing his Norwegian memoir and found it "a much more formidable task than that of climbing the mountains themselves." After over four years' work it was published in 1904. Two years later, Cecil's became vice president of the Alpine Club.

The main work pressure was caused by cousin Arthur becoming Cecil's junior partner on inheriting the partnership. They had a deep and long-held mutual dislike of one another: a relationship that was to be forever sour. Cecil thought him cruel. Their characters contrasted: outgoing, enthusiastic, practical, well-travelled Cecil and the serious-minded, stern, perhaps arrogant, Arthur, who served on innumerable Skipton committees. Perhaps too the bulk of their grandfather's estate going to Cecil's father may have been a factor. They maintained a façade before business and society guests, seated at the head of the other's table, should one be away on business. But gradually it became apparent to the workforce that there was a problem. There were manoeuvrings among the Board members: the directors his siblings and he the most senior partner. It was a complete surprise to him when it all came to a head in 1909 and he was forced out of the business.

### Norway, the Northern Playground

Cecil's book was based on his many articles, notebooks, diaries and papers. His publisher thought it too long at 700 pages and Cecil did cut it down to 425.

The print run of 500 was self-financed. His photographic landscapes were too costly to reproduce so he pressured acquaintances to produce replacement pen and ink drawings: most by a friend Eric Greenwood who ran a worsted mill and of whom Cecil wrote "being a bachelor he has little to occupy himself with during the long summer evenings;" some by the already overworked YRCJ editor, Thomas Gray; and several by Cecil's young sister-in-law.

Cecil died before finishing a second edition leaving Len to complete it in 1941 including his later explorations and more illustrations. Then wartime shortages and the publisher's preferred format resulted in a lower quality edition.



The Gjededalstind,  
and frozen lake in Koldedal.

What had happened? The industry was in slow steady decline though the business was in profit, when they had taken a large loan from Craven Bank of which Arthur was a director to install badly needed new machinery. The bank was then taken over by the Bank of Liverpool. It appears that Arthur saw a better future with that bank than playing second fiddle in the cotton mill and failed to give the firm backing, without which the bank would consider the loan unsafe. At the same time Arthur dismissed the mills' agents in Bradford and Manchester, and the manager of the new mill (who then set up on his own and successfully ran a Lancashire mill as a competitor.)

Arthur's actions were treachery of the first order in Cecil's eyes though Cecil may have been relieved to be rid of his mill work and freer to travel. He was shocked: no pension, no salary, the sudden loss of his professional identity, estranged from his family, and unable to live in the heart of his close-knit community which knew all this: stressed and despondent he had to get out of this situation. In 1910, his share of the business worth much less than expected, Cecil started selling his other Carleton properties. But nobody wanted houses in a declining mill village. When some went up for auction there were no bids, although selected groups of cottages were later sold privately. Only the Swan Inn, sold easily and at a good price.

The family moved into the Ecroyd's second home, Whitbarrow Lodge, just north of Morecambe Bay. Leaving his father's Beech House to go and live in a smaller property must have been a bitter pill to swallow, though one was with memories of happy times spent there holidaying with the children. The family lived comfortably there until 1917.

It was not all doom and gloom. There were Geoffrey Winthrop Young's Easter gatherings in Snowdonia, Len starting serious rock climbing and her marriage to his friend Geoffrey, mountaineering in the Alps and Norway - he was still climbing into his 70s. But then his gifted favourite son, Laurence, and mountaineering protégé being horrifically killed in the war had been another blow, one from which he never really recovered. That same war took all three of Arthur's sons, all had been regular childhood visitors to Beech House and grew up 'under Cecil's wing.'



Post-War Len married Geoffrey and Edith accompanied Cecil to Norway when he was introduced to King Hakon and fêted. Cecil rented properties in Milnthorpe then Beetham to eventually settle in Cartmel in 1924 for his last five years. Over those last years his memory for his mountain ascents was fading. Finally, propped up in nursing home bed watching some lads playing cricket, one sent the ball for six and Cecil called out "Well played, well played, my boy!" - his last words. He died quietly aged 80 in 1929. He was returned to Carleton for burial in the northeast corner of St Mary's Church graveyard, on the opposite side of the old cotton mill to his Beech Hill home. The sun came out during the interment and lit the faces of the small choir (some trained by Cecil) as they sang the Nunc Dimittis.

By this time England's cotton industry faced increasing overseas competition. Arthur tried to continue, putting more of his own money into the business and repeatedly asking the workers to take wage cuts. Strikes did achieve reductions in wage cuts. Gradually workers moved elsewhere for other better paid work in other industries. Inevitably a point was reached where another cut in wages was steadfastly refused. At a final acrimonious meeting in 1930 no agreement could be found, the mill's doors were closed and its



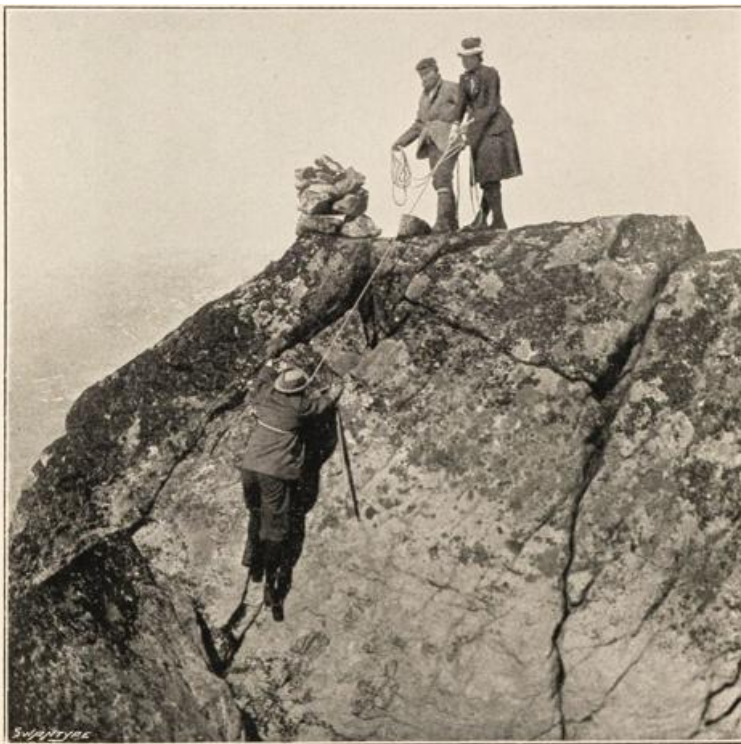
*Cecil, 1893*

keys handed over to the bank. Carleton's more than eight decades of association with the cotton industry was over.

So how does one summarise Cecil, the man? "For a mountaineer and explorer, he had the ideal equipment - a magnificent physique, exceptional hardihood, grace and agility, an unerring judgement ... coolness and courage" said *The Times*. The *Craven Herald* cited "There are two patron saints of Norway - St Olaf and Cecil Slingsby." As a Rucksack Club friend put it "He absolutely bubbled over with good nature ... and ... fire[d] us with enthusiasm and emulation." Ernest Roberts started with "a figure of glorious legend, a hero of a Golden Age ... full of life and vigour and joy, an active Yorkshire Rambler and the greatest. ... a pioneer of British rock-climbing, and [he] is bound up for ever with Store Skagastölstind, the Requin, and the Plan." Then turned to the more personal "The difficult and the unusual attracted him, once on the Barden Moor road ... sedately crossing the bridge over the beck he skipped on to the parapet and ran along it with the remark 'Always choose the most sporting route.' He was always the same, never out of temper, a delightful companion, full of reminiscences, the anxious mentor and guide of untried youth, and deferential almost to a fault to what he conceived to be superior information or experience in others." He was sociable, formed an easy rapport with those he met, and was a successful businessman.

No wonder the people of Norway, we of the YRC, the AC and FRCC, and the residents of Carleton will be remembering his contribution to mountaineering in July 2026.

Acknowledgements: YRC member John Snoad died in 2020, and the Club retains his extensive biographical notes on Cecil which are the source material for much of this article.



Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Luster Turlag for access to a 1994 Snoad paper, to the Rucksack Club for use of material from their 1930 Journal, to the Alpine Club for access to Mumm's Register of Members 1857-1890, Carol Whalley for access to her family history research, and to Richard Hargreaves and Janet Lambert of the Slingsby family for their reflections on an early draft.

*Top of Skagastölstind - 'A long pull, and a strong pull, and all pull together.' Cecil, Therese Berthau, and Ole Berge, 1900.*

# Slingsby, Mohn & Lykken's Momentous Mountain Month

Eli Anne Tvergrov &  
Knut Ihlen Tønsberg

**Introduction:** 1876: Privileged foreigners and Norwegians with time to spare walked into the southern Norwegian mountains. They brought back, through stories, poems, and paintings, the majestic and seemingly unreachable symbols of Norwegian strength and history. Norway was moving into a time of modernisation - with new commercial farming, agricultural cooperatives, hydropower, and expanding shipping. Cairn by cairn, something was building: a new, romantic admiration for the beautiful mountain landscape mixed with growing demands for broader democracy and resistance to Swedish dominance in the union (dissolved first in 1905). The discussions were loud and lively in the cities - but spread far into the valleys, along the fjords, and high up into the mountains.

Two young men set out in 1876 to challenge the “hideous peaks” of the Norwegian high mountains. Their achievements soon merged with a radical political awakening that shook the very bedrock of Norway. For many, the breaking point came with their symbolically charged ascent of Store Skagastølstind, Storen, in Hurrungane.

Those two were Emanuel Meyer Mohn (34) from Bergen and W<sup>m</sup> Cecil Slingsby (27) from Yorkshire. They left Christiania (now Oslo) around 7<sup>th</sup> July, bound for



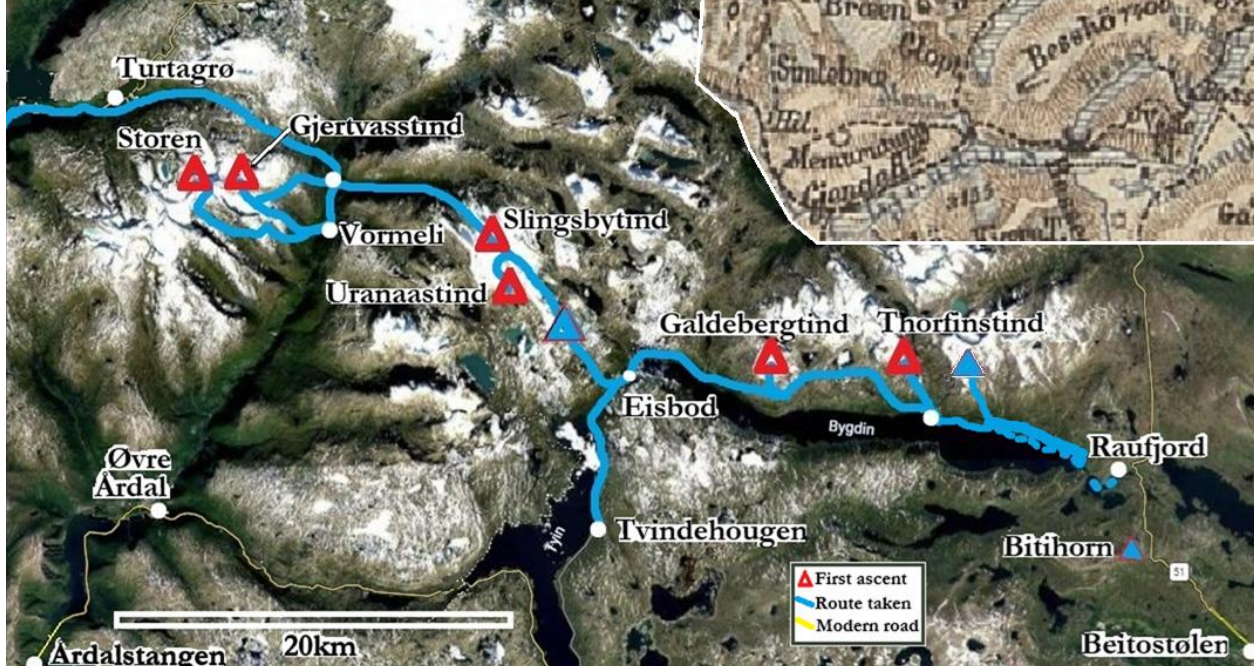
*Mohn (left) and Slingsby in their 1876 mountain attire and equipped with long ice axes, rope, rope waist belt, a telescope, a barometer, and a rucksack. The photographer is most likely Lars Andersen from Bergen but then based in Ålesund.*

Jotunheimen, and during the coming month they would make a series of ascents that profoundly shaped the development of both Norwegian and British mountaineering, pushing forward standards in both cases.

**Years of Preparation:** They had first met two years earlier, travelling on a steamship bound for Bergen. Through regular correspondence they had agreed that, come summer, they would test themselves against a range of grim and hideous new peaks.

After four days travelling north from Christiania on the 13<sup>th</sup> July they checked into the Raufjord Hotel at the eastern end of lake Bygdin. They had arranged to meet Knut Lykken, a forty-five-year-old reindeer hunter, mountain guide, and hotel keeper, whose guiding contract to take them along the Bygdin range westward to Eisbod was to begin on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Two days later, as satisfied clients the two of them had celebrated first ascents of 2119m Torfinnstinden and 2075m Galdeberget by erecting summit cairns.



*Mohn, Lykken and Slingsby's July 1876 route. Insert is from the 1870 map then available*

**Vinje and Sars:** For Mohn, Eidsbugarden, at the western end of Bygdin, was not just another hut - it was a natural pilgrimage site. In 1868, the poet, writer, and editor Aasmund Olavsson Vinje had built a cabin there. One of the three financiers who supported Vinje was his forty-year-old close friend, Professor Johan Ernst Sars.

In 1868 while still a student Mohn, a devoted admirer of both men, had been among the very first visitors to the cabin during the summer it was completed.

Sars, a newly appointed professor of history, was a leading ideological voice in what became the progressive Liberal Party, the first political party to be formed in Norway "Venstre", founded 1884. He had formed a close friendship with Mohn, the young Bergen-born schoolteacher and philologist. During the summers, Mohn joined Sars on long mountain journeys that essentially functioned as multi-day political and philosophical seminars.

One DNT hut warden reported to the association's chairman Yngvar Nielsen: "The way they reasoned! They wanted to be rid of the king, the government and the entire parliament. They were terrible people."

Mohn was one of these "terrible" men wanting parliamentarianism not monarchy, and the discussions they all had in the capital and in the mountains were often intense. The circle continued to gather at Eidsbugarden after Vinje's death, when Thomas Heftye took over the property and turned *Vinjestova* into a tourist lodge in 1870.

On 18 July, Slingsby was expecting two more experienced English climbers to arrive at Eidsbugarden. When they failed to appear, he and Mohn persuaded Lykken to extend his guiding contract by another four days.

**Northwest to Uranostinden – 19 July:** On 19 July, the trio continued northwest to 2157m Uranostinden, a favourite summit of Professor Sars. No recorded first ascent existed at the time and Slingsby raised the question beforehand of whether they ought to leave the peak untouched: "Professor E. Sars had a great wish to make the first ascent of

this peak, but was unable to accompany us ... so I proposed to Mohn that we should leave the actual top still untrodden, so that Sars might still make it his own.” Mohn assured Slingsby that Sars did not have the health for such an ascent, and that his friend would not mind if they climbed it - so they did, reaching the summit without difficulty.

Once on top, the two Norwegians wished to rest, take in the view and build a cairn, but this did not suit the younger, restless, and more energetic Englishman. Slingsby therefore continued further north to a separate 2028m peak which Mohn would later christen Slingsbytinden.

Descending the Skogadalsbreen and west down to the summer farm Skogadalsbøen (later a DNT cabin from 1888), they had completed first ascents of Torfinnstinden, Galdeberget, Slingsbytinden, and Uranostinden. From that last summit, Slingsby carried down a stone which he presented to Professor Sars a week later at Røysheim.



Emanuel Mohn 1842-1891

Knut Lykken 1831-1911

W<sup>m</sup> Cecil Slingsby 1849-1929

**Three in a Bed:** On the night before 20 July, the three of them shared a single bed in the seater (a summer pasture cabin) at Skogadalsbøen. The only one who slept soundly was Lykken, who snored.

Early in the morning they set out for Gjertvasstind (Jervvasstind), rising to 2351m. This was the easternmost peak on the Styggedalsryggen ridge in Hurrungane, and a summit Mohn wanted to attempt. Slingsby too, to survey the south-western approach towards his great objective: 2405m Store Skagastølstind.

From one of the summits earlier that week, Mohn had thought the mountain looked extremely steep. He was prepared to cut steps with the ice axe, but at close range the terrain proved different. The ascent was heavy going and seemingly never-ending (today it's jokingly called Norway's longest slope).

Slingsby, the only one wearing nailed boots, at one point grew impatient and pushed ahead, but halted on the upper snow-plateau. There he planted his ice axe and waited for nearly forty minutes for the others to arrive. Mohn was allowed to be the very first to stand on the highest point.

Together they built the usual cairn before continuing down to Vormeli in Utladalen. Once an exceedingly remote mountain farm (at 600m), it now served as an upland saeter, with two dairymaids in residence and a place to stay the night.

**Doubt on the Col:** Store Skagastølstind was Slingsby's ultimate objective. He had studied the mountain from several angles and at ever-closer range in 1872, '74 and '75. He had nicknamed it "*The Tinker*" — after the noisy, troublesome travelling tinsmiths women were advised to be wary of. It matched the impression of this thundering, active Hurrungane giant, a mountain the locals warned people to treat with caution.

Slingsby's observations from the year before combined with Mohn's observations from the west side of Hurrungane as early as 1868, determined their choice of route: they would head up Midtmaradalen and climb via what came to be called the Slingsbybreen.

The 21<sup>st</sup> August was the last chance for an attempt as the following morning Lykken had to turn back home. All three must have felt the weight of the challenge ahead, and the local guide, Lykken, had already shown hesitation. This was unknown terrain for him, and largely for everyone else as well. They were heading for Norway's third-highest mountain.

Mohn had always been clear that he wanted to climb as high as possible. But he had no experience with the kind of climbing they were about to undertake and did not know what to expect on the glacier terrain.

Slingsby, on the other hand, knew this would be his only chance in 1876 and his preparations had been meticulous. He'd brought the best equipment available to members of the Alpine Club in London: a rope and waist-belt for himself and Mohn, much slimmer and shorter than the thick hemp ropes used by Norwegians - and a double-headed ice axe with a long ash shaft of nearly 1.3m: a pick on one side, a wide adze on the other. Too heavy at half a kilo for daily use, but superb for difficult glacier work. Lykken had never seen anything like it. Slingsby's boots had nailed soles giving him grip on hard snow and ice that neither Mohn nor Lykken could match.

**English Mountaineering:** They set out at 7am on 21<sup>st</sup> August, though with mixed motivations. Yet over the next hours they achieved something that no one in Norway had ever done before: late that afternoon, at 6 p.m., they stood together, safe and sound, on the col beneath Store Skagastølstind, the place later called Mohn's Skar.

They had ascended 2100m from Vormeli, and only 140m of ascent remained to the actual summit. But the situation was far from good. The Norwegians wanted to call it a day. Mohn probably felt the consequences most sharply: untrained and inexperienced on steep snow and ice, and with no nails under his boots he'd already slipped several times, once badly enough to become completely stuck. He was now likely gathering his last reserves simply to get safely back down the glacier they had come up.

Lykken declared that he would not "kill himself" by climbing higher. He could hardly risk his reputation nor his future livelihood. Safe travel in the mountains was his business. It did not sit well to expose paying clients to obvious danger. Besides, his wife and children were waiting for him at home.

The Englishman must have searched for hope, even as Mohn declared that the summit above them looked utterly inaccessible. “There seemed to be no proper arête to connect the peak with the skar, but merely a narrow face, mostly consisting of smoothly polished and almost vertical slabs of rock. The first 150 or 200 feet appeared to be the worse, and I thought that if those could be surrounded, the top might be won, but really, I did not then think there was the slightest possibility of doing it ...”

**A Consolation and a Breakthrough:** Perhaps as consolation for his English climbing partner, Mohn ventured that perhaps two competent climbers might be able to manage it. Within seconds, Slingsby was on his feet and attacking the final metres. But he did not choose the easiest line — the ridge route from the col which today is graded UIAA II. Instead, he followed a snow cornice a few metres southwards, to the left, before climbing upwards. He most likely ascended a chimney line, equivalent to a modern UIAA III+.

Slingsby later wrote that he did not even see what is now considered the easiest route. Was it perhaps blocked at the time by large boulders that have since fallen away? Slingsby never saw a couloir rising from the very top of the col.

The Norwegians could hear an ice axe, the Englishman cutting steps on icy rock and scraping his way upward, until everything went silent.

Then they heard the Yorkshireman from the village of Carleton-in-Craven release all restraint: W<sup>m</sup> Cecil Slingsby was standing on the summit of Store Skagastølstind, gathering stones to build a cairn as the first person ever to stand there. Mohn’s watch showed 18:38 when he realised that English mountaineering had now unmistakably been introduced to Norway. A proud moment as well, his friend was still alive!

A little later, with a measure of luck, the Englishman managed the decent back to the two Norse waiting below, and he admitted to having been frightened on the way. Late that same night, the three finally returned to the warmth of Vormeli.

**To Have Succeeded:** On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, Lykken thanked them for the assignment and headed east toward home. Mohn and Slingsby circled round to the southwest toward the Sognefjord. On the final stretch from Turtagrø toward Fortun, they met hikers from Bergen, Mohn’s hometown. One of these would later deliver a sharp vote of no confidence to Mohn via a Bergen newspaper. Criticism would come from several quarters, repeating the theme that well-known men like Mohn ought to keep their distance from foreigners, when lacking both courage and ability.

No news of this reached the two climbers, who by then had arrived at the Lusterfjord home of 81-year-old Captain Munthe at Ytre-Kroken. In his younger years Munthe had travelled widely in the mountains as an officer. With Mohn and Slingsby he shared his knowledge of art, culture, and, not least, of his time working for Norges Geografiske Oppmåling, producing county maps.

What followed was, quite simply, a delightful period of “Rest after Toyle”, lasting three or four days. The most strenuous physical effort was a spirited game of croquet. They stretched their muscles, had their mountain clothing patched, and their boots repaired. The garden was heavy with sweet black cherries. Slingsby enjoyed fishing and sent a

crate of apples via Bergen back home to England. Mohn devoted his time to writing, and as promised, prepared a full tour report for the editor of the national newspaper *Dagbladet*.

**Newspapers and Emotions:** In the week before Mohn's official report was printed *Dagbladet* and several other newspapers published sensational stories from the expedition without fact-checking. Other mountain travellers had come down to civilisation carrying loose fragments, half-heard phrases, and disjointed accounts from the various stages of the expedition. The reporting bore the clear imprint of this.

When the authentic and enthusiastic tour report by Mohn finally appeared in *Dagbladet* on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, most people no longer knew what to believe as it was alongside the earlier rumours which continued to spread across the country for another two weeks. In his report Mohn wrote that Torfinnstinden was taken "by storm", and he said nothing about the use of a rope. He wrote that they had *considered* climbing the snow flank directly up Uranostinden, abandoned the idea, and instead traversed the ridge (Langeskavlen) with steep drops on both sides. Mohn mentioned nothing about danger or near-slips.

He stated that they descended Gjertvasstinden by glissading down the snow. He described Slingsby "climbing like a cat" on Store Skagastølstind, while he himself, exhausted, was unable to follow the Englishman to the top.

Although *Dagbladet* issued corrections, the broader newspaper narrative continued in the critical direction. The Bergen native had not bothered to follow the foreigner those last metres. Mohn, it was said, had represented the Norwegian nation far more than guide Lykken, and as a public figure he had brought shame upon the fatherland.

The two happy mountaineers did not respond. They were already heading into the mountains again where no newspaper stories could reach them.

**The Expedition Continues:** The two now set their sights on Sunnmøre - though not before carrying out further reconnaissance in Jotunheimen. From Kroken they walked to Årdalstangen, where they stayed at the Klingenberg Hotel. Their onward route northeast up Utladalen past Vetti took them to Stølsmaradalen saeter for the night. After some confusion in the terrain the next day, they descended via the Kyrkjestigen to a night's lodging and a reunion with the dairymaids at Vormeli.

**Reserved audience:** Late in the evening, ten days after their ascent of Store Skagastølstind, they arrived at Røysheim, a gathering place for mountain tourists, a little north of the popular summits Galdhøpiggen and Glittertinden.

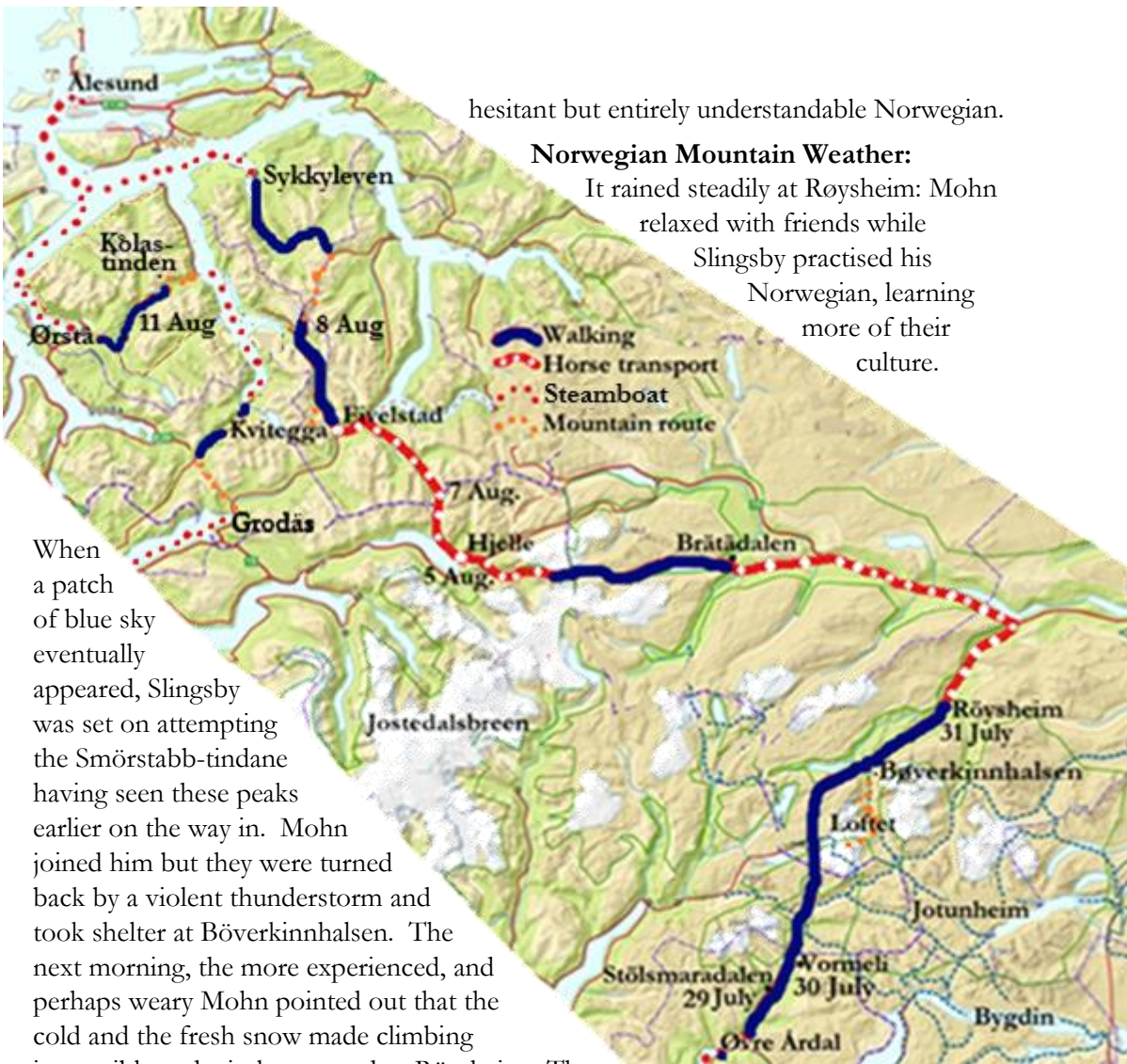
Professor Ernst Sars and other close friends of Mohn were there and had heard the rumours: Had Mohn and Lykken perhaps been the first on Store Skagastølstind and not the Englishman? Or was it the other way around?

The version they now heard must have disappointed them. Norway was in a period of strong national awakening and seeking independence from the union with Sweden, and here around the table sat the leading characters of the new national movement. Even so, it was a pleasant gathering with celebratory toasts, though some may have been more reserved than originally planned. Slingsby, red in the face, thanked them in

hesitant but entirely understandable Norwegian.

### Norwegian Mountain Weather:

It rained steadily at Røysheim: Mohn relaxed with friends while Slingsby practised his Norwegian, learning more of their culture.



When a patch of blue sky eventually appeared, Slingsby was set on attempting the Smörstabb-tindane having seen these peaks earlier on the way in. Mohn joined him but they were turned back by a violent thunderstorm and took shelter at Böverkinnhalsen. The next morning, the more experienced, and perhaps weary Mohn pointed out that the cold and the fresh snow made climbing impossible and wisely returned to Røysheim. The

Englishman felt compelled to give it a try, promising to turn back if the weather worsened. "I allowed myself to be persuaded by my own overconfidence" he later admitted. Inevitably, he found névé like cast iron and had to cut steps. After almost an hour he found snow, then winds stronger than he had ever experienced. Visibility shrank to a few metres as he first dropped to his knees then lay flat so as not to be blown off the ridge, yet he continued towards 2208m Store Smörstabbtind.

Eventually he came onto an arete, only to be stopped by a vertical drop. Razor-sharp ice needles struck him hard. His unlined cloth cap with earflaps and a handkerchief across his face gave little protection. Fortunately, he had warm wool mittens. Icicles hung from his beard, and frost fringed his eyebrows and eyelashes. Time to turn back?

Slingsby pushed on and at last the wind eased though still too fierce to head into it. Instead, he angled northwest up 2170m Loftet and could soon shake the ice from his beard and empty his pockets of snow. He took shelter behind the cairn built by Theodor Broch in 1827. His descent was hazardous but luck was on his side and he reached Røysheim late in the afternoon, soaked and cold, but unharmed. No one there had noticed the storm, but they believed him when he told them all about his day.

**Via Nordfjord to Sunnmøre:** On 5<sup>th</sup> August they rode through Brätådalen to shoulder their rucksacks and walk over into Sunndalen and Hjelle for the night. All in dreadful weather which continued for three days when a local lad guided them through flooded streams and on poor tracks over Flobjellet to then ride past Haugen (now Fivelstad). Their lodging was familiar to Mohn and, armed with ice-axes, they joined the farm folk on a bear hunt on the slopes of 1717m Kvitægga.

On 8<sup>th</sup> they took their leave, walked down Norangsdalen and over a col but, curiously, neither of them wrote about the impressive peaks they passed such as 1564m Slogen: Were they shrouded in cloud or were they keeping them secret for another day?

That evening they boarded the steamer to Ålesund. Passing the mouth of Hjørundfjorde, if it was clear they would have seen the sharp alpine peak Likkjedalstindane at the entrance to Molladalen, but again they did not report this.

**Confusing Peaks:** Out in the streets around his Ålesund hotel, Slingsby realised the many similarities between the Norwegian words he heard and the Yorkshire dialect from his home county. Here they also had the chance to read the first newspapers and Slingsby did not like the way he was being portrayed.

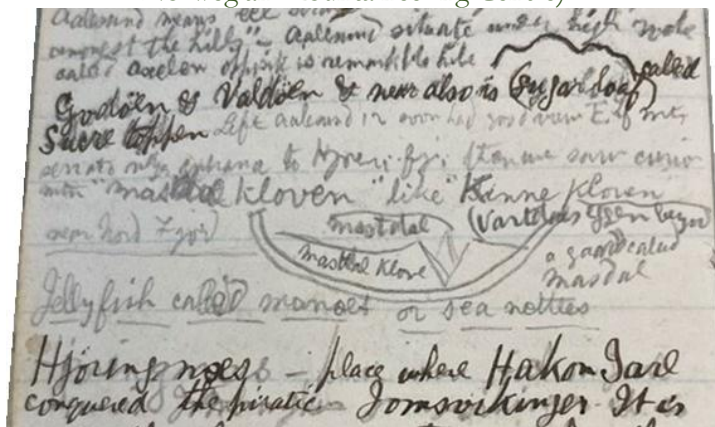
In Ålesund they also made time for the photograph at the start of this article. The result was, in Mohn's opinion, poor, and Slingsby likely never used the picture publicly. Both men appear tired, worn, and a little dishevelled.

On the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, the coastal steamer left Ålesund for Örsta. Slingsby kept his telescope trained on the mountains, searching for a particular summit which he'd seen on his first visit to Norway, 1432m Gluggentind (Kolåstinden) the "king" of the Sunnmøre peaks. He waited

for the moment when the mountain would appear briefly through the strange cleft of the Masdalskloven. Later, from Örsta, he was able to study the peak from both west and east. "Some of my most delightful memories of Norse travel centre round a walk which Emanuel Mohn and I took one lovely evening in August 1876, through the Folstaddal from Ørstenvik (Ørsta) to (Store) Standal. The especial loveliness of this valley was then enhanced by a glorious sunset, which gilded the towers of Kjölaastind as they stood proudly out of the light and iridescent clouds which draped the ridges.

### Slingsby's Notebook

Slingsby made copious notes on his trips. This is part of a page is from his 1876 notebook (courtesy of the Norwegian Mountaineering Centre).



Among those placenames and routes there's a sketch of Masdalskloven closely matching a recent photograph.



For Slingsby, Kolåstinden was like a Gothic cathedral, with hundreds of spires separated by deep, dark valleys. Lower peaks lay around it with their jagged crests and blue glaciers, wild enough, but never as beautiful as the mountain that dominated them. Mohn regarded the peak as something exceptional and only wished it had a glacier at its foot and snow-filled gullies which he felt, would have made it stand out even more!

He also noticed two side valleys branching as they passed. These were said to surpass everything else Sunnmøre had to offer in terms of peak and ridge formations.

**Suspicious Circumstances:** All the beauty and hospitality they'd expected vanished on arrival the hamlet of Store-Standal. They were refused lodging everywhere, until the local ferryman was finally persuaded to spread straw on the floor for them. At least they did not have to sleep outside.

Distrust still clung to them: What were they doing here? Were they spies? They were certainly not traders. They were not painters looking for scenes. Climbing mountains *for fun*? Fortunately, trust grew with time, with the help of a local interpreter, Slingsby's attempts at the dialect, Mohn's Bergen translations, and two pairs of friendly eyes. In his notebook, Slingsby filled several pages with tales of superstition, Vikings, and trolls, enthusiastically shared by one of the locals.

**The Great Attempt:** Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August brought no steamer service, so Mohn and Slingsby seized the chance to attempt Kolåstinden, at least Slingsby did but Mohn's enthusiasm waned. After a short approach and climbing a handful of minor pinnacles, "*four or five teeth*", he preferred to sit and sketch then, possibly hindered by poor soles on his boots, turned back when the ridge became too narrow. But first he looked around in awe. Never had he seen a landscape so troll-like, so otherworldly.

Slingsby and the young local boy they had recruited as a helper, entered a side valley and came beneath what the Englishman called the magnificent Blaabreen (blue glacier). Finding a line was difficult, with only in brief glimpses of the mountains between clouds. He judged that they would have to ascend the glacier and follow the base of the southeastern arete.

All went well up to the glacier front, but they could not get onto the ice. The rock ridge to the southeast offered an alternative for some 50-60m but soon forced them back down to the glacier. Progress was poor, but Slingsby saw hope in a 25m ice tongue, rising at about 50° toward a promising ice shelf.

In many sections, this glacier tongue narrowed to a frightening degree. On one side yawned a deep blue crevasse; on the other, the ice had shrunk away from warm rock, leaving a gap of a few metres, with no visible bottom — and no way of crossing except by committing fully to the tongue itself. Unattractive, but it was the only possibility.

Slingsby began cutting large steps. Halfway across he turned to throw the rope to the boy, but he was gone. Where was he? Then Slingsby spotted him above, standing on the ridge. He had somehow found a line of easy natural steps that Slingsby had overlooked, but now he was stuck. The only way down was to return to where Slingsby stood, yet for the boy it was unthinkable to step out onto the ice tongue.

Slingsby realised that to continue, he would be climbing solo, hardly the material for admission to the Alpine Club, perhaps, but he couldn't let the opportunity pass.

**The King of the Sunnmøre Peaks:** Progress was slow through a maze of crevasses towards a steep icefall near the centre of Blåbreen, where the ice was covered with hard snow. Then he felt it: The freshly greased new soles from Ålesund were a mistake. No nails for bite, he began to slip. It became dangerous so he retreated.

Back on the southeastern rib, he had to cut steps again up hard unyielding snow and ice. With one hand he swung the half-kilo ice axe; with the other he steadied himself against the steep wall, moving boot by nail-less boot. Only after 40-50m did the glacier's slope ease, becoming snow-covered making walking possible again.

Looking upwards he had no visibility. Somewhere above him, he knew, the glacier rose to its highest point. At every exposed spot he hacked away heaps of snow or left other markers, to make sure he could find his way back.

Amid the greyness and whiteness, he must have lost his sense of direction; no one has ever established exactly where he actually went. Crevasses were everywhere. Far above, in brief glimpses, he sensed an arc of wild towers and spires. Some were visible, connected; others stood alone, jutting out of the snow. Between them: openings and abysses. Seen through the mist, the summits appeared huge and unreachable - until he came close enough to make out natural steps. But which one was the highest? Which was the king?

**Sensing the Summit Through the Mist:** Through the swirling mist, and likely in growing frustration, Slingsby made out two parallel summit pinnacles, either of which could be the true high point. He pulled himself up the higher of the two as if climbing a tree. The top was so exposed that there was no room to stand, but in the freezing wind he managed to place a small stone there before retreating immediately.

He climbed down into a notch between the two pinnacles. From there he saw peaks floating like boats on a sea of cloud, at times completely swamped by them. Then, suddenly, he caught sight of yet another tower, surely higher still. He wasn't going to give up and found the going easy for a while along natural ledges until the wind strengthened and becoming truly punishing, "madness to linger", he thought, as yet another turret of rock loomed out of the mist. Was it higher? No way of knowing, so frustrated, he turned back.

Following his earlier marks, he made his way down. His young companion was waiting safely in the valley below the glacier. Back in the hamlet by the fjord, Slingsby was warmly congratulated. Later he reflected "I shall not attempt to defend the practice of solitary climbing. On the contrary, I condemn it severely. Still, I state my belief that most of my Alpine friends would have done as I did under similar conditions."

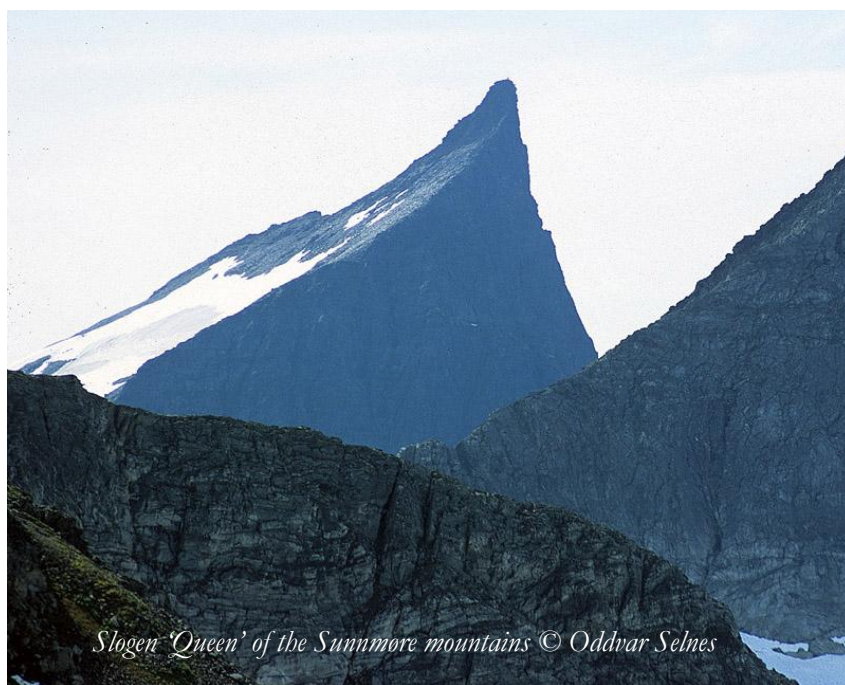
Slingsby made no secret of his uncertainty as to whether he had reached the true summit - local climbers have since been clear that he almost certainly didn't. Yet with nothing but his ice axe, and no nails in his boots, he had undeniably carried out a solo achievement far beyond the ordinary.

After his final metres on Store Skagastølstind, the assault on Blåbreen and his climb up the southeastern ridge practically to the top of this 'King' should be ranked as his second most demanding solo effort among all the summits and glacier routes he and Mohn attempted that year.

**Mountains Are Ugly!** On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August they took the steamer into Hjørundfjorden, bound for Sæbø village. They saw new mountains rising with sheer and seemingly inaccessible walls. The gullies were riven apart, even wilder and more forbidding than the cliffs themselves. Mohn had been here the previous year and, always forward-thinking, wanted to sketch a panorama while Slingsby noted peaks he thought might be climbable.

The last miles from Sæbø were rowed to the head of the fjord at Bjørke. The companions absorbed everything the dramatic landscape revealed, while one of the rowers delivered his blunt verdict: “The mountains are ugly!”

Neither of the two travellers mentioned the distinctive 1564m Slogen by name. This is odd, given Slingsby’s fascination with pyramid-shaped peaks, often with glaciers close by. It would be almost exactly eight years later, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1884, that Slingsby finally stood on the summit of this ‘Queen’ of the Sunnmøre mountains.



*Slogen 'Queen' of the Sunnmøre mountains © Oddvar Selnes*

### **Running Out of Time:**

Time was pressing. Their boots must by now be worn out, and both men exhausted which would account for them taking horse transport from Bjørke up to the station at Kalvatn. There they found no food, no coffee, no milk, nothing. So, they may have crossed Kivisdalen toward Grodås on empty stomachs, which might explain why

they later wrote appreciatively about the blueberries they ate at the col.

In the August 10pm gloom, they reached Grodås and its tourist hotel. A good night’s sleep awaited them, with the moon shining through the window.

Early on 13<sup>th</sup> August, they were rowed westward across Hornindalsvatnet. The village schoolmaster was at the oars teaching as they went, leading Slingsby to fill more pages in his notebook with details about the flora, fauna, houses, and local customs.

In the final hour of their marathon journey, they walked from the head of the lake out to Nordfjord-Eid. After tea at the hotel, they were rowed out to the steamer Hornelen. On the way, Mohn fumbled with an oar and even fell inside the rowing boat. One wonders how exhausted they both must have been.

**Sensational Arrivals:** Two days later they landed in Bergen. The newspapers reported that they caused a sensation in their “tourist costumes.” Slingsby checked in at a hotel, while Mohn went home to his father.

Their next days were spent in Bergen and among Mohn’s circle of friends. Slingsby’s Norwegian was now good enough that he could follow conversations. He was invited to dinner by the Mohn family before he finally left for England on 19<sup>th</sup> August after six weeks in Norway.

**An Exceptional Month of Mountaineering:** With only limited help from the guide Lykken and two young boys, the pair had, in a single expedition, ascended on foot around 18,000m. In map distance they had covered well over 500km on foot, without accounting for all the detours. They were on the move for roughly thirty days, aside from a few rest days. The daily stages amounted to 20-30km, often with a major summit included. Slingsby added further mileage with his three risky, perhaps reckless, solo climbs. In addition, he had climbed the last 140m up then down the final tower of Store Skagastølstind.

Their climbing shook the Norwegian national consciousness to its core. Norwegian mountaineering gained a foundation which soon became more solid and grew in scope.

As for Slingsby and Mohn, their friendship endured through good conversations, visits, and letters for as long as both lived. They exchanged information and observations about peaks, glaciers, snow, weather, natural history, and the mountain world. They shared the same circle of friends, but, as far as the records show, never again undertook a major climb together.

Their ascents eventually increased Slingsby’s profile in British and Alpine climbing circles. Slingsby with Hastings, Collie and Mummery were later described as one of the most skilful and adventurous teams ever to confront the Lake District mountains.

However, no Norwegian roped together with any climber from another country has ever been subjected to the kind of harsh and persistent criticism that Mohn was forced to endure in the years that followed. But that is another story.

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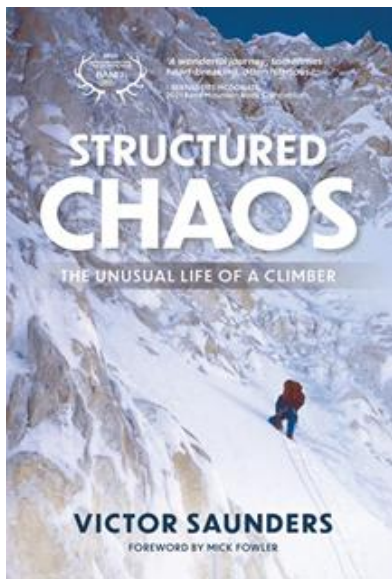
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# Book Reviews

Both of these books are now available in the Lowstern library. From Vertebrate Publishing they each measure about 23cm by 15cm, have around 170 to 180 pages, and are priced at £14.95 besides being available from the publisher's Sheffield office.



## **Structured Chaos: The Unusual Life of a Climber by Victor Saunders**

As our principal guest at this year's Annual Dinner Victor inscribed a copy of this his most recent book for the Club. He is a Boardman-Tasker award winning author and Structured Chaos won the non-fiction Mountain Literature award at the 2021 Banff mountain book competition.

Through thirteen chapters and an epilogue Victor describes his progression from childhood in Malaysia, through climbing canal walls in London, and the eccentricity of climbing on clay cliffs to expeditions in the Greater Ranges. These kindly but candid philosophical accounts documenting his developing friendships, adventures, successes and failures are well written and helpfully illustrated with over fifty colour photographs.

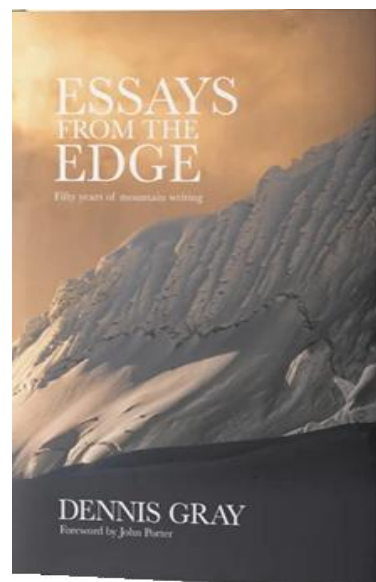
My favourite chapter is Hanging on a Telephone which includes being avalanched while in a tent which eventually results in him being charged under the Indian 1885 Telegraph Act. If you were at the Dinner, then you've met the man, you've heard him talk, now read the book and find out a little about his early life and a lot more about his adventures.

## **Essays from the Edge by Dennis Gray**

From his personal experience Dennis has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the people, significant ascents and issues involved in climbing, especially in Yorkshire. To hear him speak for over an hour without notes recalling detailed descriptions is impressive.

These twenty-one of Dennis's previously published essays, many from Footless Crow or the Alpine Journal, cover interesting incidents and colourful characters from British mountaineering, and issues such as competition climbing and trespass. They are spread across fifty years of his writing starting in the 1970s but most are from this century.

As John Porter wrote in his foreword, they are 'intelligent, well-written and insightful essays.' Catherine Moorehead edited the collection and any one of the essays would make a good read on a quiet evening at Lowstern.



# New Journals in the Lowstern Library



## Craven Pothole Club Records 157-160

If you know members of the CPC then you will want to consult Howard Beck's piece in No.157 on their nicknames. Thunderbird and Muffin are YRC members. 1947 saw the discovery of human corpses from Trow Ghyll and Gaping Ghyll resulting in speculation that they may have been lone rambblers or German spies. The original Craven Herald and other reports of the incidents and court proceedings are presented in full in the same issue including evidence from an earlier YRC descent. An experiment in AI generated potholing images resulted in depictions of unsafe practice.

For an undated early account of arrangements made for ladies visiting Stump Cross Caverns to discretely change from crinolines and bonnets into more suitable 'coarse hempen habiliments' and headscarves, see issue 158. This also includes a piece on Cliff Downham's 1932 handover of the £8 Bancroft Winch later used at Alum Pot and GG. In the same issue is a short account of a descent of Leck Fell's Shuttleworth Pot to see its impressive decorations -its entrance was only created in 2010.

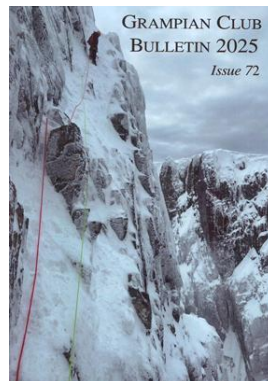
The CPC's County Fermanagh meet is reported in issue 159. John Sutcliffe appears again in connection with Magpie Mine and the Limestone Way in issue 160. Armchair masochists may read of plunging into arctic frozen lakes, while for those who prefer to stay unfrozen and coherent, a non-technical outing is described of a trip through Cligga Head Mine in Cornwall. A full and entertaining account of the Mulu Caves Project 2024 includes Andy Eavis. The thirty or so members of this expedition explored and surveyed about 8km of new passage, a new entrance and a completely new cave.



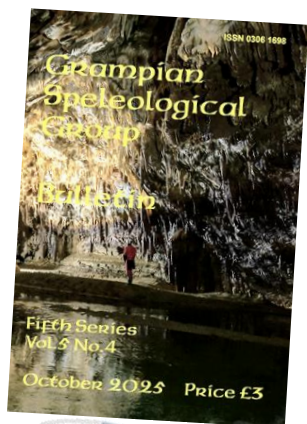
## Grampian Club Bulletin 2025, Issue 72

The broken key incident resulting in our problems getting into Inbhirfhaolain are reported in this issue of the GC's Bulletin. The replacement set of keys are now clearly tagged.

Their December working party encountered a problem our work meets have not yet met: a cold spell had frozen leaves and water into the gutters preventing them being cleared. On the mountains advice for those attempting the Cullin Ridge an interesting account of two members' ascent of Rowaling's 5630m Yalung Ri as part of a larger guided group; Alf Barnard's achievement of the SMC Full House, that's Munro Tops, Corbetts, Grahams, Donalds, and Furths; the demanding Mardi Himal trek; the John Muir Way; the Skye Trail and much more.



## Grampian Speleological Group Bulletin, October 2024 and October 2025



The more recent issue discusses the exploration of new caves. It related the responsibilities of those engaged in such activities to CSI first attenders at a crime scene. There is a duty to disturb nothing until it is properly recorded for later publication. Floor deposits are cited as potentially being valuable sources of information though it is recognised that there are circumstances in some very active streamways there are limits to what is practical.

For the techies there is an article asserting that ‘Every raindrop carries a cosmic fingerprint.’ It describes an experiment measuring meteoric  $^{10}\text{Be}$  deposition in Elphin. The beryllium-10 is formed through the interaction of cosmic rays with our atmosphere. Currently they are collecting baseline data.

### The Alpine Journal 2025

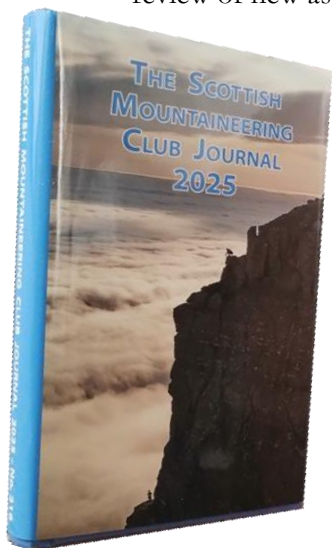


This year’s Annual Dinner’s principal guest, Victor Saunders provides the lead article, ‘Footsteps of My Forebears: The First Ascent of Yawash Sar’ where we can read in more detail his 2025 ascent with Mick Fowler.

There’s much more than just reports of expeditions in the AJ: science, the environment, history, literature, and art. In that last category is a piece our member Rod Smith was working on when he died so suddenly last year (the YRC supplied his obituary for this issue). Rod’s article describes the Francis William Helps sketches of Somervell and Dorjay Passang made on the 1924 Everest Expedition, setting them in the context of the expedition. In the history section is an article on Reginald Farrer’s botanical and mountaineering work. Research findings explain how trees initiate cloud formation over high mountains many miles away.

Roughly half the volume is specifically about recent mountaineering and half of the is a review of new ascents worldwide – the Area Notes and brief MEF expedition reports.

### The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal 2025



The Scottish Highlands figure large the memories of many of our members. It is not that long ago since weekends snatched in February and at Easter plus a week at Whitsuntide were the most that our active members could manage to prepare for a couple of summer weeks in the Alps. If you have memories of poor ice or snow conditions when running out of daylight and needing more rope to reach a belay, then the first couple of articles will bring back the nightmares.

If you have watched the sea eagles on Mull then Hamish Brown has a poem in this issue you should read. The Unspoken Rule of Alpine Climbing deals amusingly with toilet etiquette on belay ledges. Greenland, Romantic paintings and etchings, competitions, and many of our favourite mountain areas are covered in this issue.

# Club Proceedings

## Yorkshire Ramblers' Club 133<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting

At the AGM, held at the St John's Methodist Church Hall, Settle, 15<sup>th</sup> November, our President took the Chair with 37 members present as the meeting started and more arriving a little later. and held a minute's silence in memory of those who had died since the last AGM Richard Gowing, John Lloyd, David Martindale, Clive Rowland, Arthur Salmon, Rod Smith and Angie Linford, a friend to many members. The meeting's business was then conducted efficiently allowing time for queries to be discussed.

In his mid-term address, the President thanked the officers, committee members, post holders and meet leaders for their hard work in ensuring the smooth running of the Club and called for new volunteers to help develop the Club and to lead meets. The meets programme had gone well, Skye was a standout, the Ecrins had great weather for alpine mountaineering, but the Long Walk only had a small turnout and may need reconsidering. A new and expanded WhatsApp community and an Instagram account had proved to be very successful. A new woodstore and shed had been erected at Lowstern to facilitate the refurbishment project. A new agreement (the Tim Josephy Accord) with the Climbers' Club to agree easier access to each other's huts at member's rates is about to be finalised and the Reciprocal Rights subcommittee is working on a survey to obtain members views.

Honorary Membership was conferred on Richard Josephy with the unanimous support of the meeting in recognition of his unstinting service to the Club as Huts Booking Secretary since 1996 and as a committee member from 2006 to 2024.

Financially the Club is in a good position, helped by the subscription increase, with funds available to cover the cost of planned work on the Lowstern washrooms and the drying room. Broadly, this year across the two huts the income covered the expenditure: the deficit at LHG being covered by the surplus at Lowstern. Although bed nights at LHG had improved, overall huts use was still lower than several years ago, which remains a concern.

Membership now numbers 155: five new Members; three resignations; and six deaths. There are seven new Prospective Members, 14 in all.

Officers and other post holders for the coming year are:

President	Ged Campion	Membership Secretary	Helen Smith
President-Elect	David Large	Meets Secretary	Tim Josephy
Vice President	Conrad Tetley	Editor	Michael Smith
Hon. Treasurer	Martyn Trasler	Librarian	
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	Mick Borroff

Elected committee members are:

Toby Dickinson, Rory Newman, Steve Richards, Helen Smith and Tom Spencer.

One application to the Special Development Fund had been received, and financial support was given towards the cost of alpine skills training by a Guide on the Ecrins Meet.

# Chippings



## Snowshoeing in the Vercors

After a previous winter trip to the Vercors in France (see YRCJ 2019, p120-124), Mick Borroff returned this year for a fortnight's further exploration. While a massive dump of snow had fallen around Christmas and much was still in place, valley temperatures of 17½°C on the approach to the massif were concerning. Fortunately, there was more overnight snow on several days but this was accompanied by consequent increased avalanche risk requiring prudent route choice. The weather was dominated by a high-pressure system providing clear skies on most days. From the summits, the usual fabulous views of the snow-capped alpine arc and the adjacent Ecrins, Chartreuse and Belladonne summits were enjoyed. He undertook a variety of raquette routes in different areas from a base in La Chapelle-en-Vercors: Mick will happily provide further details.



*From the top: The blue hills of Drome from Port d'Urle; Mick near the Collet des Clots, Vallon de la Fange; La Moucherotte looking to the Chartreuse massif*



## Speleo-entomology – A YRC First

Cuthbert Hastings joined the YRC in 1900 and was an enthusiastic potholer having explored Gavel Pot in 1885 with his brother Geoffrey several years before the YRC was formed. He was also a keen photographer and we have some thirty caving-related glass plate photos attributed to him.

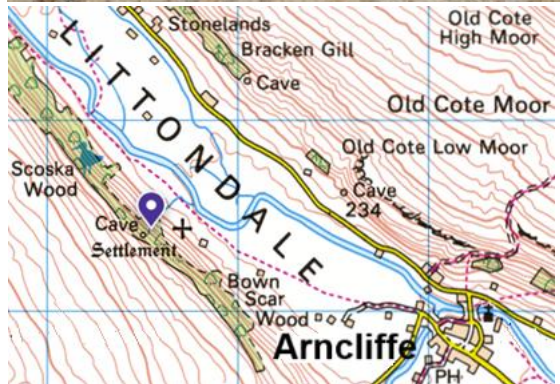
Scoska Cave in Littondale was first explored on a YRC meet in 1905 when a female skeleton was discovered (YRC 1906-7, 2(7):229). Hastings visited it in 1910 and noted a population of hibernating moths on the wall (YRC 1911, 3(11):269). These are Tissue moths - *Triphosa dubitata*, (previously known as *Scotosia dubitata*). In 1914 he returned to photograph them (right) and these are the earliest records for Scoska known to the Yorkshire Moth Recorders. Scoska Cave holds one of the biggest over-wintering populations in the country and counts are sometimes over 300. One of the Recorders, Dr Charles Fletcher, kindly supplied a colour image for comparison.

Moths enter the caves in August and leave in April, so they are there for a large proportion of the year. So if you are underground in this period, keep your eyes open in the entrance passages. (MB)

Those moths were not his only observation in this cave. The January 1920 issue of *Natural History for the North of England* (later *The Naturalist*) on page 142 reports that “Hastings recently sent ... some diptera ... the fly seen early in the year on windows, like a small house fly with a reddish abdomen, called *Blepharoptera serrata* L. As he stated, flies could be found hibernating in ...

Giggleswick Scars [caves] [w]here we found numbers of the gnat or mosquito *Culex pipiens* L. ... all females, and much lighter in colour than specimens seen in summer; also two species of fungus gnats.”

Cuthbert canoed down the Lune (with Geoffrey), placed an iron ladder in Gable Pot stream passage in 1885, was on the 1904 first descent of Rift Pot, aged 53 joined the army and served long in the East African swamps. Only increasing deafness caused him to decline the Presidency of the YRC. (MS)



## Lowstern Gathering from Hull, Skipton, Bristol and Norwich



This group, most of whom met in 2023 climbing in Kalymnos, used our clubhouse for a reunion and to go climbing with less risk of sunburn or dehydration than when they met previously.

At Robin Proctor Scar, most enjoyed Wheels of Fire where the dilemma was whether or not to use the mono mid-way up. At Attermire and the 6as and 6bs were thoroughly enjoyed on Gorgon Buttress.

Besides the climbing, chatting and the meal there were other social activities.

The lawn above the ha-ha provided space for some highly comical hotly-contested rounds of musical chairs, as well as a version of hungry hippos which involved two teams

creating human wheel-barrows to run/crawl as fast as they could to gather as many quickdraws as possible. Lowstern has seen some sights over the years but that last one must be one of the more creative activities.

You may be able to spot Nick, Tom, James and Imogen in these photos.





If you are wondering what a 'mono' is then it is a one-finger pocket hold. Using a mono requires a specific strength and technique. Used incorrectly or without adequate preparation a move with such a hold can lead to an injury.



*Above: The Hale Bop  
Experience 6a+,  
Robin Proctor Scar*



*In the red sandstone Konorcbek Canyon*

### **Kyrgyzstan's Tian Shan Mountains - 1**

Moving from Yorkshire to west London makes it easier for Fiona Smith to hop on a flight and jet off to different mountain ranges. This August it was to the furthest east of the 'Stans', Kyrgyzstan. The highlights of her visit were fording a river on horseback, trying the Kyrgyst cuisine (more horse), getting snowed on at 4000m, sitting out a thunderstorm in a Yurt, and watching the sunrise over snow-topped mountains. Her trek was six days from the Jailoo Kyzyl Suu, along the Jukku Valley to the col, across the Arabel syrt and down part way to the Issyk Kul Lake. (FS)





## Kyrgyzstan's Tian Shan Mountains - 2

As Nietzsche said: “this painting – that which we humans call life and experience – has gradually become, is indeed still fully in the process of becoming, and should thus not be regarded as a fixed object.” With this in mind, I believe it is important to continually push the boundaries of our own comfort zones and seek out adventure beyond the familiar.

Kyrgyzstan began, quite simply, as an idea - a passing thought inspired by stories I'd read about its beautiful landscapes and untamed wilderness. On a whim, I suggested to James Spreadbury that we should visit, half in jest. Before long, the offhand comment took on a life of its own, and soon enough, Nick Crapnall and Eve Allerston had also booked their flights.

We arrived in Bishkek in the very early hours of early August, with no expectations and little idea of what awaited us. Fuelled by a sense of adventure and determination, we set off into what truly felt like the unknown. Our main goal was to horse trek from Karakol to Son-Kul lake, perched at 3,000 metres. None of us had any prior experience with horse riding, yet we began our journey undeterred. We meandered through rolling hills on our steadfast horses, often without another soul in sight, spent nights in yurts beneath a canopy of stars, and shared stories late into the night. The scenery was breathtaking - vast, untouched, and seemingly endless. It's a place that, before long, will surely be discovered by more tourists, so we felt fortunate to experience its raw beauty before the western world leaves its mark.

We drank fermented horse milk from a rather dubious-looking wooden bucket, a traditional Kyrgyz drink, to which James said: “I was hoping that the more I drank, the better it would get, but it never did.” We were also fortunate enough to witness a traditional local game where men on horseback wrestled over a headless goat, aiming to toss it into a tyre.

We met a few climbers and mountaineers who told us the area was spectacular for the sport, so we've made a promise to return for a different kind of adventure. The trip was strenuous - our legs and backsides certainly felt it - but it was a journey like no other! (IC)





### **Kyrgyzstan's Tian Shan Mountains - 3**

The above members, 6000km from home, unaware of one another's plans discovered they were just 20km apart when one posted a message on social media. Unfortunately though they were then in contact, their itineraries did not allow a chance to meet up.

A few months later Michael Smith and David Anderson were at an Alpine Club lecture where the Slava Topol Project's leading medic was describing their establishing a pioneering preventive mountain rescue service to Kyrgyzstan's 7134m Pik Lenin Peak, a little southwest of the Tien Shan, in the Trans-Alay range. They were not simply going to the aid of climbers in distress but running basecamp and advanced base high-altitude clinics, treating everything from minor blisters to life-threatening High Altitude Pulmonary Edema, and being part of the transient community offering preventative safety advice. The project is a pilot to try and build a sustainable safety culture in one of the world's most demanding environments. The hope is to optimise arrangements over a few years then hand operations over to the local authorities with whom they are already working closely.

Pik Lenin is one of five Snow Leopard peaks, 7000m mountains in the former Soviet Union. Summitting one or two of these peaks demonstrates one's mountaineering capability and bagging all five gets one the coveted title of Snow Leopard – since 1961 when certificates were first awarded there have been only 705 officially awarded.

Pik Lenin is popular as it is considered the least technically demanding of the five and recently has attracted around a thousand attempts each July-August season resulting in typically five deaths a year. In 1990 43 climbers were killed during an earthquake-triggered avalanche. There were no deaths this year while the Slava Topol Project was operating.

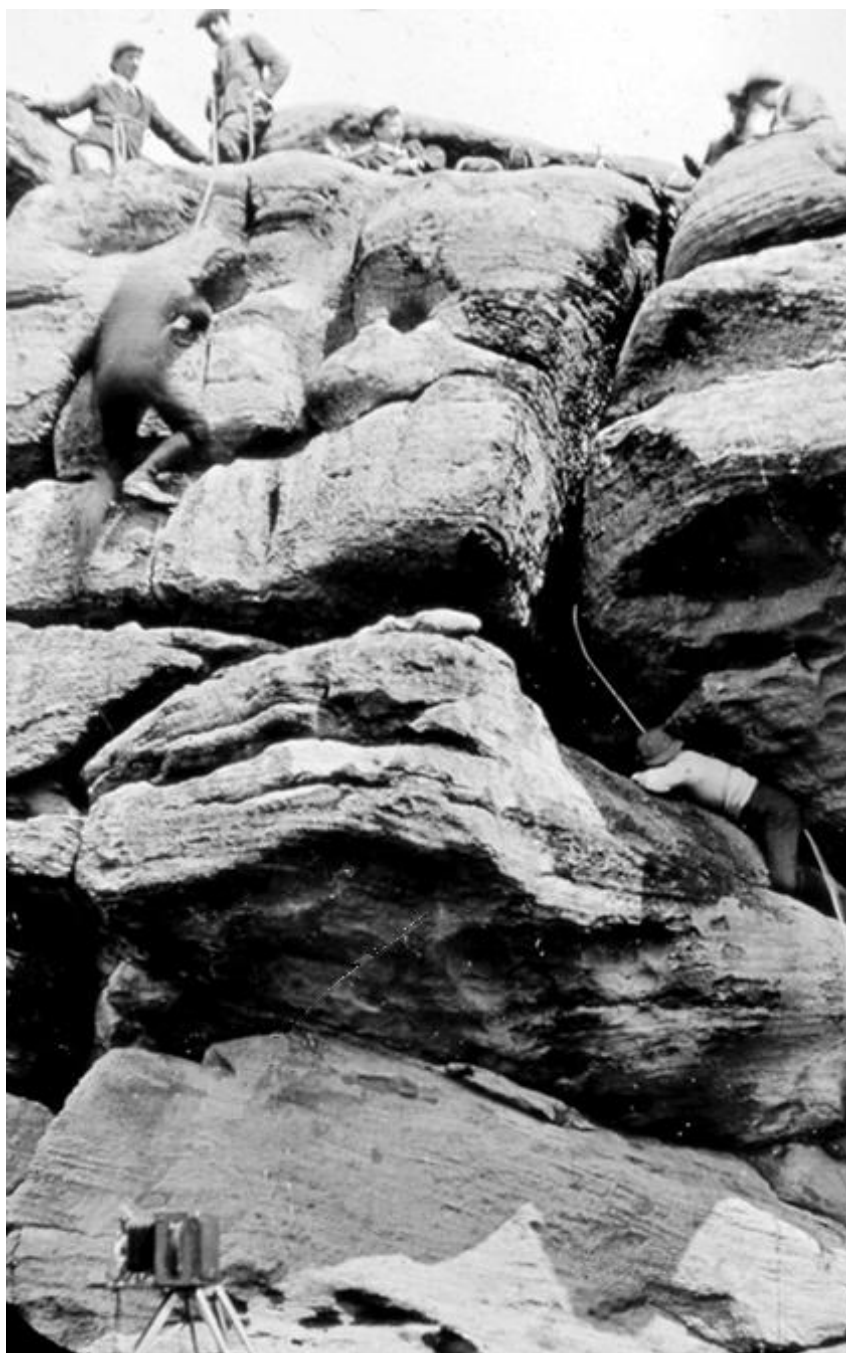
Nepal's authorities are imposing a requirement of summiting a 7000m peak before issuing a permit to attempt Everest. Not only is Pik Lenin not a technical ascent, it is more easily accessed than comparable Nepali peaks. Fly into an international airport, take a day's drive and you step out of your vehicle at Pik Lenin's 4400m basecamp – unfortunately probably feeling lousy given the sudden change in altitude as those of our members who have arrived in La Paz to climb in Bolivia will affirm. With more mountaineers having limited time it is likely that Pik Lenin will be attractive for those looking to attempt Everest.

Clearly Kyrgyzstan looks set to become one of the 'in' places for adventure travel and high-altitude mountaineering.

## YRC Glass Slide Collection

As many of you will know, the Club holds a fascinating historical collection of some 239 black and white glass slides dating back to 1892 which show past members in action caving, climbing and mountaineering etc. These were initially catalogued by Brian E. Nicholson who also copied them onto 35mm slides.

As a prelude to putting these images back on the website, the details need checking and verifying. Mick Borroff has put thumbnail images into an Excel spreadsheet, with caption, photographer, date, location and people, etc. where these are known, so that the images can be sorted easily. Mick is ready to accept suggestions for better captions.



*Original caption: Armscliff. The Goblin. J. Botterill 1908. Fat Man's Misery. The West Face routes being climbed appear to be Zig-Zag Direct VS 4c and The Goblin HS 4b according to Chris Craggs' Rockfax guide. The 1974 YMC guide gives Fat Man's Misery S as being in the middle of the northwest face, immediately left of the pulpit and going to its top. UKC extends this to descending the other side of the pulpit. (Ed)*

## Support for Members to Develop Skills

Five members on this year's alpine meet received a grant from the YRC's Special Development Fund towards the cost of their three-day alpine course provided by Tim Blakemore, an IFMGA French/British Mountain Guide.

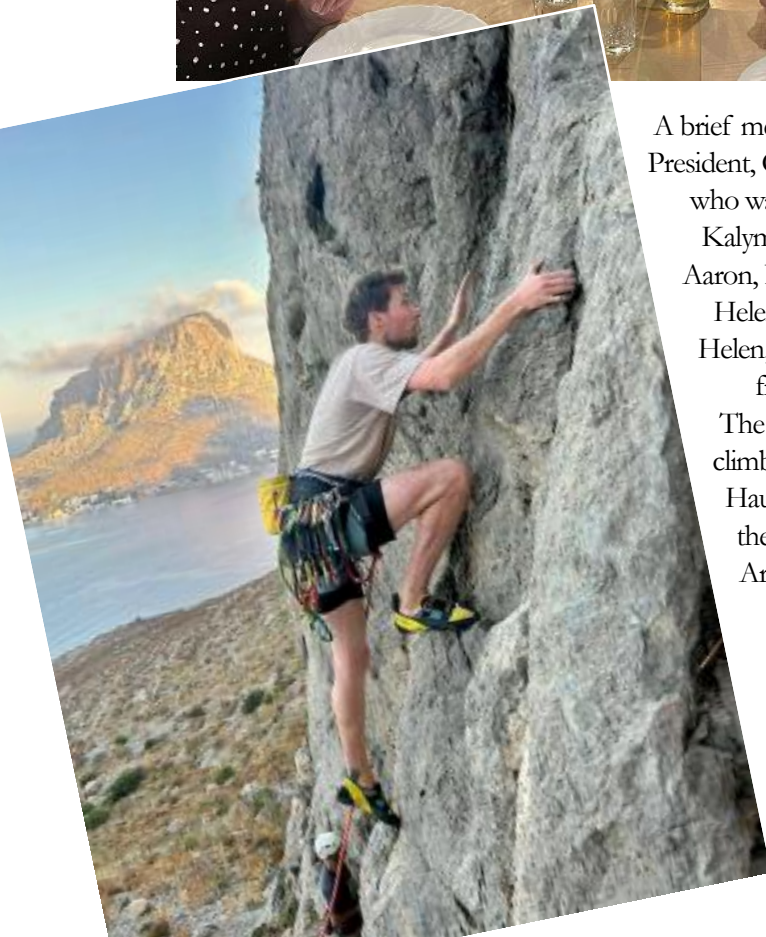
This funding scheme was introduced a year ago and our committee will consider applications from any established members. A key expectation is that the Club should benefit as well as an individual member. For example, by passing on their skills to others, using them to lead more demanding activities, giving presentations or publishing material.

## Back in Kalymnos



A brief mention of our President, Ged Campion who was back on Kalymnos with Aaron, Bev, Walter, Helen, Aerial, Helen, Nick, and friends

The pre-meal climb was Petit Haute 6a\*\*\*, the Myrties Area, Trois Ilots, The Bay.



## Crazy Horse

Chiang Mai is the Buddhist cultural heart in the Thailand's mountainous north, famous for its ancient temples such as like Wat Phra Singh and Wat Phra That on Doi Suthep mountain. Many visitors brows the vibrant Lard Yai or Sunday Walking Street market. But not for long in Imogen's case. She was out at nearby Crazy Horse Butress, about 35km or 40 minutes driving away to the north.

Crazy Horse is a well developed, iconic butress offering well protected routes across 22 compact, well defined sectors. As the main crag in Chiang Mai, the paths are well maintained and the climbing areas are relatively easy to access, with short approaches - especially when compared to Scotland.

Her party hired all the gear they needed from Main Wall in Chiang Mai and hit the 1317 road on 110cc scooters.

They were a team of three climbers - two competent and one beginner – who in a single visit completed three routes: Ding Dong (5a), Rope and Rock (5b), and Ayah! (6a). Each is around 23m and awarded two stars, which is something of a rarity in the UK. As Imogen summarised it “All in all, it was a marvellous day on good rock, spent with great new friends:



## Two on Toubkal

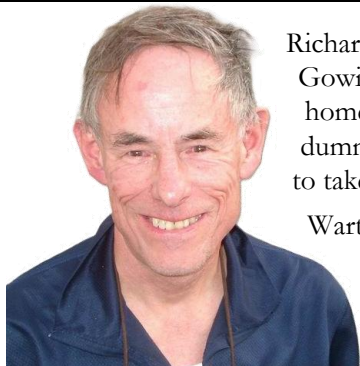
The weekend before Christmas, while many of us were out shopping or arranging things for guests, Toby Dickinson and Fiona Smith were dashing out to the Atlas and back to summit 4167m Djebel Toubkal, North Africa's highest peak. More of a challenge than the route up from the CAF refuge was getting Toby and his gear to the foot of the mountain. The former hit a passport problem and had to fly out from Manchester rather than Heathrow and then his kit bag ended up in Casablanca not Marrakech. They waited a few hours for it at Imlil with a donkey then followed the rest of their party heading for the refuge. Both summited the next day. Toubkal is having the most snowfall in eight years.



*A late start for Toby on the far left and Fiona's summit celebratuion*

# Richard Gowing 1934-2025

## Member 1956-2025



Richard was born in Billingham in July 1934 to YRC member Geoffrey Gowing and Katherine known as Kay. When war broke out his Teesside home was close to a prime military target, a chemical factory. Thankfully a dummy decoy was built and proved an effective deception sparing Richard to take up mountaineering and caving.

Wartime disruption delayed Richard's schooling until he was six and Red House, by Norton village green three miles away, was requisitioned as a school. Soon the school was evacuated first to Saltburn on the coast, then Helmsley for greater safer. He sang in the CofE church choir

twice on Sundays. Richard relished the freedom of spending his spare time cycling through the local woods exploring. Selected aged 13 for being academic, Richard transferred to Oundle School there, both suffering from measles in the sanatorium, he met David Stembridge three years younger but a walking companion during their recovery and often on meets thereafter.

In Borrowdale, Bentley Beetham of early Everest fam, took Richard up his first rock climb. Then early member Alexander Rule proposed him for YRC membership.

Richard's two-years national service was with the Royal Signals in the Tofrek Barracks at Hildesheim, Lower Saxony. His German improved rapidly as his colleague would only speak German to him unless he was really confused. Richard then studied chemistry at St. Johns College, Oxford where he made a life-long friendship with Darrell Farrant who he subsequently introduced to the YRC. From there Richard joined the Transport Section of British Nuclear Fuels at Windscale (later Sellafield) power station and in 1965 went to Japan for a year commissioning a British-designed nuclear power station at Tokai, north of Tokyo.

While at Tokai, Richard made a week's camping and hut round of several peaks in the rugged Northern Alps including the highest, 3185m Oku, via the north-northeast ridge of Mae-Hodaki, a Cullin-like scramble. He described the trip in presentations to the YRC and AC.

Richard then worked on systems for moving radioactive material. He published papers and presenting them at conferences across Europe. For the Institution of Nuclear Engineers, he gave engineers tours of the THORP reprocessing plant. His specialism was the transport of highly radioactive spent fuel rods. One of his lasting designs developed the fifty-ton rail waggon-mounted Excellox flask: improving its: internal support, shock-absorption, neutron shielding, and capacity. In 1984 one flask was filled with steel bars and water before a Deisel locomotive was driven into it at over 90mph – it survived with only cosmetic damage. The train was destroyed. This public confidence-building demonstration made the evening's national television news. The design has moved through several iterations and BNFL operate 170 of them. Proud of this design – a scale model of the flask sat on his study desk - Richard was delighted to be invited to the roll-out of the latest version.

Back in the mid-1960s, one Elizabeth Tyson was dating a chap who in conversation mentioned his friend Richard as a charming young man who climbed and was living in Japan. Elizabeth thought Richard sounded the more exciting of the two, and on his return arranged for him to call at her nurses' home and collect her, most properly from the lobby, to go out for a meal.

Their second date included a long walk near Buttermere where, soaked in a downpour, they sheltered in the Fish Hotel for tea and scones. They kept in touch by letter after Richard was recalled to Japan. The frequency of his letters arriving at the nurses' home caused comment. He was an entertaining and expansive letter writer. His correspondence with Club members were always informative once one had deciphered his scrawl.

On his return Richard and Elizabeth married in 1967 with Darrell as best man. In 1968 Emma Loise was born. The following year, Victoria was born prematurely but her life was short. Sarah completed their family in 1973 welcomed at just five days old. Throughout the 57 years of their marriage, Elizabeth strove, largely unsuccessfully, to get Richard to sit still as he would much rather be out walking, caving or climbing.

Darrell took a house master post at St Bees, several miles from Richard's workplace, they met up regularly after work for a walk followed by a pint, and for weekend outings in western Lakes. Notable were Richard leading Darrell up Napes Needle and rocking the top block to the latter's discomfort, and walking across both a frozen Red Tarn and Ullswater. When Richard moved on to Annan power station, they enjoyed many ascents and rock climbs in Scotland with Richard leading the pitches.

On YRC meets, Richard was a regular on Long Walks, in Wales, in the Lakes, and on Social Meets with Elizabeth. Scotland too, with a creditable 1967 Cullin Ridge top-to-top time under 14 hours accompanied by Roger Allen and David Smith. Thirty years later he was snowed in on the Braemar meet. On the dismally wet two-day St Cuthbert's Way long walk, somewhere in the agricultural land approaching Jedburgh, Richard's navigation went awry so he summoned a recovery car but then had to enquire at a house to determine his location.

Richard's international travels included Australia, southern Spain where he lived for a year or so, and of course the Alps. Despite his rigorous scientific background evident in his published academic papers, his Alpine climbing companions remember a miscalculation in preparing their soup from a packet – vast quantities but little flavour.



In 2001 Richard joined the AC's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in Zermatt, climbing the 4160m Breithorn. He was also a member of the Oxford University MC. Richard's last rock climb was Bristly Ridge on Glyder Fach with fellow AC member Robin Quine.

A founder member of the Oxford University Cave Club in 1957, Richard kept a diary recording all their expeditions during their first year. He spoke of these trips at their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event and recounted both the first and anniversary meets to GB in the Mendips.

Outdoor activities recently became more challenging, though aged 85 he climbed The Cloud with Emma and celebrated with a bottle of fizz. During the 2020 Covid restrictions he contributed to the YRC's substitute 'Long Walk' with a solo few miles along the Cockshoot ancient, cobbled path and part of the Macclesfield Canal towpath. A year later he managed the Introductory meet, the Dinner and the Christmas meet. But for the 2022 Dinner he sent his apologies as he was "under the knife."

Often a quiet and quietly spoken man, those who took time to converse with Richard were well rewarded by his fund of experiences. He was well-informed across diverse fields including mountaineering history, classical music, railways, mechanics and technology.

He was survived by Elizabeth, their children Emma Louise and Sarah Helen, sons-in-law Jerry and Dave, grandchildren Megan and Harry, Megan's partner Matt and great-granddaughter Darcey-Mae. Sadly, Elizabeth too died shortly afterwards. (DF, MS, ELG)

# Major David Hall 1945-2025

## Member 1989-2025



David George Hall was born in Ormskirk, the youngest of three children. From an early age his world was one of fresh air, adventures and challenges. A fall from a tree, breaking a femur when he was ten years old, served only to increase the resilience, strength and thirst for adventure that was the thread that ran through his whole life. His time in Cadets in the last years at school helped build the reliability, discipline and the “steel” that carried him forward into adulthood.

David’s aim was for a military career, and in due course he joined the Royal Engineers, but subsequently had to return home to support his mother after his father was killed in a road traffic accident. The experience he gained whilst in the Engineers remained, and when he was able return to the military, it was to the Parachute Regiment as a Reservist, eventually being commissioned as Major. Later, when he felt he was ready, he applied for selection to the Special Forces Reserves, which was always his personal goal. He was given his own squadron in 1984, his duties including the selection and training of recruits for the Regiment. This involved many of the activities for which the SAS is well known, examples recalled by his SAS colleagues include being parachuting into the North Sea, midnight drops into dense undergrowth, and the like. He commanded his squadron successfully for several years until he retired.

David was respected for his decisiveness, intelligence and calm authority, characteristics invaluable in the SAS, just as they were when, alongside his military commitments, he qualified and worked as a teacher to disadvantaged boys, giving them much needed direction in their lives, an experience he found both interesting and sad.

In the mid-1980s, along with Kate, his first wife, he opened the Base Camp shop in Ilkley, and quickly established a reputation for selling good outdoor equipment, and for giving customers sound advice, well-grounded in his own personal experiences. His encyclopaedic knowledge and first-hand use of the equipment he sold were qualities quite rare in the outdoor gear trade, both then and now.

He inevitably quickly attracted custom from YRC members living in and around Ilkley. Knowledge of his business spread within the Club, and his advice was sought by members across the country. He gave good advice to Michael Smith and fellow YRC members in 1988 when they were planning the climbing expedition to the Bolivian Apolobamba, this being the first significant overseas expedition for the Club for many years.

In 1989 David was invited to apply for membership of the YRC, and he subsequently served on the Club’s committee from 1993 to 1998.

He attended a number of meets in the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, Scotland, and notably the Bosigran climbing meet in Cornwall, but his over-riding interest was in skiing.

David was a great enthusiast for free heel skiing, mountain tours on Nordic equipment and telemark skiing, both on and off piste. Starting in the mid-1990s, over a number of years, he joined with YRC members Alan Blackshaw, Kevin Brown, John Mclean and others from New Zealand and Norway in winter visits to the Alps, staying in Alan's apartment in Le Tour at the head of the Chamonix Valley. They explored the many pisted areas in the Chamonix Valley, though Kevin mentions they sometimes struggled to control the long metal edged skis with their soft leather boots and the old Rottefella toe bindings. The focus was on learning to do telemark turns but really it was about spending as much time as possible on skinny skis. One long day was usually spent each year skiing down from the Aiguille du Midi to Chamonix.

In 1992 the Slingsby Project, the celebration of the YRC's first hundred years, took many members to various parts of Norway. For his part, David and a group of other YRC members were in the Jotunheim, on a hut-to-hut tour on skis, and climbing peaks.

Further afield, in Colorado in 1993 with Alan Blackshaw and Kevin Brown, David skied on the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division trail from Vail to Aspen, a multi-day challenging backcountry adventure requiring significant planning and experience. Patrick Fagan of the Eagle Ski Club also joined them on this tour.

In 1995 the four of them were back in North Norway where in poor weather conditions they made a ski tour into Dividalen, east to Kilpisjarvi, a remote Arctic village in Finland's Lapland, including climbing Halti, Finland's highest peak on the border with Norway, and Rastuurdahadi. As a renowned seller of top skiing equipment, David was singularly unimpressed when they encountered a Finn with Nokia wellies mounted on his skis. Two years later, David, Alan and Kevin were in Peyto Lakes, Alberta, Canada on a ski trip that unfortunately had to be shortened because of extreme avalanche risk. Back in Norway the following year, with Patrick Fagan and Kevin, they skied from Lakselv to Kautakeino, in poor visibility and with very low temperatures.

Kate, David's first wife, unfortunately died in 1999. Six years later David married Lynda and fully embraced her three teenage children, not as stepchildren, but as his own family. The Base Camp business kept him busy and his new, enlarged family commitments brought a wealth of new responsibilities as well as much enjoyment.

David retired from Base Camp in 2016, passing the business to two employees. Now trading as Backcountry and relocated to Otley, the business continues to thrive.

David and Lynda moved to live in southern Spain in 2019 close to Calpe, an area well known to many YRC members, and where they joined many of the ex-pats activity groups, including mountain walking groups. David joined the 2022 YRC Calpe meet for a meal.

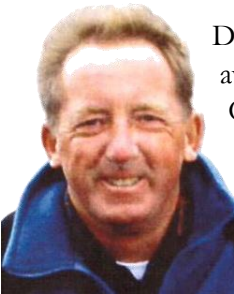
Sadly, David's final years were marked by serious ill-health, with three years of treatment and physical decline. He could no longer cope with the high temperatures of Spain, nor was he able to go hill walking, climbing, let alone skiing. He and Lynda relocated back to Settle in 2024, where he used a battery-operated wheelchair to get around town.

Until those final three years, David's life had been one of action, adventure, caring, guiding and advising others in need. He was inquisitive and interested in people and the world around him, and had lived life to the full.

Members of his SAS Squadron, former business colleagues, and climbing and skiing friends joined Lynda and family on 7th January 2026 to celebrate his life. The YRC was represented by Michael Smith, John Mclean and Alan Kay. (TAK, KB, LH)

# David Malcolm Martindale 1941-2025

## Member 1988-2025



David was born into a family of two brothers and one sister. Father was away at war, so his mother had her hands full looking after the children. One of David's earliest memories was of sheltering in the pantry during an air raid with a saucepan on his head.

His first school was Haxby Road, where he did well, winning prizes in his final year before moving on to Nunthorpe Grammar.

When still at school, his first job was as a butcher's delivery boy. He had a sit-up-and-beg bicycle with a large basket at the front piled high with orders labelled with the customer's name and address. All went well with his first delivery until he fell off, and so did the parcels and their labels. Customers who wanted pork ended up with beef, and those who wanted lamb ended up with sausages. That was his first work experience quickly finished. The paper round that followed was much easier and lasted much longer.

In 1958 David was started working at Rowntree's factory, where he had a number of roles, including in the wage office, as a computer operator, and a pensions administrator. Except for a spell at Armstrong Patents, he remained there until retirement in 1995.

He was popular and made lifelong friendships and regularly met up for a few beers and a good laugh. Few Club members will know he was a fan of Elvis, his nickname 'Deke' coming from Elvis's character Deke Rivers in the 1957 film 'Loving You'.

Sport played a big part in his life. He enjoyed playing football at school and later for local teams. He supported York City, Leeds United in their Glory Years, and Manchester United, being mesmerised, as many were, by the Holy Trinity of Best, Law & Charlton.

However, cricket was his greatest sporting passion. He was a member of Yorkshire Cricket Club for many years. Often enjoying the company more than the game, David was an impatient spectator, sometimes leaving before the end and missing some of the best action or an exciting finish. He made yearly trips to The Oval and Lord's, and then 1981, he went to watch England play in the West Indies. This was the first of 15 cricket tours. Further trips included more visits to the West Indies, Australia several times, New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

After he joined the YRC, he enjoyed sparring with Lancastrian members over the long-standing cricket rivalry. Derek Bush recalls putting the TV on for a test match and seeing David's face staring back at him.

David's walking started mainly in Yorkshire and the Lake District. Then in 1983 he and his younger brother John went north to see the ospreys at Loch Garten. Whilst there they had a couple of walks in the Cairngorm Glens. This was David's first sight of the High Tops & he was captivated. From then on he and John made regular visits to Scotland and he began climbing Munros. Their last trip together was in 2018.

He was introduced to the YRC by David Hick, also from York, and became a member in 1988. One of his first meets with the club was the long walk in Wales, Moel Siabod to Moel Hebog. He was immediately recruited to the first of the club's Bolivian meets the following year. In those days the RGS still encouraged serious mountaineering expeditions to include a surveying or scientific component adding to the sum of human knowledge. When David was not exploring potential routes up onto glaciers or portering gear up to high camps, he was working with John Sterland in collecting seeds for the botanical study and leading in the recording of fauna, especially the birds. Unable to secure more than a month of leave from work he made the 20-hour journey on top of a lorry accompanied by Harvey Lomas back to La Paz from the village of Pelechuco, by the Peruvian border.

He climbed his final Munro, Ben More, on Mull, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1999, a cold and very wet day. He was joined by his brother John and David Hick, with whom he had climbed on many occasions, notably the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Sgùrr Dearg. After 15 years of ascents David became Munroist 2020 and despite the weather they managed a glass of champagne on the summit followed by a celebratory dinner in a local hostelry.

He attended many YRC overseas meets, notably six in the Alps, the centenary excursion to Norway, and to Iceland where he climbed the active volcano, Hekla. Although dormant while he and David Hick were on it, they discovered that lava eliminates all the usual landmarks by which they would navigate, so back at the track they had no idea whether to turn right or left to return to their car. Luckily they guessed right (in both senses).

On the Grand Paradiso meet in Northern Italy 2006, Derek Bush, John Lovett and Ken Aldred had climbed up to the Sella Hut where to their surprise they met David. Although he was never one to show his feelings he was quite emotional that day because it was a significant achievement for him. He was due to go into hospital when he got back to York.

Sadly, David's medical problems had begun shortly after his retirement but he did not let them stop him finishing the Munros in and he continued to attend meets for as long as

possible. He never complained and battled on as best he could, but eventually could no longer manage the hills and even walking a short distance became a struggle. His last meet was Spain, Sierra Nevada, in March 2019.

David was never a mere "hill bagger" but enjoyed being on the hills for all they offered: their birds, flowers, rocks and streams and very occasionally their kind weather. He was always good company with the wry humour that everyone who knew him will remember. He was stoical, determined and reliable. Exactly the friend you want with you on long days out.

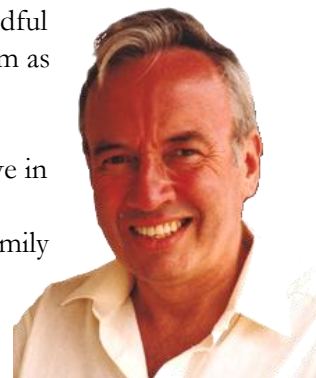
(DH, CM)



# Laurie Partington 1933-2025

## Member 2011-2025

Laurie Partington came to the Club late in life and attended only a handful of meets but those who met him on those occasions will remember him as he had a wide range of interests and always maintained a lively conversation throughout a meal. His early meets were in Scotland: Ballachulish in 2009 staying at Inchree overflow bunkhouse; Glen Etive in February and Harris at the An Bothan bunkhouse in 2011; then as a member at Knoydart in 2012. Proud of his membership he told his family "They don't just let anyone in."



Beyond meets he made use of the Club's two cottages, usually with his proposers, Tony Dunford and Ken Roberts. The last of those occasions was hillwalking in the Dales with Ken and Tony in 2017 from Lowstern.

After obtaining a chemistry degree at Sheffield University, Laurie embarked on a career in the chemical industry working with Glaxo and Beecham to improve the yields of antibiotics which he did with notable success.

As a result of this, during the Vietnam War when the USA was short of tetracycline, he was persuaded to move to California to improve the yields and manufacturing quantities at new factories there. Tetracyclines are antibiotics that work on two of the main kinds of bacteria so used in the management and treatment of bacterial infections. Maintaining a sufficient supply of them at a time of war was critical

A few years later accompanied by their two young children Christopher and Helen, Laurie and his wife Barbara moved back to the UK, Laurie joining Fisons Pharmaceutical Division. That is where Tony met him in 1968. Within a few years he rose to become Technical Director of the division.

Given his experience in the USA, he was aware of the need to introduce the latest 'Good Manufacturing Practices' throughout all Fisons pharmaceutical manufacturing, QA and R&D activities. This enabled the company to successfully export to the USA.

Laurie and Tony left the company after over twenty years, and later carried out training assignments in Africa on behalf of WHO and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Laurie also wanted to go trekking again in the Californian Sierras, so both did sections of the John Muir and other trails out of Devil's Postpile. As Amateur Radio sessions, often off Black Cwm with Christopher, did not occupy him enough he and Tony also decided on the Munros starting with a full traverse of An Teallach – they completed over 100.

After working abroad, Tony invited Laurie to apply for YRC membership, and they enjoyed those meets in Scotland. Tony recalls that Laurie was a great companion on the hills with plenty of knowhow, and a host of funny stories and anecdotes to keep spirits up whatever the weather.

Laurie died on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at the age of 92 and will be greatly missed. (TD, CP)

# Clive Rowland 1943-2025

## Member 1968-2025

Yorkshire lad, Clive Rowland, started climbing in the Peak District, progressing to Snowdonia, the Highlands and the Alps before climbing some of the world's most challenging peaks including Denali, Everest and 7,285m Baintha Brakk, commonly called The Ogre. Clive is probably best known for his work on that last mountain. He first attempted it as part of the 1971 Yorkshire Himalayan Expedition, but they were defeated by an early onset monsoon and porter problems, and they had to be satisfied with nearby 5584m Razaqui.

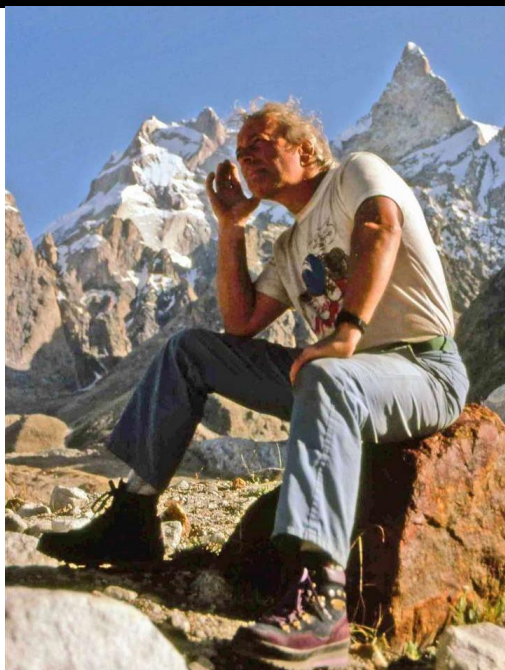
In 1977, he returned with Doug Scott, Chris Bonington and Mo Anthoine and the first pair summited the Ogre's difficult, technical ascent. On the descent Scott broke both legs and later Bonington his ribs. Both were frostbitten, leaving Clive and Mo to shepherd them down more than 2000m of extreme climbing, abseiling and crawling for five days without food to reach basecamp – only to find it abandoned (1979 YRCJ11.38p216). Getting out and the drive home were also difficult, because Afghanistan was suffering a period of political assassinations and large anti-government demonstrations.

Living in Sheffield, trained as a cabinetmaker, Clive worked in the steel industry and in construction. He was building and renovating properties throughout his adult life - alongside working full-time and fitting in his climbing.

Clive was introduced to the YRC by John Middleton, Bill Woodward and Ray Harben. Bill, Ray, and Bryan 'Tanky' Stokes were part of the 'Parnassus Club', contemporary with the Alpha group of gritstone climbers which included Paul Nunn, Tut Braithwaite, Peter Crew, Al Parker, Martin Boysen, Don Morrison, and Clive. They all drank at the same pub.

It was through Tanky that John met Clive. John had a horticultural shop in Sheffield's centre close to where Tanky worked in a cobbler's shop. Later, Tanky's Sheffield gear shop was a popular gathering place for climbers. Perhaps seeing Tanky's and John's shops inspired Clive to later open the Highlands' first specialist mountaineering gear shop, in Inverness. It too became a gathering place for northern climbers, not just selling gear, but encouraging, inspiring – selling dreams.

John introduced Clive to caving, and Clive, in return, developed John's climbing skills. The vast cave system, the Reseau Felix Trombe in the Pyrenees, was their 1972 caving trip as guests of the Spéléo Club de Paris. They made the first through trip from the Gouffre Emile, down to the lowest entrance, the Pene Blanque. Their 8km, 28-hour trip had over 700m descent and



200m ascent including 20 abseils, Tyrolean traverses, and deep wading for ages. Read about it in the YRCJ 1973 (11:36,p44). They remained good friends sharing 'adventures' until recently.

Besides making occasional appearances on Scottish meets, Clive gave an entertaining slide show of alpine ascents at the 1970 January Hill Inn meet. He served on the Committee around that time and ticked off the North Glen Affric and Sgurr na Lapaich tops on our 1983 Munro meet. A signed and dedicated copy of his autobiography 'Towards the Ogre' is in our library. Within the SMC he was custodian of first the Ling Hut then the Raeburn Hut.

The fearless 20 year-old - the youngest Briton to climb the Walker Spur and the Bonatti Pillar - was there with the best during that Golden Age of British Mountaineering, from the 1960s through to the 1990s. His love of adventure took him to Arctic Norway, the Pamirs and Alaska. He was ambitious in his climbing aspirations and took pride in the development of the new routes he and his friends tackled.

Clive and Paul became part of the Hamish McInnes' safety crew looking after cameramen filming in the Alps.

A skilled raconteur, Clive's telling of his epics was always modest with his part understated. He was in demand for fund-raising talks about his experiences. A sociable socialist he was actively engaged with his local Nairn community. When the youth football team leader moved away, he took over as coach with his wife, Fiona, as organiser. He was at the centre of a Thursday walking group which started with Munros but reduced its ambitions as they all aged. Each walk was followed by a chat over a nip and a half in a pub. Friday evenings were at The Bandstand with Clive holding court.

Those he climbed with describe him as a great companion, reliable, determined and stoical. He climbed for the joy of it and not just to reach another summit. On the ascent of the Walker Spur, trapped by poor weather, it was clear that resupply from Chamonix was needed. It was Clive who volunteered to make the long energy-sapping round trip which resulted in a blister on his foot that turned septic. He completed the ascent in considerable pain but by the time they reached the train station he could barely walk.

Away from these famous climbs Clive was a family man with a passion for nature and a dry sense of humour. Walking near Chamonix with his four-year-old son, Will, he carried a hidden maraca, and convinced the lad there were rattlesnakes in the undergrowth. Will



was a teenager before he realised the deception, but it kept him on the path away from snakes.

Clive maintained good health until shortly after his retirement 15 years ago, when he suffered various serious illnesses which he bore stoically but as these took their toll he found his decline frustrating.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April Clive died peacefully aged 81. He is buried at Cawdor cemetery, his headstone a boulder similar to the one he is shown seated on above. With his passing, few of that era of British mountaineering remain.

Our condolences go to Fiona, Josephine, son-in-law Max, William and Cara.  
(JM, FR, MS)

# George Arthur Salmon 1933-2025

## Member 1951-2025



*Arthur: Determined, intelligent, methodical, intrepid, stubborn, salt of the earth, a risk taker.*

The dawn of 1933 welcomed the birth of George Arthur Salmon in Hunslet, Leeds. His origins were modest, coming from a working-class family in the interwar years. His father George Edward served in the Royal Air Force during both World Wars, while his mother Marjorie was a piano teacher, a strong woman who led the family resolutely through tough times.

Arthur's older brother Roy (member 1950-2017) was in the scouts when his interests turned to outdoor activities such as mountain walking and rock climbing. Roy's adventures on the crags of Almscliff and Ilkley attracted the youthful curiosities of his

younger brother's Arthur and Trevor to join these early excursions. Quickly, they all fell in love with the sense of adventure that they found climbing. Before long, they were travelling further afield on Roy's motorbike to go mountaineering. Arthur then went on to join the YRC in 1951, Trevor following suit shortly after, upon turning eighteen.

Arthur's unstinting commitment to the YRC through his seventy-four-year membership meant that he held many offices in his time. He was the Club's Vice President from 1979-81, the President in 1992-94, he spent 14 years as Treasurer from 1998, as well as being a Committee Member, Trustee, Low Hall Garth Warden (where he renovated the shower with a handsome piece of stone) and most recently Librarian at Lowstern. He also organised the YRC Ladies' evenings and weekends over many years with his wife Shirley.

For most of his membership whenever in the country, his regular attendance on meets especially in the Lakes and the Dales and on Long Walks was the norm, accompanied by Frank Wilkinson. These included climbing, caving and Wednesday evening meets with the Leeds-Harrogate group organised by Bill Lofthouse. In due course, his son Graham and later daughter Barbara became YRC members.

Arthur climbed peaks in the Alps with Graham on such as the traverse of the 3888m Feechopf and the 4027m Allalinhom. Then there was his 1988 Piz Roseg epic, where he spent two dangerous unplanned nights on the glacier resulting in a frostbitten toe.

Shirley died in 1999, the year after Arthur retired. This era coincided with him spending more time overseas. Trips in those years include the YRC's 2000 Guangxi Caves Expedition in China, treks to Morocco, Ladakh, the Bhutan Himalaya and Sikkim. Later in 2018 aged

eighty-five, following a trip to Madrid to visit his grandson Conrad, he joined the Calpe meet in Spain, completing the narrow grade 1 Sierra Ferrer ridge scramble.

Returning to his childhood, Arthur attended Cockburn Grammar School, where the spark was lit for his life-long love and fascination with chemistry. On leaving school, Arthur was awarded a scholarship to Leeds University to read Chemistry. It was there he obtained his BSc in 1954, becoming a postgraduate research student in the Department of Physical Chemistry headed by Professor, later Lord, Fred Dainton. The laboratory at Cookridge Hospital, a radiation research centre, opened in 1956 and Arthur moved there a year later to complete his PhD.



*YRC members on their first trip to the Alps, circa. 1954. From the left: Arthur's brother Roy, Roger Allen, Cliff Large, Arthur himself, and Neville Newman*

A keen ballroom dancer, Arthur met Shirley Connell at the ballroom dances held at St. Joseph's Church, Hunslet. A romance blossomed and they married at Hunslet Parish Church in May 1957. Once married, they moved to Wantage for Arthur, in lieu of military National Service, to work at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment also known as the Harwell Laboratory. This was the main centre for atomic energy research and development in the UK from 1946 to the 1990s.

Following two years at Wantage, Arthur was free to move on, and so in 1959 he took up a postdoctoral position at the University of Oregon in Eugene, USA. In Eugene, Arthur was in his element due to the proximity to the Cascade Mountains where he would walk and climb with friends and ski with Shirley. Arthur recounted one of his overnight trips to the Cascades in the YRC Journal 1962 Vol.9, No.31. During their American chapter, Arthur and Shirley travelled to and from New York on the cruise liners RMS Queen Mary and RMS Mauretania, transatlantic crossings that Arthur would always look back on fondly.

Arthur and Shirley returned to Leeds in 1961, where Arthur took up a postdoctoral fellowship back at the Cookridge Radiation Research Centre. They made nearby Adel their home and daughter Barbara and son Graham

soon followed. In 1965 they moved to Holt Close, where Arthur lived until his death.

In 1970, Arthur was appointed Director at the Research Centre, and there he remained until retirement, supervising PhD students and lecturing in Physical Chemistry at Leeds University. Over the years, there was a continuous flow of British and overseas scientists to the Cookridge laboratory. Shirley and Arthur developed a wide circle of long-term friends from around the world, whom Shirley entertained during their visits to Leeds. Arthur was awarded the degree of DSc by Leeds University for his research work and served a term as chairman of the Miller Trust for Radiation Chemistry with the responsibility of organising international conferences held every two years, alternating between the UK and Europe. He was awarded the by the Association for Radiation Research's Weiss medal in 1989 and the Maria Sklodowska-Curie medal by the Polish Radiation Research Society a decade later.

An idyllic time for the family came in 1973 when the family had some months in Ontario, Canada whilst Arthur worked at the Atomic Energy of Canada's Chalk River Laboratory. The family embraced the Canadian outdoor lifestyle in the small town of Deep River, located along the banks of the Ottawa River, often swimming at the beach and canoeing across the river to Quebec.

Arthur had a wide range of interests outside of mountaineering. He enjoyed history, politics, gardening, and singing in choirs - Handel's Messiah, Gilbert and Sullivan and 'Yorkshire' amongst his specialties. And finally, sailing. In 2001, Arthur and Graham bought Night Moth, a sailing yacht. Over the next twenty years or so Arthur enjoyed



many sailing trips with family and friends around the West Coast of Scotland and Ireland. A particularly memorable trip involved sailing from her mooring in Troon up the west coast of Scotland to St. Kilda, 60km west of the Outer Hebrides. Another was a cruise to the Orkney Islands, returning via the Caledonian Canal.

Arthur's weekly Thursday walks with Frank Wilkinson (right), George's Buxton and East were an essential feature of Arthur's retirement. The group could usually be found in Calderdale exploring some of the more esoteric routes the area offers, capping it off with a pint or two in The White Swan, Hebden Bridge, before catching their train home. This customary routine gave Arthur something we all need, friendship and camaraderie.

In February 2025, Arthur had his second hip replacement. Whilst recovering from the procedure it was discovered that he had stage IV, advanced pancreatic cancer.

He declined rapidly and died at home on the 27<sup>th</sup> March with his family by his side. The pace of his deterioration was a shock. But as he said, "I've had a good life."

The University of Leeds honoured Arthur by flying the flag on the Parkinson building at half-mast on the warm sunny April day of his Lawnswood funeral, when twenty-six Club members gathered at the graveside. Yorkshire lost one of its sons. (BS, CS)



Dennis Armstrong penned and sang the following song to the tune of 'Three Blind Mice' for the 1993 annual dinner, marking the end of Arthur's first year of presidency.

Three Brothers Salmon: Roy, Arthur, Trev,  
 They all came into the YRC,  
 They potholed and climbed together with glee,  
 The meets were great when we had all three,  
 The three Brothers Salmon.

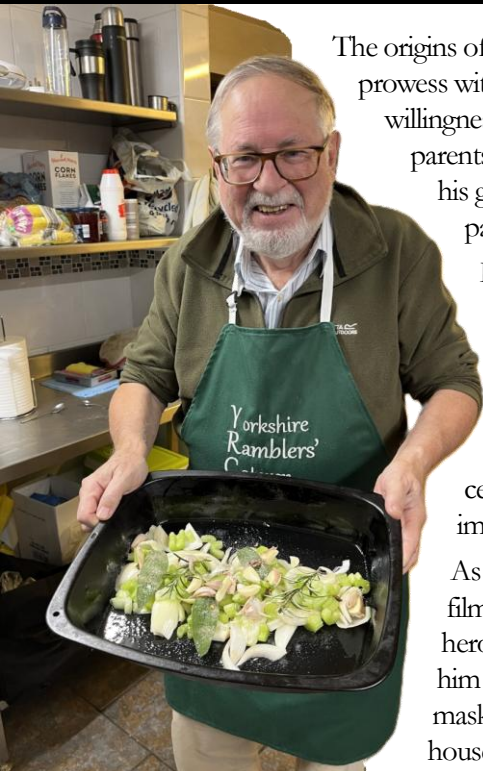
Three Brothers Salmon Roy, Arthur Trev,  
 Roy went off to Scot-erland,  
 Trev took off to Niger-land,  
 But Arthur stayed in good Leeds-land,  
 The three Brothers Salmon.

George Arthur Salmon, Three degrees are his,  
 A B.Sc. in chemistry clear,  
 A Ph.D. as a mountaineer,  
 And a D.Sc for drinking beer,  
 George Arthur Salmon,

George Arthur Salmon, Il Presidentio,  
 One year gone and one year more,  
 For you to go to complete your tour,  
 We only ask please don't snore!  
 George Arthur Salmon.

# Roderick A. Smith 1947-2024

## Member 2021-2024



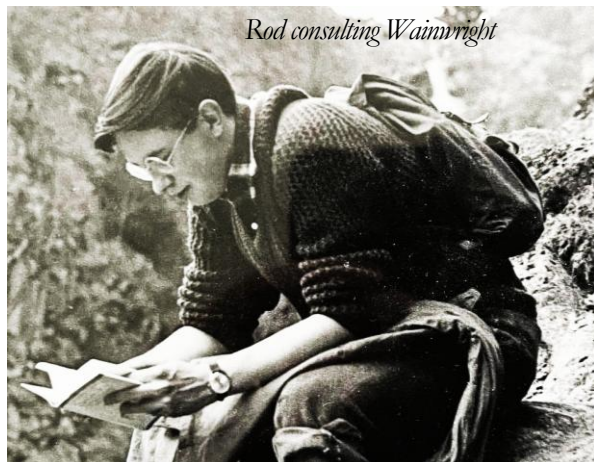
The origins of Professor Rod Smith's love of mountaineering, academic prowess with its application especially to railway engineering, and his willingness to help others, can be seen in his early life. Raised by teacher parents he was taken by them for long outings on the moors, and by his grandfather for walks along the rail tracks. They set him on a path which took him a long way.

His grandfather was a platelayer on the line through Greenfield, near Saddleworth, where they lived beside the moor. His parents married early in WWII when his father, Eric, served in the RAF. Mother, Gladys, taught at Friezland Primary and in peacetime Eric was Saddleworth School's head. Rod grew up there below Aphin Pike in Yorkshire's West Riding, an area later ceded to Greater Manchester. Being a Yorkshireman was important to both his father and to Rod.

As a sixth birthday treat Rod was taken to see George Lowe's 1953 film 'The Conquest of Everest' - its stirring orchestration and the heroic tones of the narration inspired him. Family tradition recalls him then "climbing the stairs on fixed clothes line, wearing a gas mask." Local outings with his father onto the moors above their house started soon after that.

He vividly recalled their first visit to the Lakes District: Patterdale over Grisedale Pass to Grasmere, a blister-inducing Great Gable and leaving his woollen bobble hat, so lovingly knitted by his mother, on the top; then an easier stroll around Tarn Hows to finish. A year later he was back there walking along the Climbers' Traverse. Among his weekly Eagle comic's educational information for boys at that time was an introduction to rock climbing which Rod collected. In it he recognised the iconic Napes Needle.

Rod was soon scrambling gritstone edges as a teenager. Then he was introduced to climbing first by a schoolmaster, later on a Mountaineering Association beginners' course on Skye. Hemp waist bands, army surplus karabiners, rather primitive protection and the maxim "the leader never falls" were then the norm. Rod progressed to the easier Severes and over the years enjoyed many of the UK's classic rock routes. In his sixties, in windy conditions, and kitted out with a modern harness, he achieved a long-held ambition of climbing Napes Needle, led by a young Sheffield colleague. Rod's last climb was on Raven Crag's Corvus on our 2022 North Lakes meet. Apart from the new harness his garb was that of his climbing heyday.



*Rod consulting Wainwright*

His time at university extended his mountaineering to the Alps and some of the remoter ranges including Svalbard, Greenland, Japan, South Africa, Nepal, Baffin Island, and the Karakoram. At Cambridge, he met his wife-to-be, Yayoi. He first tested her mettle on a damp, misty, cold November day on Napes's Arrowhead Ridge. She passed with flying colours. It nearly backfired for on un-roping she declared "I will never go anywhere with you again." Despite this, their marriage lasted fifty years.

Hillwalking, Rod made many Marsden-Edale crossings, was on his third round of the Wainwrights, and completed a self-devised fifty-mile walk from Sheffield to his childhood home in Greenfield. Quantity though was not the point with Rod, he had an eye for the aesthetics of the mountains – writing "Pennine curves are gentle... Far removed from the geometric savagery of the Alps, Norway, Greenland and the Himalaya".

One of his notable ski mountaineering expeditions was a 1985 ski traverse of the Jostedalbreen with Yayoi who again after two days of slogging uphill carrying camping gear in damp conditions declared "I'm never going to come anywhere with you again!"

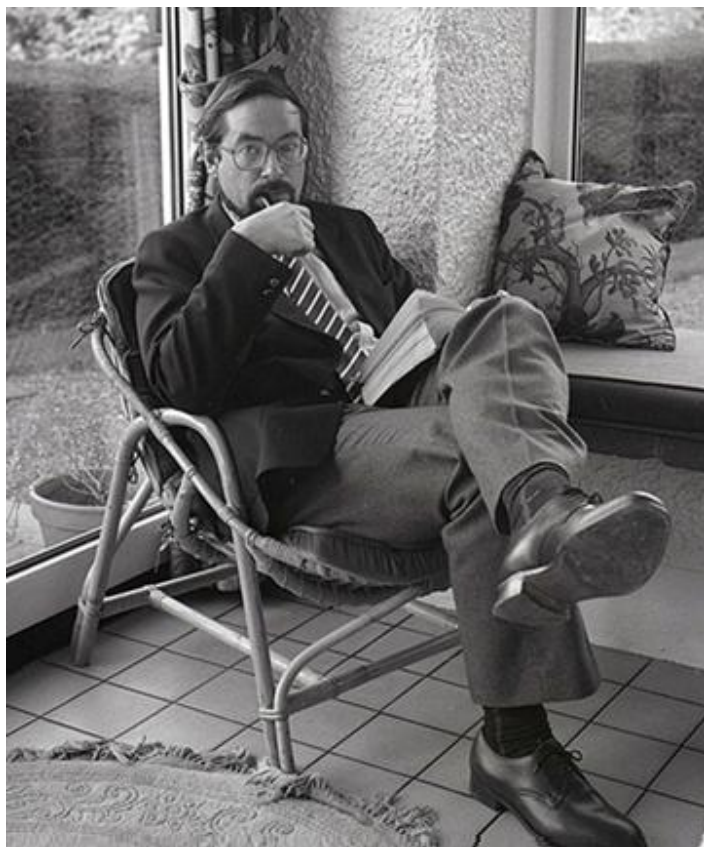
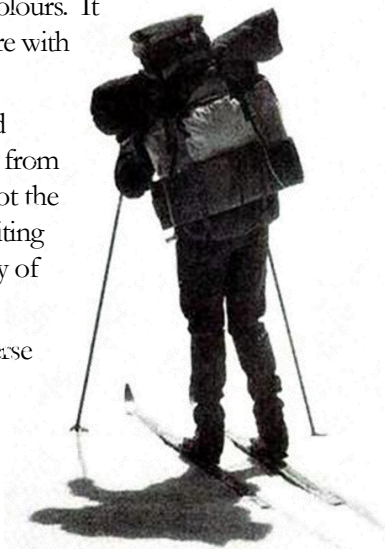
Rod reached the top of his profession as an academic, was a towering figure in the rail industry having over fifty years involvement with the Japanese railways, and was honoured by several universities. He lectured in the Cambridge University Engineering Department in the eighties, was Professor of Mechanical and Process Engineering, at Sheffield in the nineties, then became Head of Mechanical Engineering at Imperial until 2005.

As Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department of Transport when HS2 was being planned, his patience was sorely tested when, as he perceived it, changes made against his advice undermined its viability. Not one to waste his time where he could not be effective, he resigned. Top posts

followed: President of both the Engineering Integrity Society and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers; consultant to the Board of British Steel then British Rail; Commissioner to the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales.

Rod presented at many international gatherings and his expertise was called on in cases such as the Hillsborough football stadium disaster and the Icelandic volcanic ash cloud grounding planes across Europe. The media, including the BBC's Newsnight, called on him for interviews.

Beyond his publications in the metal- and railway-related fields there were diverse scientific papers on crevasse fractures, ice-wood composites, floating ice shelves, rock anchor strength, reducing risk in climbing, and modelling glaciers.



Besides the YRC, he was a proud member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, Alpine Club, and Arctic Club. Actively engaged in them all he wrote articles for the FRCC and obituaries for the AC. Though a YRC member for only a few years, he had already made an impression. He encouraged the move to midweek meets, at the 2021 Saddleworth meet presented an entertaining account of his childhood there, and with Yayoi catered for meets in North Lakes, in Calp and at Lowstern for the Christmas meet last year. Where he could, he helped both the Club and individuals in need with advice and advocacy, all with a light touch.

More widely, Rod, as a Director of the Mountain Heritage Trust spoke of their need to engage with new audiences but feeling his voice was not heeded he resigned.

Pupils at his Friezland Primary and Hulme Grammar Schools benefitted from his visits when he spoke about his love of trains, climbing, mathematics and their local countryside.

Rod's 77<sup>th</sup> birthday outing was a damp, misty Boxing Day family walk above Grasmere in his beloved Lake District, with his wife and his niece. Tragically, a simple slip while descending from Grisedale Hause resulted in a head injury and unconsciousness from which he did not recover despite attempts at resuscitation. The Keswick MRT organised recovery of the body by helicopter.

So how will Rod be remembered? His name made it into the Cheddar Gorge climbing record as the route Professor Smith's Warning 8m E4 6a\*\*\*. Years before that Napes Needle climb he cautioned that Sheffield colleague, who was making very bold climbs, of Whympers's maxim, "climb if you will but remember each step may be your last."

The Japanese Shinkansen or bullet train in York's Railway Museum may be his largest monument. It was through his influence it was gifted to the UK. But the greatest will be memories of his knowledge and achievements across so many fields, his infectious enthusiasm, and his encouragement and support for those he met.

A packed memorial service at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford saw several members present. Rod leaves his beloved wife Yayoi, sister Janet Thompson, nephew Adam Whitehead and niece Annabel Bunce. He will be greatly missed, not only within the YRC. (YS, MS)





The YRC has two properties available for use by members, their families and by kindred organisations.

For details of these properties and for booking requests, visit:  
[yrc.org.uk/huts](http://yrc.org.uk/huts)  
[/yrc-huts](http://yrc.org.uk/huts)



Lowstern, Clapham, Yorkshire Dales



Low Hall Garth, Little Langdale,  
Lake District

YRC members have reciprocal rights to use certain other clubs' properties in the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, Peak District, Wales and Scotland.

For a list of those properties first log into the YRC website then select Huts, followed by Reciprocal Rights Huts

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The deadline for material for each edition is the 1<sup>st</sup> November.

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## The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club

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