



THE FELL AND ROCK JOURNAL

2016



Ron Kenyon - President 2014-2016, at top of Goldrush (HVS),
Adrar Iffran, Anti-Atlas, Morocco.



No 85

Edited by Martin Cooper and Andrew Paul

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Front Cover: Upper Grains Ghyll Buttress, Allen Craggs. Whole Grain (HVS). Climber - Paul Clarke. *Photo - Richard Tolley*

Inside Front Cover/ Half Title: Melbreak and Buttermere. *Photo - Tony Simpkins*

Title Page: Brocken Spectre *Photo - John Holden*

Opposite: Very Big Springs E7 6c - The Burren, Ireland, climbers Sam & Ed Hamer. *Photo - Hamer Brothers*

Inside Rear Cover: Barre des Ecrins at 5 a.m. Alpine Meet 2016. *Photo - Andrew Paul*



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Editorial

We suspect that the change to the dimensions of the Journal, after 110 years, will generate either approval or opprobrium. If nothing else it will probably lead to some lively discussions. We believe that the time has come to give more prominence to photographs and paintings, and smarten up the slightly dowdy image of the Journal; this is a process which we began with the 2014 edition, and have completed with this one.

Enough of form, let's move on to content. We have a wealth of articles about some remarkable climbing achievements, real evidence of the vitality of the club, so an entire section is devoted to these exploits. However the world of mountain walking and ski touring is not overlooked, with a number of pieces about activities in Scotland and Overseas. Mike Cudahy entertains again, with a fine piece of writing about his (in)ability as a skitourer.

This year several events came together to present a theme. At least two incidents on the fells/crag required the assistance of the Mountain Rescue, which provided a good snapshot of the quality of our rescue and health services. Independently, John Wilkinson provided a piece of writing about a year on the crags in 1945, which, while not its primary purpose, gave an insight into how accidents and rescue were handled then. Finally Richard Tolley, using his knowledge from being part of a rescue team, provided an update on the transition from the R.A.F. Helicopter Rescue to a private service.

Finally, we have revived a section on the year (well two years actually) in the life of the club. This used to be a regular feature, but fell by the

wayside a long time ago – the 'Bill Frindall's of the club will tell you exactly when. It is a celebration of the many achievements of club members. Particular mention has to be made of 'Lake District Rock', and the winning of the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival award for the best guidebook – Steve Scott has written about the genesis and realisation of this guide. The section also contains a number of articles about the broader Lake District context in which we enjoy our playtime.

New Routes continue to be found, against all expectation, and the section does not include additions in the new Borrowdale guide, which will be available by the time this Journal goes to print. In the Book Review section we have focussed on climbing and mountaineering books which we felt were of some significance, rather than reviewing guidebooks.

We hope everyone finds something within which provides interest and enjoyment.

Martin Cooper and Andrew Paul

Right: Aiguille Verte and Les Droites.
Barbara Swindin

Climbing

James McHaffie

Dan Hamer

Peter Graham

Peter Metcalfe

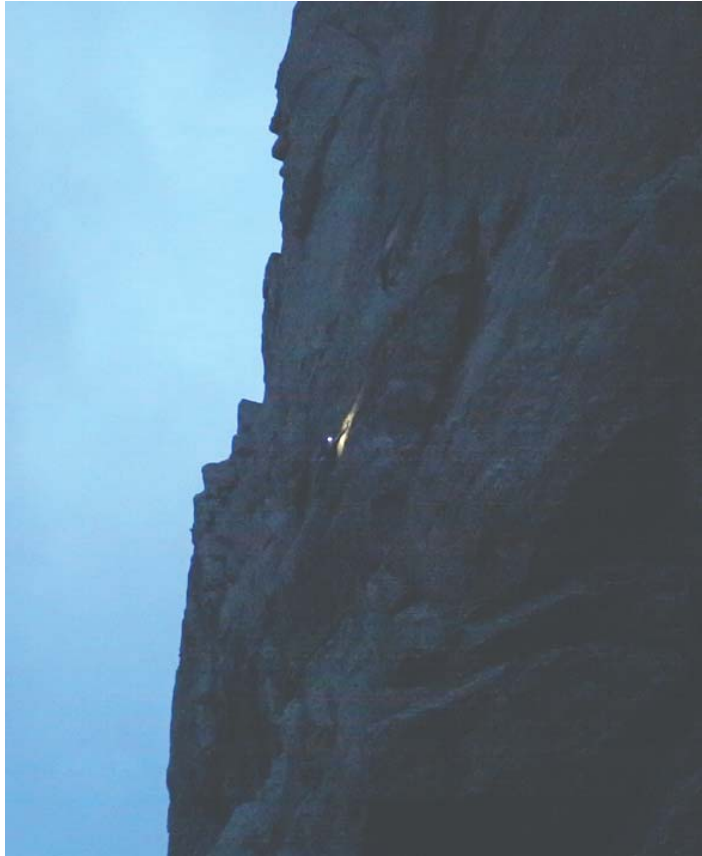
Roger Wilkinson

Tony Walker

Ian Stirrups

Ron Kenyon





James McHaffie soloing Central Buttress, Scafell Crag, by headtorch, 3.30 a.m. June 2014.
Photo - Adam Hocking

Lakes One Hundred

James McHaffie

In 2003 I was living in Wales, but all I could think about was the project in the Lakes. The idea was to climb as many great Lakeland routes as possible in a day. I'd thought about it since 1999, inspired by Big Ron's circuit in the Peak, but it took a few years to take root and develop, with lists I'd make getting tricky beyond eighty routes.

A week or so before I was going to make my first attempt on an overly ambitious list of routes, I set off on a route called Exponential Exhaustion at Kilnsey. I got past a technical wall to better flat holds, but these were dusty, and a minute of flapping found me in mid-air. The thread, which appeared good, exploded when I came onto it and the rock hit me in the ear with some speed. I arrived near the base and Rob Fielding lowered me the rest of the way. He turned away in disgust, which made me worry at first that my ear was hanging off, but there was only a small hole. A trip to A&E left me with stitches, a compression strap on my head to prevent cauliflower ear, and slightly dodgy balance for a week or so. It's still the worst fall I've taken and could have been much worse, as just before I was going to go for the thread I uncovered a key wire hidden by some vegetation, which is what stopped me. I was a little superstitious at the time and took it as a sign not to attempt the solos. This was a good thing, as I doubt I would have got close back then, confidence can only get you so far. It never came together again but was always in the back of my mind.

More than a decade later the scheme reappeared in my thoughts, more as a curiosity at first, looking at lists, thinking about possible routes

and cliffs I could visit. Over the last few years I've done a fraction of the soloing I used to do, and in the spring 2014 I began to get reacquainted, re-climbing routes like Fingerlicker, Silly Arete, doing over ten routes at Gogarth in an afternoon, and running into the Carneddau for routes like The Grooves on Llech Ddu. It did feel harder. Routes that had felt akin to paths a decade ago seemed like they were a much bigger deal.

When I set my full first list out in March or so I felt a pang of despair. It was considerably watered down compared with the original list of decade before, but still looked ridiculous on paper. I started to work out realistic timings and these made it worse. Maybe people were correct about it being a mad idea.

I'd not booked any work in for the last two weeks of June, hoping to get some good weather during the longest days of the year, and looking forward to hanging out in the Lakes, visiting family nearby. It turned out to be one of the luckiest of weeks, the stars were 'truly aligned' for it. I worked on an ML assessment on the weekend of the 14th of June and on the afternoon of the second day, when my lower body normally feels like it has been done over in an American prison, instead it felt fresh; the hauling and climbing in Yosemite had delivered a good fitness base.

On the Tuesday of that week I arrived in the Lakes feeling a little rough but with fantastic weather and an ace forecast. I headed straight to Goats Crag, a tiny outcrop beyond Reecastle, which I'd not been to before. The views back towards Scafell and Great End were incredible and I did everything on the cliff before heading to

the big Goat Crag to go up Praying Mantis and stash an abseil rope on top. Heading down I did a couple of E2s I'd not done and, arriving at a tiny esoteric cliff in the woods named Mac's wall, I was blown away to meet two other climbers, Pat and Craig from Carlisle, who had known dad. We headed over to check out Millican Dalton's buttress which was, unfortunately filthy; although I did Cold Lazarus for old time's sake. This small buttress was eventually removed from my list.

The Wednesday was the key recce day I'd decided upon, the make or break day; leaving Stonethwaite campsite, I was going to run up Langstrath to Flat Crag and work my way back to my car. If I choked or was crawling off the hill the idea was a dud. I felt a little bit anxious about finding out just how pie in the sky it really was.

I did a load of routes I'd not done, before leaving Neckband; after two cans of coke in the ODG, I paid for it with a headache as I topped out on Gimmer. On the run between Pavey and Sergeant Crag Slabs I saw two red deer enjoying the solitude of the fell top. I got down to my car feeling like I'd had one of my best days out climbing. I knew I could do a lot more, having done a lot more running to access Flat Crag than I'd be doing when starting from Scafell. The game was on.

The weekend was spent relaxing. Sophie came up from Wales and we visited my sister, Heather, brother in law Richard, and godson Thomas. They had rented a beautiful National Trust house on the quiet side of Windermere, near where 'Swallows and Amazons' was conceived. The Saturday night we spent in the CC hut in Grange. Appropriately, there was a poster of Dan Osman doing a half lever whilst soloing a big flake, saying 'Don't let your fear stand in the way of your dreams!'

On Sunday, I left Stonethwaite campsite and Sophie dropped me at Sheps cafe. Hock picked me up and we went round to Wasdale and had a meal at Wasdale Head with Craig Naylor, farmer, climber, and grandson of the legendary fell runner Joss Naylor. We all chose the Cumberland sausage with mash.

We hiked into Hollow Stones and set up camp. It was quiet but Mary Jenner, Mark Greenbank and Keith Phizacklea were on the way down and came for a chat. Dave Birkett was checking out possible new climbs on a hill around the corner. Later, Rob and Craig Matheson came along as well. By eight in the evening it was only me and Hock, my enigmatic friend I'd known since primary school, who indirectly helped start me soloing. Hock said he'd meet me at Falcon Crag sometime in early 1996, but he didn't and so I set off up SpinUp and Funeral Way. From then on a different world of climbing opened up. Dick Patey was in his mid 50s and lived near the Borrowdale Hotel in the 1990s. He was fit as sin and I watched him solo MGC regularly and routes like The Bludgeon. We were convinced he was ex-special forces. I used to chat to him about good routes to go for. I'd brought the tent up for both of us but Hock decided not to bother with it; being fond of the stars he went and slept under them!

At 2.55 a.m. my alarm went off. I'd slept well and felt rested, but looking up towards Scafell it was pitch black. I carried a small rucksack with a thermal, trainers, an empty bottle for stream water, some food, a map and a compass. Not hungry, but I forced down some food, a small drink of tea, and set off.

CB was the biggest route on the list, and in its own way the most intimidating. The first ascent of this route in 1914 was visionary, with the kit they had. Leaving Sansom's shoulders to gravel up the

crack, before bringing Holland up, was some feat which dad would speak of in his lectures in the Moot Hall in Keswick. Mabel Barker's and Menlove's efforts were also incredible. It was the centenary of the first ascent this year and I'd read a great deal about the First World War and what was 'involved'. Herford died in it, in 1916, at the age of 25. His essay 'The Doctrine of Descent' is a brilliant piece of writing concerning mountain climbing. Starting on CB felt like paying respects, and the story and tragedy related to the climb was like fuel.

I topped out at first light and felt relief, scree-running back down to meet Hock, before contouring round to briefly join the Corridor Route, a path my dad had helped build. After a few routes on Piers Ghyll Crag, and one on Undercarriage Wall, feeling much like grit, I continued running and received a stunning view of Styhead Tarn, Derwentwater and Borrowdale in the dawn light. It was a crystal clear day, 4.30 in the morning, with empty hills.

No 15, Gimmer String



I tracked round to Esk Hause and Ore Gap, looking back towards Scafell. The East Buttress was in full glory and the Main Face was shown as a silhouette. Dropping off Bowfell I arrived at Flat Crag. Simon Gee was there and after a quick handshake I headed up Fastburn. I ran down to Neckband and set about six routes. I was only going to do five here, but looking at a crack at the base called Cut-Throat I thought it looked easy, after America. I was wrong; it was dusty, smeary, and quite strenuous.

I dropped down into the valley, noticing some bog asphodel and sundew between the bedstraw and bracken on the way up to Gimmer, where I set off up Intern. I first climbed this with Alison Iredale in 2001, the same day as the Twin Towers. I dropped down left and set off up Gimmer String. On the top Steve (superfit) Ashworth was there, having bivvied on the top. I used to work with Steve and it was great to see him. Fifteen minutes later I arrived at Pavey Ark.

I first climbed here in 1999. On arriving I had soloed Astra and Cascade, before belaying Dave Birkett on his project. He told me he was concerned that if he fell off he would hit the ground. He got really high and fell off. His gear held fine but it gave me a shock. Dave has only deepened his legend through the years, putting up incredible lines. Whilst working with him and Paddy, he would tell us that he was the best dry stone waller in the world. Nay said we, but two years ago he won at the Chelsea Flower Show. He was the best! I went up Capella and Poker Face before heading, via Cove Crag and Bright Beck Cove, towards Sergeant Crag Slabs. The two red deer were there again on the quiet fell tops.

Dad found Sergeant Crag Slabs in the mid 90s, and it gives some of the best single pitch slabs between V5 and E2 in the Lakes. He brought me

up here to climb my first HVS, Lakeland Cragsman. Hock was there, having driven round from Wasdale, and I quickly did five routes before pulling back up the hillside to jog to Heron. The climbs here are small but on perfect rock and it is a great place to visit after Bleak How. After Heron I dropped off to Bleak How and Fat Charlie's Buttress, before arriving thankfully at my car. I'd told myself at this point to pretend I'd stepped into a fresh body and was just starting.

I arrived at Goat a short while later and headed up Praying Mantis. I first did this with dad, who said a friend of his once got his fingers trapped in a fingerjam on the first pitch whilst seconding. He couldn't free them so dad started to go down to him, saying he'd have to cut the finger off. His friend freed the finger. Tumbleweed Connection, Bitter Oasis, Mirage and Footless Crow are some of the finest climbs in the Lakes.

I climbed a few shorter routes before moving on to Grange Crag. Dad once told me Colin Downer came round the house, threatening to beat him up if he did any of Downer's lines on this crag. I was curious as to how I'd be on these. Sudden Impact and Rough Justice have 5c moves about half way through. I was a bit tired, but mainly in my feet. Then on to Shepherds; the sacrilege of missing out dad's favourite cliff, Black Crag, was not lost on me. I took it off the list a few days before starting, but intended to do his climb, The Niche, later on.

After an egg butty at Sheps'cafe I covered Shepherds in the heat of the day, feeling very muggy. Porcupine felt hard, Aaros as ever the most pleasurable, and by the time I reached Brown Crag Grooves I knew I was tired. Shepherds is nearly always dry, has the 'best cafe' at the base and offers great views across Derwentwater. My first climb was on here, Donkey's Ears.

Hock picked me up from beneath and we drove round to Reecastle, a crag in a truly stunning setting near Watendlath, the views from its top back towards Bassenthwaite Lake. There was a small crowd back from the crag. Maxine Willet from the Mountain Heritage Trust had brought the Abraham Brothers camera up. It was great to see Duncan and Evon Booth with their kids, and I felt buoyed by their implicit confidence in my ability, as they wouldn't want their children to see anything traumatic. Nicole Macgregor, Clare and Henry Iddon were also around the cliff, part of Hock's enigmatic social networking. It felt warm and I did eight climbs as fast as I could. Towards the end a climber asked why I don't do Thumb-screw as he found it easier than some of the others. I'd intended to but was too tired to do it safely.

Since leaving Shepherds I didn't think I'd complete the challenge. Fatigue had properly arrived. I did a pleasant tetchy E2 on the south crag, Widowmaker, and myself and Hock headed up to Goats. Enjoying the smaller climbs, I felt like at the end of a long few days sport climbing. Rogue Herries I'd left till last on this cliff as it was the hardest and I didn't think I'd do it. I wanted to pull up to look at the first hard bit; after a minute I committed upwards in what became the only bad bit of the entire day.

Feeling pretty battered I decide to leave Lower Falcon, although it would have been great to do The Niche. At the garage in Latrigg Close we grabbed a sandwich, Lucozade, and Hock some tabs, before we set off into Thirlmere. This used to be my commute road, and as Castle Rock appeared in the evening sun the journey with my primary school friend felt a little surreal and brought 'The Heart of Darkness' to mind for some reason. The journey from Goats to Castle Rock

was the biggest rest I'd had and, arriving at the crag, I got a second wind. A few routes on the south crag meant a move to the north with five routes left to do. I really wanted to do two three pitch routes, Thirlmere Eliminate and Harlot Face. These routes involved Jim Birkett, Paul Ross, Don Whillans, Joe Brown and Pete Greenwood on their first ascent and were cutting edge for the area at the time. Thirlmere Eliminate went well, being a corner. At the top you can bridge and get all the weight off tired arms. I think I'd done most of these climb with my friend Wesley Hunter sometime in the 90s. We had a load of adventures and some truly ridiculous teenage arguments on the cliffs.

At 10.15 or so I finished on Angel's Highway and was glad I'd had a frenzied hour, negating the need for head torch climbing when tired at the end. I sent Sophie a message. Hock had brought up some bottles of Cumberland Ale and myself, Hock, Simon Gee, and Henry Iddon got stuck into them before heading to the Oddfellow Arms in Keswick for another pint. Lucy Wood had made some great food, which me and Hock consumed sometime after midnight, before bed. The next morning I met Hock and Lucy's lovely baby, Olive Tinker Hocking. Dave Birkett got in touch to see how it had gone. I was deeply touched by the level of support given by people both on the day and in congratulations afterwards, on what I'd seen as a personal pilgrimage through some great memories of the Lake District. Some climbs were big, some were tiny, some were clean, some were filthy but all were in the most fantastic landscape.



Angels Highway, Castle Rock - Number 100.

The full list ...

1. Central Buttress E1 5B Scaffell Crag
2. Heatwave 95 E2 5B Piers Gill Crag
3. Shaun & Haley E2 5C Piers Gill Crag
4. Sleeping with the Stars E2 5B Piers Gill Crag
5. Piers de Piece E1 5B Piers Gill Crag
6. Wheel of Misfortune E2 5C Undercarriage Wall
7. Fastburn E2 5B Flat Crags
8. Gillete Direct E2 5C Neckband Crag
9. Razor Crack E1 5A Neckband Crag
10. Gandalf's Groove Direct E2 5B Neckband Crag
11. Sweeney Todd E2 5C Neckband Crag
12. Cut-throat E3 6A Neckband Crag
13. Aragorn E2 5C Neckband Crag
14. Intern E1 5B Gimmer Crag
15. Gimmer String E1 5B Gimmer Crag
16. Capella E1 5B Pavay Ark
17. Poker Face E1 5B Pavay Ark
18. The Confidence Man E2 5B Cove Crag
19. The Future's Bright E1 5A Cove Crag
20. Slab, Ridge and Arête E1 5B Cove Crag
21. Nobble Nibble E1 5B Cove Crag
22. Bright Beck Corner E3 6A Bright Beck Crag
23. Confusion Wall E4 6A Bright Beck Crag
24. The Tinkerer E1 5B Bright Beck Crag
25. Little Jack E1 5C Bright Beck Crag
26. Aphasia E2 5B Sergeant Crag Slabs
27. Quicksilver E1 5B Sergeant Crag Slabs
28. Holly Tree Crack E1 5B Sergeant Crag Slabs
29. The Death Stroke E1 5B Sergeant Crag Slabs
30. Between The Lines E1 5B Sergeant Crag Slabs
31. Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now E1 5B Heron Crag
32. Flamingo Fandango E1 5B Heron Crag
33. Big Foot E2 5C Heron Crag
34. The Question E2 5C Heron Crag
35. Little Corner E1 5B Heron Crag
36. Barefoot E2 5C Heron Crag
37. Joie Pur E2 5C Heron Crag
38. Traverse of the Frogs E2 5B Heron Crag
39. Amistad Con El Diablo E2 5C Bleak How
40. Bleak How Buttress E2 5C Bleak How
41. Cellulite E2 6A Fat Charlie's Buttress
42. Cholesterol Corner E1 5B Fat Charlie's Buttress
43. Supermodel E1 5B Fat Charlie's Buttress
44. Reassuringly Stocky E1 5C Fat Charlie's Buttress
45. Praying Mantis E1 5B Goat Crag
46. The Sting E2 5C Goat Crag

47. Paint it Black E2 5C Steel Knotts
48. Zombie in the Dark E3 6C Castle Crag
49. One Across E1 5C Castle Crag
50. Fuel Crisis E2 5C Grange Crag
51. Driving Ambition E1 5B Grange Crag
52. Desmond Decker E2 6A Grange Crag
53. Rough Justice E1 5C Grange Crag
54. Sudden Impact E2 5C Grange Crag
55. Red Neck E2 5B Grange Crag
56. Mule Train E2 5C Shepherds Crag
57. The Black Icicle E1 5B Shepherds Crag
58. Porcupine E3 6A Shepherds Crag
59. Hippos Might Fly E1 5A Shepherds Crag
60. Straight and Narrow E3 6A Shepherds Crag
61. The Grasp E1 5B Shepherds Crag
62. Poop & Clutch E2 5C Shepherds Crag
63. M.G.C. E2 5C Shepherds Crag
64. Shanna E2 5C Shepherds Crag
65. Aaros E1 5B Shepherds Crag
66. P.S. E1 5B Shepherds Crag
67. North Buttress E1 5B Shepherds Crag
68. Imago E1 5C Shepherds Crag
69. Jaws E1 5B Shepherds Crag
70. Conclusion E1 5B Shepherds Crag
71. Brown Crag Grooves E1 5B Shepherds Crag
72. White Noise E3 5C Reecastle Crag
73. Rack Direct E2 5C Reecastle Crag
74. Rack Finger Flake E2 5C Reecastle Crag
75. Water Torture E2 5C Reecastle Crag
76. Bold Warrior E1 5B Reecastle Crag
77. The Gibbet E1 5B Reecastle Crag
78. Guillotine E3 5C Reecastle Crag
79. The Gauntlet E1 5B Reecastle Crag
80. Widowmaker E2 5B Reecastle Crag
81. Mort E1 5B Goats Crag
82. Balancing Act E1 5B Goats Crag
83. Light Fantastic E2 5C Goats Crag
84. Pussy Galore E2 5C Goats Crag
85. Munich Agreement E1 5B Goats Crag
86. Optional Omission E1 5A Goats Crag
87. Nightmare Zone E1 5B Goats Crag
88. Berlin Wall E2 5B Goats Crag
89. Stranger to the Ground E3 5C Goats Crag
90. Rogue Herries E4 6A Goats Crag
91. Mackanory E1 5B Goats Crag
92. Green Eggs And Ham E1 5C Castle Rock
93. Reward E2 5C Castle Rock
94. Romantically Challenged E1 5B Castle Rock

95. Pinnacle Wall E1 5A Castle Rock
96. The Final Giggle E1 5A Castle Rock
97. Harlot Face E1 5B Castle Rock
98. Thirlmere Eliminate E1 5B Castle Rock
99. Wingnut E2 5C Castle Rock
100. Angel's Highway E1 5A Castle Rock

Cobbling it Together

British weather can be disheartening – especially in the mountains – as anyone who has ever planned a trip to Skye will attest. That said, we should be thankful for the extraordinary variety of climbable rock outcropping across our islands. Conditions would have to be apocryphally grim for the BMC ever to announce that ‘there will be no climbing in Britain today!’ The message is simple: if it’s pelting with rain at Stanage or Raven Tor, forget the indoor walls in Sheffield - why not try Pentire Head instead? It comes down to time, transport and a flexible approach to venues.

I’d missed out on the better part of a busy climbing year with my two sons, preparing drill targets for a copper exploration programme in outback north Queensland. Despite the indifferent weather, they’d criss-crossed the British Isles throughout the summer visiting dozens of different climbing venues. They’d succeeded in climbing a string of iconic traditional routes, interspersed with quality sport climbs and deep water solos for the Berghaus-sponsored Great British Isles Climb Off.

They’d intended to start in Scotland, but sadly the weather was against them. As a result, they’d been forced to head south, first to Cornwall, then Swanage and finally Pembrokeshire in search of dry rock. In between, they’d made brief forays to North Wales. On one of these, Sam had bagged the historically significant route – Strawberries – at Tremadog. The weather, however, had remained consistently uncooperative.

A second trip home for me at the end of the summer had not been planned. One minute I was swatting flies away from malachite-stained

Dan Hamer

outcrops on the banks of the Leichardt River, the next I was winging my way home via Tokyo for an unexpected 10-day break before the drilling commenced in earnest. When I arrived home in Derbyshire, Sam and Ed were on their way back from the west coast of Ireland, where they had been dodging a succession of fierce Atlantic squalls on the limestone sea cliffs at the Burren. They’d all but abandoned the prospect of getting to Scotland.

I checked the weather forecast in Derbyshire the day after landing, and to my surprise found that a change for the better was imminent. After two frustrating months that had seen the Climb Off avoiding the worst of the rain and wind in the southern and western coastal extremities, the first weekend in September looked set to buck the trend. It didn’t look too warm, but high pressure and a northerly airstream across the whole country provided the first incentive to venture north of the border.

Sam was keen, and realising it was probably the only opportunity to complete the Climb Off’s primary goal, he unpacked and then quickly repacked. We set off at 05:00 the next morning determined to avoid the traffic. Driving by turns we cleared the Manchester conurbation well before rush hour and by 07:30 were having breakfast at the service station in Tebay. At 09:00, we were coasting around the southern suburbs of Glasgow, heading for the Erskine Bridge.

Parking next to the football ground in Dumbarton, we made a brief reconnaissance of the crag. Access to Dumbarton Rock couldn’t be easier. Scotland’s premier urban bouldering venue and one of the country’s hardest traditional routes

together form the western promontory of a volcanic plug topped by the town’s Castle. It’s an impressive piece of rock, especially the headwall of the main crag. The Castle’s outer ramparts come so close to the crag that access to the top of the climbs is a serious challenge.



The trip to the Burren - King Crozzel F7b+, Climbers - Sam and Ed Hamer. Photo - Hamer Brothers

Sam set his sights on Chemin de Fer – the classic E5 Extreme Rock route – a diagonal crack line towards the left hand side of the main wall. We noted that the boulder problems and sport routes were well chalked up. In complete contrast, the traditional routes appeared to be chalk-free - a phenomenon that Sam and Ed had seen repeatedly across the country during their summer travels.

Chemin de Fer required considerable effort and Sam finally peeled off just below the point where the crack slants leftwards. ‘Didn’t warm up enough’ was his frustrated quip. He lowered off for a rest and we had lunch beneath one of the larger boulders. A couple of other climbers appeared with a crash mat and began bouldering. Sam’s second attempt went much faster and he reached his original high point in a fraction of the time taken previously. He was able to find a comfortable resting position, arrange protection for the final section and was soon topping out on the skyline.

If climbing the route had been hard, stripping it – it was beyond my seconding capabilities - was a far more serious undertaking. It’s always awkward to strip diagonal routes from above, especially the steep and impending variety, and Chemin de Fer proved to be no exception. Straining to retrieve his gear from the middle section of the crack dragged the doubled abseil rope a few inches to the right. It slotted into a v-shaped notch and locked solid. It proved impossible to pull the rope down from below. This required him to launch a clandestine assault on Dumbarton Castle’s defences by scrambling up the vegetated rocks at the right hand end from the beach and scaling a lower section of the

perimeter wall. Fortunately, there were no sentries on duty to deter access!

After all this effort, he had little energy or enthusiasm for a second route. We pitched our tents at a camp site near the start of the West Highland Way and headed to a nearby restaurant. During the subsequent meal, Sam considered the venue for the final day of the Climb Off. I assumed that he would be keen to look at one of the harder crack lines at Dumbarton Rock. Instead he asked: 'How far is the Cobbler from here? Dalriada's the route to do!'

Dalriada is a stunning line. It's one of the most photogenic mountain routes in the country - an impossibly undercut arête on the crag immediately below the north summit of Ben Arthur - the Cobbler. Would it be practicable? We weighed up the odds over coffee.

It had been dry for 36 hours. The forecast for the next day was decent. Sam was certainly climbing well enough to have a go. It would be the perfect route to finish the Climb Off. What was there to lose? We decided to wait until the morning and take a trip into Glasgow to look at a guide and a map. We got back to the campsite at 21.00, confused by the extended daylight.

Next day we were encouraged by clear skies and brisk temperatures. We drove into the centre of Glasgow, to one of Tiso's outdoor shops, and searched for a guide. One look at a photograph of Dalriada was enough. We bought the guide and an OS map of the area around Loch Lomond and set off northwest across the Erskine Bridge again.

We parked at the foot of the zig-zag track in Arrochar, at the head of Loch Long, and set off towards the Cobbler. It was already midday when we reached the tree line. From here we got our first view of the dramatic skyline and a sensa-

tional profile of Dalriada. The next section of the approach climbed the east bank of a stream to a knot of large boulders. A few hundred yards beyond the boulders, the track splits into two. One branch continued straight ahead to a saddle, whereas the other forked left and climbed steeply into the couloir beneath the Cobbler. Conditions were perfect. Sam couldn't believe his luck!

We gained height easily on the way up the couloir as the view to the south expanded rapidly. We leap-frogged several walking parties on the track and reached the saddle between the two main peaks of Ben Arthur around 13.00. I have seen many impressive lines in a career in the mountains extending over more than five decades; Dalriada is right up there with the best of them - a fierce-looking, serrated arête with a succession of overhangs outlined against the blue and at almost 3,000ft. I was pleased that I'd brought a pair of prism belaying glasses. They're a must for routes like Dalriada unless you want a crick in the neck!

Placing gear on the lower section of the route proved extremely taxing, especially as Sam was climbing on a single sport rope. He had to adjust several runners to make sure the rope ran smoothly across the various overhangs. A tricky-looking crack went more easily than expected and he soon reached the sanctuary of a 'hands off' rest beneath the upper headwall. He had a good shake out there and this proved crucial because the route retained his interest to the very top! He was out of sight on the final section and I had to monitor progress from the movement of the rope. I paid it out slowly as he inched upwards and it was the shout of congratulation from a photographic vantage along the terrace that alerted me to his success.

Stripping gear from Dalriada proved every bit as difficult as the previous day's antics on Chemin de Fer, and we finished up on top of the north peak with me roping him down to the anchors he had placed at the top of the route to release his abseil. We then strolled over to the main summit and climbed the rocks marking the true top to bask in the late afternoon sunshine.

Sam and Ed's experiences across the British Isles during the Climb Off say much about the current state of British rock climbing. Record numbers pay to climb on indoor walls; bouldering is justifiably popular and Mediterranean sport rock is a big draw. However, outdoor lead climbing on traditional routes in Britain appears to be unfashionable. It's a pity that so many of our brilliant crags and the iconic routes on them are neglected by the current generation of climbers.

British rock has much to recommend it, despite the vagaries of British weather. Although the summer of 2015 will not be remembered as a vintage period for British traditional climbing by most climbers, Sam and Ed would probably disagree. They travelled more than 3,000 miles around the British Isles in the two months of the Climb Off. They climbed at venues in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland - the Cobbler being the last. They didn't climb any new routes or even make early repeats of anything super hard - that wasn't their objective.

As they explained to me back in Derbyshire before I left for the outback, they climbed 'for the sheer hell of it.'

Dalriada, The Cobbler E7 6B, Climber Sam Hamer.
Photo -Hamer Brothers





The Capitan. Lurking Fear climbs just to the right of the sun shade line. Photo - Peter Graham

Lurking Fear

Peter Graham

I can't remember exactly when I first met Gregory. It was probably sport climbing somewhere. Back in the day he used to be almost exclusively into clipping bolts. To be honest, I didn't get on with him so well at first. He was too 'new school' for my fusty traditional ways. But gradually, over the years, I began to like Gregory and we became good friends. Many a relaxed hour was spent basking in the sun below Spanish sport crags; we even climbed the odd longer route together.

Two years ago I bumped into Gregory in Camp 4 and although we'd never climbed anything serious together we made the audacious decision to try to climb Zodiac. Much time was spent preparing for the route. We had to borrow lots of gear off other people including a haul bag and a portaledge. With a haul bag packed and ready to go, we made the forty minute walk to the base to fix the first few pitches. All was going well until it all went wrong near the top of the first pitch.

While top stepping on a small RP, it ripped. Somehow I managed to get the rope wrapped round my leg in the fall and I face-planted head first into the corner. As I wasn't wearing wall gloves I also managed to rip a huge flap of skin off my little finger. Safe to say, we backed off, me and Gregory parted ways and I spent the rest of the trip cragging in Indian Creek.

It wasn't till a couple of weeks ago that me and Gregory felt comfortable enough to try to climb something big together, just the two of us. Hazel had to leave the valley for a few days to do a talk in Banff, so it seemed like the perfect opportunity for us to climb something together.



The face plant, post Zodiac

This time we decided to try a slightly easier route: Lurking Fear. Being more of fan of climbing than hauling we were keen to try and climb the route quickly so we could be light enough to jug with a bag rather than haul. I was keen to try and climb it in a single push if possible.

'Even if it takes 2 hours a pitch that's still only 38 hours on the go!'

Hazel pointed out that there was some fault in this logic. I'm still not quite sure what it is though.



From top left, clockwise: The first bivi, second bivi, El Capitan, selfie of right foot, 2nd selfie of right foot
Centre: the 'G' unit. Photos - Peter Graham

After dropping Hazel off at the airport, we made a few final preparations and walked up to the base of the route, reaching the bottom of the first pitch just as it went dark. To get a head start, I climbed the first pitch in the dark to fix it ready to blast in the morning. It took a bit of getting used to climbing with Gregory again, as I made my way up the 5.9 A0 bolt ladder. Sometimes he would short rope me on a tricky section right when I didn't want him to. But that's just his way I guess. He's a temperamental soul and if you don't pay him enough attention he'll short rope you right when you really don't want it, when you're cruxing out 20 foot above your gear. By the top of the pitch we seemed to be getting along well however, and I abseiled back down to the comfort of a sleeping bag and a can of King Cobra. I drifted off feeling confident about the following day. Being made of tougher stuff than me, Gregory stayed up to watch out for bears.

We woke up at 2 a.m. and after a quick breakfast I stashed the sleeping bag and other comforts and set off juggling up the fixed rope. I offered the next pitch to Gregory, but it turned out it was my lead again. Fortunately it was just an easy bolt ladder with a few hooks, so I wasn't too bothered, but when I got to the belay Gregory informed me that he wouldn't be able to clean the pitch either! The lazy bastard! So down I went and then back up again. It turned out Gregory wasn't up for leading or cleaning any of the pitches, he was only interested in belaying. I questioned why I'd ever thought it would be a good idea to climb with Gregory in the first place. What was in it for him? But I guess you can't climb without a belay, so at least he was serving a purpose. And so it went on. Up and down and back up again. Every pitch. Without any rest. I soon began to realise that it wasn't going to be

sustainable to climb the route in one push, especially as Gregory wasn't pulling his weight. By around 9p.m. we had managed to climb ten pitches and the one man-sized ledge only a short pendulum away was too tempting to miss. I laid out the two foot by one foot piece of foam from the back of my rucksack and curled up in my bivi bag until it got light again. The ledge was only big enough for one so I made Gregory spend the night hanging from a bolt, as punishment for his laziness.

I woke up feeling surprisingly refreshed. As we got higher on the route the angle eased and the pitches started to flow faster as there were more free climbable sections. The odd ledge also gave much needed relief from sitting in my harness.

We reached Thanksgiving Ledge, two pitches from the top, just after dark. In the cave I found a log book.

'First big wall solo, 7 days,' read the last entry. Soloing sounds like hard work. I was glad to have Gregory along with me.

According to the topo the last two pitches could be linked together, so I made for the top.

One final effort in the dark. 'Watch us here mate!' I shouted to Gregory as I cranked up the final 10a sandbag crack. Gregory remained silent as always, but I knew he was paying good attention.

An Occasional Alpinist Attempts the Cassin

Pete Metcalfe

In 1937, over the course of three days, Riccardo Cassin and his two friends Esposito and Ratti forced a line up the massive NE Face of Piz Badile in the Bregaglia on the Swiss-Italian border. It was an amazing feat of mountaineering, route-finding and endurance. Two members of another Italian party attempting the route who had, already exhausted, joined Cassin's team, died from exposure and exhaustion during the traverse over the summit and descent into Italy.

The Via Cassin, or simply 'Cassin', is now a frequently-ascended but much sought-after 'tick' for the Alpine climber. It is one of the six great Alpine north faces (the others being the Cima Grande di Lavaredo, Eiger, Grandes Jorasses, Matterhorn and Petit Dru) but is also considered the easiest. The now standard approach is non-glacial, the route is pure rock-climbing and the rock generally sound. Objective dangers are thus minimal - apart from the weather. Its aspect and form (Badile means

'shovel') means that a storm would quickly make the Cassin an extremely serious place to be, with any precipitation on the upper reaches being funnelled directly down the route. In addition, the descent can be as problematic as the ascent,

with the choices of a gruelling abseil down the North Ridge or traverse over the summit and descent of the Voie Normale on the South (Italian) side.

However, any climber who has seen the Badile and the perfect line of the Cassin will be drawn again and again to pondering its ascent. On a joint FRCC/AC/CC trip in 2010 Andrew Paul and Jamie Goodheart from the AC managed an ascent of the North Ridge before the weather closed in,



but I missed my chance. Having seen the mountain from far away on the other side of the Val Bregaglia I had vowed to return. In the intervening years my leading grade had improved to the point that I started to wonder: would the Cassin

Route be a viable proposition for a mid-range UK climber with a reasonable amount of Alpine experience on less committing and technical undertakings?

The first, and most obvious, thing to point out that it is, by any standards, a long route: between 800 and 900m in length depending on the exact line taken whether the lower grade 3 pitches are included. This translates into around 18-22 pitches, although again this depends how much of the easier ground is run together. It is sustained at F5a-6a with limited fixed protection, equating to about UKVS 4c-HVS 5a. Neil and I had pored over topos and descriptions and felt like we knew every pitch. Over the years us we had both undergone an intermittent but reasonable Alpine apprenticeship. We were regularly climbing around E1, were physically fit, and felt ready for the challenge.

After a brutal slog up to the twee but friendly (and pricey) Sasc Furà refuge at 1904m we made a reconnaissance of the approach to the base of the North Ridge at 2560m. Although a useful exercise - the way is not all that obvious by head torch at 4.30 a.m. - it highlighted how little acclimatisation we'd done. Hearts pounding and lungs pumping, legs leaden, we wondered how on earth were we going to do this in the early hours of tomorrow morning with a full rucksack then go on to do a massive Alpine face?

It was 4 a.m. in the refuge and we tried to cram down some bread and jam. There were about five teams, mostly Italian or Swiss, heading for the Cassin and others for the North Ridge. It is about one and half hours to the base of the North Ridge, from which there is a short abseil to the ledge giving the 'Attaque Direct' the 'Attaque Originale' via the Cengalo Glacier is no longer viable due to its retreat and generally diabolical

state. We could hear it collapse periodically during the course of the day.

We arrived first at the foot of the Diedre Rebuffat around 6.15 a.m. The corner was still damp as the morning sun crept down the face, and the climbing felt hard for F5a. We ran the following easier pitches together, now in the full glare of the rising sun. The next F5c+ was a serious rising traverse with some pitons in place, but I was glad of our full rack of cams. Despite our head start the

The abseil onto the access ledge



other teams were pulling away from us with incredible skill and slickness.

After a steep F5b pitch we ran out around three rope lengths all the way to the Cengia Mediana, the large ledge at mid height. Although this felt

Heading towards the Cengia Mediana on P5

strenuous and committing it was in retrospect the only way to keep to schedule. The ledge is large and comforting and was currently accommodating the majority of our companions waiting for teams above them to complete the crux, an open groove followed by a steep corner and an easy traverse out right. Eventually it was our turn: Neil took the lead. It feels a sustained UK

HVS (5a) but, remember, this is at altitude wearing a rucksack with another 10 pitches to go.

The second "crux", a short traverse under a roof then a layback corner, turned out to be straightforward and shortly we found ourselves well above the second Bivouac Cassin and at the base of the Exit Chimneys. We were now feeling quite relaxed and were possibly even mentally adding the 'tick' to our climbing CVs. There were still a couple of teams above us in the chimneys - they seemed to be moving quite slowly.

There were still another six pitches and over 200m of climbing to go. Clouds were swirling up from the Cengalo and the upper part of the face was obscured. Swear words were floating down towards me as Neil fought with the desperately slippery, narrow and awkward initial pitch in the chimneys. Now the clouds were just above us and looking decidedly black and I was starting to get really cold. Being hit by a storm whilst in these chimneys would be a disaster - drowning could be a distinct possibility. All the other teams had now disappeared and I felt very isolated on this vast face.

'Safe!' came a welcome call from above. It was almost as horrific as anticipated. After some judicious pulling on gear I reached the stance; the next pitch looked a least a little less strenuous. Hastily I took the lead and got another pitch under our belt.

The weather now seemed to be holding off and Neil ran out another 60m at about F5b. The face kept coming at us until the very last, with another pitch culminating in a strenuous pull onto the ridge. It was 5.30p.m. Thick clumps of cloud were jostling around us, obscuring everything at one moment then revealing surrounding tops. We heard ominous rumblings across the valley and could sense electricity in the air as we

simul-climbed the last of the ridge to the summit in about an hour. Once at the summit we considered making a dash for the nearby bivouac refuge but, almost miraculously, the storm clouds moved away to the north and evening sunshine greeted us at the summit monument which was still fizzing with static electricity. We decided on the

The crux groove and corner pitch





Left: In the exit chimneys
Right: The summit of the Piz Badile

long descent to the Gianetti Refuge in Italy and a well-deserved bowl of soup and large beer.

So, is the Cassin a good objective for an experienced UK-based climber competent around E1, with decent but not vast amounts of Alpine experience? Difficult to say. We managed it, obviously, but maybe we were just lucky - weather reports had suggested storms later in the afternoon, and if these had moved whilst we were on the face then it would have been a very different story. We could have done with cutting an hour or two off our time - 3 p.m. was our target for reaching the ridge. Acclimatisation might have helped speed our climbing; however the best way to improve your speed on long routes is to practice doing them!

I would therefore suggest that, if restricted to the UK for training, you should seek out multi-pitch routes on mountain crags and aim to climb several in a day. A combination of hard and easy pitches run out or moved together on would be ideal. In the Lakes, a suggested itinerary would be Grooved Arete on Pikes Crag (180m VD) followed by Central Buttress (E1, 120m) and Moss Ghyll Grooves (MVS, 100m), then Pikes Crag Ridge with the Isis start (S, 120m). If you can manage that easily in a day wearing rucksacks, have spent a few days acclimatising, watch the meteo with eagle eyes and are

prepared to think 'speed!' for the best part of day then you should be well prepared. But as ever, it's up to you to decide and take responsibility for any decision.

Practicalities

Accommodation

A friendly, quiet valley base on the Swiss side is at Camping Mulina on the way out of Vicosoprano at the base of the Maloja Pass. Sasc Furä Refuge (SAC) is the base on the Swiss side. The Gianetti Refuge (CAI) at 2534m on the Italian (Val Masino) side. Both give discounts for members of affiliated clubs such as the Austrian Alpine Club or AC. My FRCC membership card didn't seem to do the trick. Self-catering available and hot water for sale at ~3euro/L.



Access

From Bondo take the unmade road up Val Bondasca to the parking at its end the (10CHF charge from ticket machine before barrier). One and a half hours walk from here to the Sasc Furä refuge. Add another one to one and a half hours to reach the area around the base of the North Ridge where there are plenty of bivvy options.

Gear

We ran with double 60m ropes but 50m should be OK as abseils on Italian side are set up for doubled 50m ropes. Many European teams were using triple rated singles, however, which is certainly worth looking at. Fixed protection is limited to pitons, although now most stances are equipped with double bolt belays. Take a good

selection of cams and a single set of wires.

Twelve quickdraws will be enough but take some longer ones and slings as they are useful to avoid rope drag on the longer pitches.

The approach and descent can be done in approach shoes. If the access ledge is snowy (ask the guardian at the Sasc Furä) then strap-on crampons such as Katulas might be useful; they certainly will be if walking back from Italy over the Passo della Porcellizzo.

Food / water

Despite its northerly aspect the route is in the sun most of the morning and the upper parts catch the afternoon sun. Take at least 2 litres of water each and plenty of easily accessible snacks. Chocolate, cake and energy bars are sold at the refuge.

Guides

The topos in the Alpine Club guide and the Bregaglia Climbing 2008 guide available online describe the original route, which has now been superseded with a version featuring longer pitch lengths and an alternative finish that avoids the grotty rock of the original. It is worth seeking out the version (available in French, Italian or German) that gives the modern line, particularly as this coincides with the bolted stances. There are numerous intermediate stances utilising pitons of various vintages and (un)trustworthiness.

Descent

There's some debate about whether it's best attempt the North Ridge descent back to the Sasc Furà or to continue down the south side of the mountain into Italy and the Gianetti Hut. Abseil descent of the route would be a massive undertaking, but an emergency descent could certainly be made to the Vire Mediante from any part of the upper section. Obviously we can't give any details regarding the North Ridge option other than to say we were warned off it by many people including the guardian at the Sasc Furà. According to most sources it requires around twenty abseils and difficult route finding. The alternative is to traverse the summit ridge at about IV (45min-1hr) then descend the Voie Normale in

about five abseils. The description in the Bregaglia Climbing 2008 guide is less than helpful here. From the strange space needle monument on the summit scramble down the loose gully on the left (looking down), then follow the line of abseils at 25 intervals (look for large rings) marked by red paint splashes. At the base of the gully follow the obvious path R to a final abseil from the large metal cross then scramble down the E side of the ridge. About 45 minutes from there to the Gianetti.

The walk back to Switzerland via the Porcellizzo and Trubinasca passes is gruelling but possibly worth doing for the scenery: it took us the best part of a day. The best option is undoubtedly to arrange a lift from Val Masino or to get dropped off at the start. It is also probably possible to get back to Bondo by public transport as there is a train from Sondrio to Chiavenna and a regular bus service from there to San Moritz; a taxi would probably be necessary to get from Val Masino to Sondrio.

The Persistence of Memory

Some climbs or climbing days reside long in the memory, with many details still clearly visible in the mind's eye, while others leave little trace and one can recall little or nothing of them. Ninety per cent or more of sport climbs by general consent are in the latter category and are instantly forgettable. They are the fast food of climbing: essentially unsatisfying but that doesn't mean to say we don't enjoy them in the moment.

What makes for a memorable day's climbing? Colin Kirkus famously declared 'You know Alf, going to the right place at the right time with the right people is all that matters. What one does is purely incidental'; but I'm not totally convinced. While I would agree that a mediocre climb could easily be made more memorable by virtue of congenial company, a quality route is much more likely to satisfy and give retrospective pleasure in recall. Doing a route in the wrong company can also be memorable, but not in a good way.

So a good route is probably essential and for me it probably needs to be trad. What about length and difficulty? My most memorable routes are ones where I was challenged to a greater or lesser degree. Without some doubt - however slight - as to the outcome, an important component is missing, though it is true that even quite an easy route can linger long in the mind when it has some particular defining feature. An example would be the famous Torridon V Diff, Cioch Nose, where the exposure is mind-numbing. People do these days seem to make a big thing of multi-pitch climbing and certainly this can make for a more memorable day.

Another factor for me is the location and position of the climb, so a crag with a walk-in (and up)

Roger Wilkinson

and spectacular views has a head start. A day in a grotty hole in the ground like Hodge Close, however good the climb, is going to struggle to compete with a day on Gimmer. Then there is the historical aspect of the route; if the climb has historical significance, such as Kipling Groove or Central Buttress, this adds a lot to the experience for many people. On the other hand, if a route has only recently been put up so that few others have done it before me then something else is added to the pleasure. It is also undeniable that repeating a route is going to be less memorable than doing it for the first time.

Looking back on the summer of 2014 the route which stands out in my mind above all others is a relatively new route pioneered in 2012. The route is a three pitch offering on a favourite crag which faces south and gives splendid views over the southern Lakes. It appeared for the first time in the new Langdale guidebook published in 2013. The line is direct, the rock is good and the difficulty of the climbing is sustained at 4b and I climbed it with a good friend on a beautiful sunny day.

We set off up the Gill on the Friday of the Bank Holiday weekend along with many others. Some were climbers, mostly young and vigorous. As we wouldn't be trying to race anyone to the foot of the crag we had to hope, because our objective was only described in the latest guidebook (and in addition many climbers rely on selected guides, ensuring that they will all be queuing for the same routes as each other), that our slow upward progress would not lead to us having to follow other teams up the crag. Casually chatting with our fellow climbers at the foot of the crag we

ascertained that no-one else had the new guide, and they were all heading for the long-established classics. We enjoyed a leisurely lunch at the foot of the Rake and under a cloudless sky, confident that we could take our time and enjoy our intended route without any hassle. Several of the archetypal climbing teams were represented: the hoary old crag rats (in addition to ourselves), reduced in their dotage to reliving the VS adventures of their youth on Rake End Wall; the pair of young blokes who'd like to look like the hoary old crag rats (though not so ancient) but confessed their inexperience by checking with us which was Stoa's Crack, and then struggling up a vertical field to reach the foot of the route when a slight detour would have made it a walk; and a young fellow from Essex with his somewhat nervous girlfriend about to embark on their first-ever mountain route, Cook's Tour.

Our route was not hard to find. It starts from a level stretch of Jack's Rake, close to Aardvark and Gwynne's Chimney up an obvious line of weakness. I couldn't help wondering why this had lain undiscovered for so long: the line at the start is not only obvious but the rock is clearly good and clean, and the climbing looks (deceptively, as it happens) easy. Because of the architecture of the crag at this point it looks like an easy scramble up to a big area of vegetation, apparently avoiding the main challenge taken by Aardvark, so perhaps this is what deterred earlier explorers.

A coin was tossed or some other method used to determine that partner would take the lead and thereby get two pitches to my one. Though initially a bit miffed by this, one has to be philosophical in these cases. Later, perhaps in retrospect rather than when actually engaged in pitch 2, I decided that I'd had the better of the coin tossing.

So partner had the joy of first setting foot on the route, and soon it became apparent that the two cracks forming a sort of blocky groove were much steeper and much more awkward than they appeared from below. Mercifully, the gear was good, at least for the easier moves, but after a certain amount of stepping up then down, right then left and a certain amount of harrumphing and 'watch me's', he was installed on a comfy ledge about 20 metres above the Rake and I was following, hoping I made it look easier than had my companion.

Swinging leads is a great way to climb a multi-pitch route, though I don't think time is saved unless both climbers carry their own rack. These days most people carry a rack far more comprehensive than is strictly necessary, at least in retrospect. But with age comes declining powers and more willingness to compromise, and a shared rack comes to look more and more of a good idea when anything other than a roadside crag is in view. So at each stance the whole rack needs to be switched from one leader to the next, a rather tedious and tiresome necessity. On the plus side, you do get a good reminder of what your partner's half of the rack looks like and how it is organized, and you get more time to chat about the route, the view, the weather and of course the quality and difficulty of the route.

The second pitch begins in an unthreatening manner, consisting of easy-angled slabs of the superb rock typical of the crag, and with comforting protection. During the period when huge flows of sticky acidic lava spread slowly across what is now the Lake District, forming the Borrowdale Volcanic Series of rocks which provide most of the area's crags, there must have been a volcanic vent very close to where we were climbing. The rock is extremely rough and

consists of fragments of baked-potato-size down to walnut size, held together by finer-grained material (volcanic ash or tuff). In some places it is possible to detect layers which look like the beds typical of sedimentary rocks, where volcanic dust rained down in intermittent storms of red-hot ash. The large fragments would have been volcanic bombs, ejected from a nearby vent (they are too large to have been thrown any great distance) and falling as deadly semi-molten blobs of lava, solidifying as they fell. Fortunately, such sub-optimal climbing conditions did not obtain in late August 2014, and I was able to make steady if unspectacular progress towards the crux section of the route, finding the late summer sunshine plenty warm enough.

So, a few metres after leaving the belay I find myself traversing rightwards below an impending wall, above which steep slabs lead upward. Shortly, the impending wall ends where a prominent right-facing corner, one side steep, the other slabby, leads invitingly upward, but guarded by what turns out to be the technical (but not the mental) crux of the route, a steep bulge of diminutive proportions which at first sight seems to be nothing at all. However, holds for both hands and feet to pull over the bulge are in short supply, and it is all too clear that, even should one manage to get halfway over the bulge, there is almost nothing to pull on to complete the move. Fortunately this little awkwardness is somewhat protected by good, if rather knee-height protection. In due course I stand on top of the sloping bulge, balanced precariously in the lower part of the groove, looking at a smooth, steepening slab in a narrowing corner, without a corner crack for gear or holds. Fortunately, the guidebook describes it well, and I am able to feel over the steep wall on my left onto another slab, where

the cindery rock offers several excellent though small holds. I pull gingerly over the wall on to the slab which, apart from its holds, mimics the slab and corner which I have just quitted.

By this time I've reached a position where a fall would take me about half way down the first pitch, with protection but a distant and irrelevant memory, but the comfort of gear is still a distant prospect. However, the climbing is never too hard, and the rock and holds are good. All that's needed is to hold it all together, keep cool and controlled, and repeat the previous sequence of moves – reach over the steep wall on the left, find the holds and pull over on to the third slab, telling myself that I would need to try quite hard to fall.

At last, (to use the modern but, I always feel, infelicitous appellation) a bomber piece of gear! I clip the left-hand rope which has served no useful purpose – simply being a constant reminder of the lack of gear – since leaving the stance. Come to that, it's a good while since either rope was anything more than a dead weight. A sigh of relief escapes the lips and a smile begins to form as the appealing steep slab, showing unmistakable signs of protection placements, beckons upwards. I'm starting to enjoy myself. Or perhaps I have been doing so all along but didn't really notice, having rather more pressing things to think about. The slab narrows as I climb and I find myself pushed steadily towards the right arête, which eventually must be turned to slither across a wall into a groove which leads up and left. Despite appearances it is really hard to find belays – blocks are loose, the corner cracks widen so that gear is in danger of dropping out and the walls of the groove are blank. I can feel partner's impatience seeping up the ropes, as they remain stationary for about ten minutes. Eventually I find

anchors but no stance in the groove (which is part of Cook's Tour), so an uncomfortable hanging belay (which is to be my home for the next hour) has to suffice. To make my position even less comfortable I must take in one rope coming up normally while the other passes through a last runner high on the now-invisible slab round the arête, which in addition creates rope drag.

Time passes slowly as partner prepares to ascend and finally 'Climbing' drifts up from below. I go into that semi-trance-like state which can overtake the challenged leader who now brings up his second on automatic pilot, while dangling in an increasingly uncomfortable hanging belay. On arrival partner pays the obligatory 'good lead' compliments, which in this case even went as far as 'Glad you were on lead' or some such. Well, now, in retrospect, I was glad I was on lead for a memorable pitch. But there is still one pitch to go, and a glance at the guide makes it clear that it's more or less follow your nose upwards from the alleged stance which will remain my home for the next half hour or more. High above us looms what appears to be a corner crack, which seems to lean out beyond the merely vertical and is a daunting prospect.

Again, the Rite of the Rack; but soon enough partner is trying out the small holds on the steep right wall of the diagonal groove. It's uncertain who is most relieved when the first piece of gear finally appears, as a fall in the first few metres would be total wipe-out for the belayer trapped in the firing line. A ledge is reached, but above the wall bulges disconcertingly as a few steep moves must be made to access some large but suspicious-looking flake holds. Suspicions are increased when some of the flakes emit a ringing sound when hit. Gingerly, partner gains another narrow ledge behind the ringing flakes, pulling

on anything but the obvious big holds. Later, with the security of the rope above me, I find that the flakes are well jammed and safe to pull on, but on lead partner wisely didn't trust them.

A short traverse right, with a good foot ledge below an impending wall, leads into the corner. Plenty of good gear appears and soon partner is bridging encouragingly and progressing in a blur of arms, legs, feet and cacophonous flailing gear rack. What had seemed to be from below a difficult challenge turned out to be a jug-fest and perhaps one of the easier stretches of this fine route.

Yes, Coati, on Pavey Ark, only three pitches and 60 metres long, was the only route we did that day, but the day as a whole fulfilled all the requirements needed to make it a memorable one. We could have gone to a smaller, roadside crag, perhaps a bolted venue, got a lot more ticks and climbed a lot more metres, but by now our day would have been forgotten.

Tatry Adventures

Winter climbing in the High Tatry (or more correctly Vysoke Tatry) has always had something of a mythical status amongst British climbers. For those of us old enough to remember, the 60s and 70s saw some very impressive alpine winter ascents from a variety of Eastern European teams trained in the Tatry. These ascents were characterised by an ability to spend days on end on the most extreme faces enduring the harshest of winter conditions. Somehow these displays of endurance and technical skill were taken by western climbers to typify routes in the Tatry, and not just the very skilled teams coming across the Iron Curtain. This myth continued until the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the gradual opening up of travel to the 'near' east.

I first visited the Tatry in February 1991 following a chance meeting with some Slovak climbers and a very drunken night on a Chamonix campsite, involving tripping over a guy line on the way to get more beer, an exchange of addresses and the assurance that 'Tatry climbing very good - you come!' A couple of telegrams later and I arrived in Prague airport to be greeted by one of my former Chamonix drinking companions. The following three weeks were a real eye opener and I began to realise just what a fabulous range of mountains the Vysoke Tatry are - something for everyone and not just a hard core of the most gnarly of the gnarly.

Since that point I have made numerous trips to the mountains - both in winter and summer - but always without meeting any other Brit climbers. Many times I have climbed with Slovaks but increasingly of late I have climbed with a variety of climbers from the UK - some with limited

winter experience, some young (14 years old) and some downright good winter climbers. All have enjoyed the experience and all were keen to return. My most recent visit was with fellow Fell and Rocker Matt Pigden shortly before Christmas this year (2015). Read on:

Due to a distinct lack of willing partners - I prefer to think that this was due to the spontaneity of the trip and the fact that Christmas would soon be upon us, rather than any personal characteristics - I was planning a solo trip to the Tatry. As always I was hoping to tick several good routes, enjoy some winter sunshine and avoid any 'too exciting' incidents. I had even managed to borrow a Yates 'Soloist' and had deluded myself into believing that I had a self-belaying system that I could use in the Tatry in winter. Fortunately, Matt came to my aid at the eleventh hour and I avoided having to use the 'Soloist' in anger. I now had a partner and any thoughts of becoming the new 'Andy K' were thankfully sidelined - soul-searching, cold and loneliness replaced by pleasant banter, cold (still) and good company. It's funny, but very fortunate with hindsight, how things work out.

The plan for the trip was simple. Wizzair would fly us straight from Luton to Poprad in Slovakia and then a 20-minute taxi ride would take us to the walk in to Chata Pri Zelenom Plese at the base of one of the most magnificent winter climbing venues in the Vysoke Tatry - the north face of Maly Kezmarsky Stit. It worked a treat and having flown out at 8.25 we were sat in the hut at 16.00 relaxing and admiring the mountains. Good start. We were the sole paying occupants of the hut

Tony Walker



Matt on the short but steep approach from the chata. Stanislavkeho Komin is the large corner directly above Matt.

until quite late when two Polish climbers arrived. Jokingly I said to Matt that by Sod's Law they would want to try the same route as us - and they did! They looked young and fit (okay relative to me!), knew the route and only had one day so we agreed to climb another route whilst they tried the 'big' corner (Stanislavkeho Komin). This route is one of the most obvious on the wall taking a huge 400m corner to a large terrace (Nemecky Rebrik or German Ladder). The route continues above for another 500m over somewhat easier ground to the summit. Most teams are content with climbing the corner (hard Scottish VI) but the Polish lads were going to get up at 5a.m., climb the corner and then continue to the summit. We were impressed!

Next day dawned a little murky but with a good afternoon forecast and an easy retreat to the hut we headed out to climb 'L'Avy Y' opposite the Stanislavkeho Komin. The Polish lads were obviously very keen and had already been on their route three hours when we left the hut. There wasn't much new snow about and the plod to the base of the route was straightforward, apart from when it steepened toward the base of the route. As usual we carried on a bit too far up the steepening slope until prudence dictated we put on crampons to avoid a fast descent down some very hard old snow.

A small but steep mixed/ice pitch prevented easy access to the base of the route proper. In previous years this had been banked out but was now quite a challenge and somehow I ended up on the lead. I was even more nervous than usual as Matt had let slip that he was a member of the UK dry-tooling team! I tried my best to climb well and not fumble around,

but I needn't have worried as the ice and turf were quite chewy and things went well. We were soon in the snow bowl below the Polish team and the start of our route. Things did not look good for the Poles though, as the odd peg and karabiner fell from on high. Mmm ... must be tricky! Our route passed to the left and ascended a less steep corner, but was still in the upper range of Scottish V, and magnificent. A couple of rather tricky ice and rock pitches led up to a terrace running out leftwards to the base of a very steep torquing groove onto an icy slab - the crux of the route. Conditions weren't too bad but all the placements were covered with a layer of cruddy snow that had to be cleared to find anything worthwhile.

Helpfully, there was a fair amount of gear in-situ that I gratefully clipped as I scraped my way upwards. We topped out and Matt thought the pitch tricky - very comforting as it corresponded to my impression too! In the hut the Polish lads arrived back at half past eight having taken the best part of twelve hours to climb four pitches. Apparently, they weren't too impressed by the conditions and also ... it was obviously a hard route. We returned their dropped gear.

The next day the weather was much better so we headed out for the big corner (Stanislavkeho Komin) to try and improve on the previous day's Polish attempt. Back at the start, I led up the icefall again and then Matt headed up the initial groove of the corner proper. This looked quite steady from below but proved anything but. Steep rock and turf - with reasonable gear - led to some committing moves out right to a thin ice smear. After a while and a very optimistic ice screw runner, Matt reached the belay and my turn came. Brilliant pitch (as they all were) but very involved. The next pitch was straightforward in

comparison - two pieces of gear and a nice Scottish V ice fall led to a double bolt belay - lubbly jubbly.

Above the belay, the main groove went up for about 70m or so and proved to be very engaging - really good but definitely tricky. Steep bridging with reasonable gear that took some digging out. Eventually some wide bridging (for short legged people at least), led out over an overhang via some nice torques and little patch of nevé to the stance, but with no bolts this time, just a couple of old pegs. A very typical Tatry pitch - a bit of everything and it takes longer than you might expect. By this time we were getting a little short of daylight but Matt headed purposefully up the next groove. After lots of tenuous scraping and torquing he ended up out of gear at a marginal stance with no obvious prospect of anything better to come. We were a little out of options and we decided to admit defeat - impending darkness and lack of adequate resources (gear) dictated a retreat. A pity, but probably a wise choice, and, despite the retreat another fabulous day on the hill.

Day three and the start of the weekend - the hut was quite busy and weather definitely Scottish - very windy and plenty of spindrift blowing around. Over breakfast I was secretly hoping that Matt might suggest that it would be prudent to walk out and have a nice relaxing day before our flight home tomorrow. Unfortunately, he looked even keener than usual and so, despite the 'hoolie' outside, we decided to climb. I suggested that we climb a shorter route on the left hand side of MKS and try and get back to the hut around 3p.m. We could then begin our walk out in daylight. It probably goes without saying but, despite the number of people in the hut, there was no one else trying to climb that day (mad



improved as we got higher up the route but Matt had a real battle on the first pitch against the endless plumes of spindrift coming off the summit ridge ('real battle' being my interpretation of quite a bit of swearing combined with the odd muffled scream). This kept me highly amused, sorry, concerned, whilst belaying in an ever deepening snow drift. The second pitch was fabulous - steep turf led to a vertical rock groove and a very 'bijou' stance. Matt led the last and a single abseil over the back of the summit ridge led to an easy walk back to the chata.

Once back we had a quick lunch of tea and cake, then packed our bags and prepared to head down. However, just as we were shoving the last bits of gear into our sacs, we were accosted by a rather merry Czech climber carrying an unlabelled bottle of some type of strong spirit and several glasses. There was no possibility of leaving without trying at least a glass or two! It was very typical Tatry and made the walk down quite mellow.

Matt had never visited the Tatry before but I had been numerous times and we both agreed that we needed to go back as soon as possible. There are so many routes to do and fabulous experiences to be had. So ... FRCC winter 2017 meet anyone???

dogs?) We decided to climb a relatively modern three pitch route called 'Koncert sa Nekonal' ('The concert will not take place'), another great route which was climbed in somewhat less than ideal conditions. Each pitch was very engaging and worthy in its own right - brilliant. The weather

Left :The first steep mixed pitch of L'Avy Y. The pitch followed the ramp line close to the steeper rock with some difficult climbing. The rock wall above my head at the top of the photo gave the crux pitch - a very steep technical crack for 15m.

Below: Matt committing to the steep slabs of Koncert sa Nekonal in less than ideal conditions.

Right: The superb big ice pitch on Stanislavkeho Komin. Although tricky (V), this pitch gave a bit of relief from the sustained mixed climbing above and below.



A Wye Valley Tour

Ian Stirrups

Looking for a way to celebrate a bigish birthday (the one where the government starts giving me some money back) I thought a long day climbing in the Wye Valley would be fun. It would also be a celebration of thirty-six years of climbing in the area.

I wanted something different and decided on doing a route on each of the six main crags. The weather in the week of my birthday was fine and dry. My wife Sue suggested that the actual birthday, being a Saturday, might mean we could find our routes already occupied, so we went for Friday.

I didn't have a schedule and had only settled definitely on the first three routes and the order of the crags, but with the long hours of daylight the main issue would be stamina rather than time, a 9 a.m. start would still give time to spare.

The first crag was Wynd Cliff on the Welsh side, as it gets the early morning sun. The crag has the fewest routes but the highest concentration of quality with most routes in the VS to E2 grade being worthwhile, but very little below VS. Generally the routes are well protected and strenuous, following steep crack lines, although Phoenix (HVS) and Zulu (low E2) have fairly bold starts. The crag is divided into two, with steps and a staircase between them providing an easy descent, and great views over the river to Wintours Leap. The choice of route was easy. Questor is best VS in the Wye valley and I think can hold its own with most single pitch VS's in the country. With warm dry rock the climbing flowed enjoyably and we were soon back at the car. Feeling pleased to have got off to a good start we headed back to England.

Wintours Leap has a lot to offer, with a great outlook directly above the tidal stretch of the Wye and generally peaceful, with the road being on the far side of the river some distance away. It is the big crag of the Wye valley, in height and length, reaching nearly 300 feet on GO (Great Overhanging!) Wall. As with the majority of the Wye Valley crags, most of it has been quarried at some point, although long enough ago (in the second half of the nineteenth century, to provide stone to build the Avonmouth docks) for it to be pretty stable. Natural rock is found, at the top of many climbs, and also on Fly Wall. As a result there are a lot of multi pitch climbs, but also single pitches at the right hand end, on Fly Wall.

Unusually for limestone there are quite a few routes below the VS grade, some of which are quite good, such as Central Rib and Bottle Buttress (so called because of the broken glass on the easy ground at the top of the route, courtesy of the local youth). There are also sports routes, although the quality is generally low in the easier grades. So for my day out there was a lot of choice. Another favourite is Zelda; this meant dropping the grade to HS but it is good climbing all the way and nicely exposed on the 2nd pitch. We got to the foot of the climb to find another team ahead of us. The leader was struggling to find the way on the second pitch, with his partner reading him the guidebook. The second was still on the stance when I arrived and also had both their rucksacks. Fortunately the leader sorted himself out and his mate set off before Sue arrived, with both sacks, one strapped to the other, which looked pretty full.

Unsurprisingly, given the number of times we have done the route, we were quickly moving on to the next crag, Ban-y-Gor, which is just across the neck of a huge meander of the Wye, and faces north. Here one is getting into the realm of Wye Valley esoterica. The routes are generally steep, quite tough and somewhat buried in the trees. Protection possibilities are often limited so a lot of routes, even when originally done free, are now bolted. Generally this is a crag for the harder climber. For the day I wanted to do a route I had not done before, Muddy Waters (**, 6a); in fact I had not even seen it, as it is towards the far end of the crag.

After a bit of a rough trek in, the route looked climbable but turned out to be fairly tough at the crux. The guide book says long reach - I think you would have to be six feet plus to climb it by just reaching up. A couple of attempts later I found a

way to gain sufficient height. The route finishes up a great little crack which is could do with being longer. We both had to push ourselves a bit on this one.

Next was Tintern Quarry, a short drive up the road, which is an enormous hole in the ground with lots of scary bad rock but also some decent stuff. Choosing a route was difficult. Sue had suggested The Unkindest Cut of All (6a+). What was she thinking of? Surely not my birthday. The only time I had done this route before I had really struggled to clip the bolt at the crux, let alone make the moves. However, for want of a better idea, this was it. Got to the crux, looked at the holds and found some power. Felt pretty pleased with a quick climb. Sue also knocked it off in short order. Given how well we were going I should have gone for Dust Devil, which is the line of the crag and goes at HVS with a mixture of bolts and



Wintour's Leap from upriver at Lancault. GO (Great Overhanging) wall is the notable white wall left of centre, Woodcroft Quarry is the dark patch going right, and the further right is Fly Wall. Zeldais to the left of GO wall



ZeldaP1. trad gear. There are a few trad routes here but most of the routes are bolted. Lower grade climbers might be tempted by 30 Foot Wall which has 4's and 5's but is mostly less than 30 foot high with sharp and shattered rock. Helmets are definitely obligatory at Tintern as the walls are often topped by unstable scree. In addition there is currently an access issue.

From the quarry it is a grind back up to the car. Shorn Cliff is the next crag and can be reached from the same parking. It is the only crag requiring much of a walk, about half an hour. The walk in is a tedious track and it's uphill on the way back. Shorn Cliff is a gem of a crag. The pleasant approach is to cross the river at Tintern, wind your way up through the woods, paths and forest tracks for most of the way, then a final steep pull until the crag emerges from the trees. Unlike most of the Wye Valley crags it is not quarried, but natural rock, mainly steep slabs with solution holes/cracks providing subtle natural protection. All the starts are shaded, but you quickly emerge to views west across the valley, perfect on a warm summer's evening. Returning through the woods at dusk, with the moon rising over Tintern Abbey, reflecting on the river, is the essence of soft southern English climbing.

As I was going well I decided on Organ Grinder (HVS), a strenuous, slightly impending layback up a large flake, a really memorable line. However a few metres up the route the power seemed to have gone and the brain didn't seem to be sorting the moves with the same clarity as earlier. So it was a bit of a struggle, although Sue cruised it. There is a good mixture of routes at Shorn Cliff with steep cracks, walls and slabs, all single pitch with abseil descents but usually a decent length. With hindsight I should have gone for one of the routes on the slabs of the Great Cave area, which has a number of amenable and good HVS's, and a few easier routes. State of Independence at VS is a little gem, featuring a concretion overhang. Concretions are a feature of the crag. They look fragile but seem to be OK. Run for Home, given E2 but I think E1, makes extensive use of them for holds and threads protection. As we were well up on time we should have done another route,

which would have given Sue a lead and compensated for the walk. But we didn't.

The last crag is Symonds Yat; it is a fair bit further up river and so a bit of a drive. I was aware that I was running out of steam, and Symonds Yat tends to be steep and strenuous. We headed for the Hole in the Wall area which is very accessible and has a good selection of all routes at all grades, including in Snoozin Susie a good two pitch VD, a rarity on limestone. I had hoped to finish on Red Rose Speedway, a superb route steep crackline, but at top end HVS I felt it would be too strenuous. I still wanted to finish on an HVS. Scooby Doo would with hindsight would have been a good choice as it is well protected but I went for Mocking Bird which is marginal HVS and staggered up it, struggling to get in decent gear on the initial crack. Next door to these routes are The Russian, good but a bit over-rated, and Red Rose Speedway. Another possibility was Pam's Pride, perhaps the second best VS in the Wye Valley, at the south end of the crags. However I always find the initial section rather tricky and with less than reassuring gear, so it didn't seem to be one for the end of the day. Whit (VS) on the Pinnacle would also have given a good finish.

Symonds Yat is second only to Wintours in length, and is unusual for the range of grades, making it a good venue for those looking for routes below VS. The location is even more remarkable, as the Yat is a tourist trap, and on sunny day the crowds gather at the Saracen's Head down by the river, from where a short rope ferry enables them to cross. It is a favourite with outdoor centres for canoe descents of the Wye, and pleasure boats convey the less agile on tours down the river. The climbing area is a magic world, far above the attractions of the river, barely

visible in the trees. However the quality of the routes and rock is rather variable and so along with lots of decent climbs are quite a lot of poor ones. Nevertheless I have found it a good source of fresh routes. Careful selection of the no-star routes can yield some decent climbing.

Organ Grinder. Climber - Paul Sheridan



PABBAY - 2015

After Mocking Bird the aforementioned Sarcen's Head was the logical next venue, the perfect way to round off a grand day out!

What is it about islands? There is something special about going out across the water to an island - be it on a lake as in Swallows and Amazons or across the sea to an island especially if it contains crags. The likes of Skye (even with the bridge): Arran, Lundy and Kalymnos come to mind. On a sunny day the Outer Hebrides can be seen from high up on the mainland of Scotland or from Skye - Lewis and Harris to the north, then working a way southwards along the horizon to Barra. This magical world is accessible by the Calmac ferries which ply back and forth across the seas.

The islands of Mingulay and Pabbay are at the southern end of the Outer Hebrides to the south of Barra. In 1993 Graham Little and Kevin Howett, together with Chris Bonington and Mick Fowler (what a team!) paid a visit to Mingulay and climbed the first routes there - what a rock climbing paradise they found!! Two years later a German team paid a visit to nearby Pabbay and climbed the first new routes there, closely followed by Graham and Kevin - soon the secret was out about these two islands and it became 'the place' to go for many climbers. I was in contact with Kath Pyke who was going there with Jim Lowther in 1996 - and thought 'Must get there sometime' - I have had quite a lot of these thoughts and I am pleased to say quite a few have now been ticked off.

Getting to Pabbay and Mingulay was something of a logistical problem - there is the main ferry to Barra (Castlebay); however these islands

are located across what can be rather wild seas. Donald MacLeod runs boat trips on the Boy James boat from Barra and has been taking climbers out to these islands for many years. He will arrange trips with at least six up to twelve climbers. We tried to get a local Penrith team (Eden Valley MC) to go but never seemed to get enough people - however in 2015 the idea of a FRCC meet developed which hopefully would bring the necessary numbers together to have the trip. Dave Menadue agreed to organise the meet, liaising with Donald, and the messages were put out to find out who was interested - and soon the numbers were sufficient for the trip to be a goer - at last!

Eventually twelve of us gathered in Oban with loads of baggage for the week. Transportation was helped with the use of Graham's van for getting most of the baggage onto the boat and so to Barra. The crossing takes about five hours, which was a delight, with the Inner Isles passing by then Barra and the Outer Hebrides getting closer. We were met at the far end by Donald and our baggage was conveyed down a stairway (it was low tide) into the hold of his not too substantial boat. This was an extremely good physics lesson about the floating powers of boats on water. There had been some doubt about leaving that evening with the weather and swell, but we were soon off into the gathering evening, bouncing across the waters. I kept telling myself that Donald knows more about the floating ability of boats than I do. The sea is a big place and this area feels very exposed to weather from the Atlantic. Eventually we arrived in the bay on the east side of Pabbay and our baggage and

Ron Kenyon

ourselves were conveyed to the island, and amazingly none were lost into the sea. The night was approaching but we managed to get everything carried to the camping area and chose our spots for the week - tents up - brew on and home from home.

Guidebook wise we had volume 1 of Gary Latter's selected guide to Scotland but also we had copies of the draft for the new guide for the Outer Hebrides, via Brian Davison, editor-in-chief of the SMC team. Evident from Brian, and also later discussion with Rob Anderson and Tom Prentice, who are putting together guides for out of the way places such as Pabbay, is the fact this is a difficult job, and they welcome comment and checking by anyone in the area. In the Lakes access for checking crags is often easy, but it is a different matter for the likes of Creag Dibbidale on Lewis and Berneray, Mingalay and Pabbay. So in due course we fed back what we could.

A lot of the accesses to routes need abseils and we were equipped with two static abseil ropes - one 65m and the other 100m (chunky abs!). We also had a selection of rope protectors to help safeguard the ropes from fraying and being cut on the extremely old, hard and sharp Lewisian gneiss rock (more later).

In the morning we rose to clear sunny skies and seals basking on the beach. Unfortunately my navigation was all to pot and I led our little group off in the wrong direction, which was not good especially for Chris's knee. We eventually worked it out and arrived on the western side, providing a view of the Great Arch and gulped at the routes there. We settled for lines on the nearby South Face of the Banded Geo which is accessible by a gentle abseil to a solid and amiable base. This is a popular crag with a selection of excellent one pitch routes with the likes of



Pabbay - Banded Geo (South), Redundancy Man (HVS), climber - Dave Menadue. *Photo - Ron Kenyon*

Redundancy Man (HVS), Bye to the Widow (HVS) and the Shipping Views (E1).

We found the more direct and usual way back to camp - though Chris was struggling with the



The traverse into Spring Squill. Climber - Dave Menadue, Photo - Ron Kenyon

knee. The highlights of the evening were two distinctive bird sounds - the first being the drumming noise of the snipe and then the comb-like noise of the corn-crake. We saw the snipe flying about and Alastair believes he saw the corn-crake later.

The next day all except Graham and Bob headed for the Banded Geo area. In the guide Spring Squill (E1) gets four stars and is a must with its adjacent Stealing a Seal's Gaze (E1). After having seen the routes on the Great Arch and the side view of the Banded Geo I was getting somewhat apprehensive with a dislike of scary abbs into sea cliffs especially following very little climbing and a fall on Blanco at Gogarth in 2014 where I hurt my ankle. An abseil point (below the 3 boulders) was established, but with a big sign saying 'ABSEIL POINT FOR SPRING SQUILL', the 65m abseil was rather daunting! Dave led the way followed by Rob, Alastair and myself. Near the start of the abseil part of the rope felt slightly stiff as it passed through my abseil plate as I slowly descended towards the sea and eventually reached the others on a reasonably substantial ledge. Spring Squill and Stealing a Seal's Gaze start up the same way - somewhat steep but on fantastic holds. I was climbing with Dave who set off first to look for the Seal's Gaze followed by Rob on Spring Squill. Dave eventually gained a belay (we believe slightly higher than normal) and I set off following weaving up on the most fantastic rock. I was pleased to have the rope going in above me and to gain the stance.

As I was somewhat the passenger, Dave led the next pitch with moves out across the roof on huge holds to easier rock above. We all topped out on two great routes. Chris and Eric were in the process of abseiling - Chris had gone down but Eric spent some time inspecting the rope before he returned to the top with a section of



rope where the sheath had been cut through!! Chris was at the bottom and was awaiting Eric, so we tied a loop round this section and off down went Eric safeguarded by another rope. This highlighted and gave a warning of the problem of ropes being cut.

I was able to get some photos of Chris leading Spring Squill - then at this point I was somewhat surprised at myself. It was about 5.00pm and I said to Dave why not go down again and do Spring Squill but this time along the traverse, just above sea level, from the zawn to the left. We then descended to check on the traverse and it was a goer. The traverse follows a natural line and is relatively easy as long as it is not under water or too wet. After a solo start we opted for a rope and ended up with four shortish pitches to get us back to 'that stance'. Off Dave went again scut-

ting up the wall - similar climbing with a pronounced awkward crux to finish. The top pitch is much easier and I had the pleasure of leading this to finish a fantastic day's climbing.

Pabbay is very exposed to weather coming in from the Atlantic and as well as a constant wind there were often squally showers. This combination was good to a certain extent in that the damp after the showers was soon blown away - but we would have preferred blue skies, no wind and no rain! There was enough to keep us amused with various other crags dotted around island - Risinish Wall across the bay from the campsite and Evening Wall, a great little crag around the headland.

Poking out into the Atlantic is a peninsula with the Gully Wall and the Poop Deck. The Poop Deck necessitates an abseil approach and its steepness is evident as soon as one starts the abseil - it has a fine selection of generally harder routes

Alastair and Chris took their fishing rods; however as soon as they started fishing, seals popped up their heads out of the water to see what was going on, and the chance of catching a fish was nil.

Near the campsite are the remains of a house, which was built in 1890 for Ronald Morrison and his family, so they could move out of their nearby blackhouse. They lived here until around 1910 when everyone left the island. The house continued in use as a shelter for the grazing tenants until the late 1930's. The island belongs to and is looked after by the National Trust of Scotland and the building is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and an important reminder of the Pabbay people who farmed and fished there for millennia.

Graham and Bob were active on the crags but had a mission to climb all the summits on the



island (five in total) and called these tops the "Graham-Bobs".

On the Wednesday Andy picked up a weather forecast for rain but better later - but it got worse. Thursday was squally showers. There was a discussion about getting out earlier - with fear of not getting off on Saturday, but a satphone call with Donald indicated fantastic weather on Saturday though we could get us off by boat from Barra on Friday. After a conflag we decided to stay - there was some unfinished (in fact not started) business. To the left of the Great Arch are two top class routes - The Priest (E1) and Prophecy of Drowning (E2) - wouldn't it be great to get these done? The weather gave a window of opportunity and Dave with Rob and Chris with Eric, grabbed the chance. The abseil is 100m to a small ledge just above the sea. The anchors were rigged and Dave set off down with rope protectors. A ledge at about half way was a concern, with rope movement against it, and protectors were placed. The belay was eventually reached

and he was joined by Rob and they sorted themselves out for Prophecy of Drowning - a stunning line starting as for The Priest then moving right into the groove and corner system. Chris and Eric followed them down and set off up The Priest. There is a cove here and it is it easily possible to get the 'classic photo' of the routes - when at the stance on the route one is however committed to upward progress. Needless to say the climbing on both routes is stupendous - following groove-lines and steep walls.

The week was coming to a close and as Donald reported the last day (Saturday) was a scorcher. Dave and Rob had climbed The Prophecy but not The Priest so Dave teamed up with Alastair and Rob with myself for the Priest. Abseil rope in place all we had to do was get over there and do it. I tried to ignore thoughts of the abseil but it turned out to be not too bad and the ledge in the middle of the abseil was not too much of a problem. I must admit I was again a passenger, with Rob doing the leading and what a route. It is rather steep on pitch two, with an interesting corner, then the final pitch traversing out left in such a wild position and gaining the top, and that great feeling after having climbed such a great route.

It was then back to the campsite to sort everything out for collection by Donald in the evening. We had bags packed and carried them to the landing place when Donald passed us in his boat en route to collect climbers on the nearby Mingulay. Eventually he arrived and with boat loaded, we bounced back to Castlebay as the rain came in again. Our boat back to Oban went in the Sunday morning and most of us pitched the tents on the seafront for the night then headed to the hotel for a meal and a well-deserved pint.

Despite the weather we had had a great week. It was useful having some determined climbers to push things along and great being away for a week with a gang of like-minded people as well as the seals, corncrake and snipe. In 2016 a meet has been planned to Mingulay - some say it is like Pabbay on steroids (Dun Mingulay seems like that) whilst others say there is much for the middle grade climber - well time will tell! Whatever, Pabbay in 2015 turned out to be a great trip.

FRCC MEET - 23rd to 31st May 2015
 Attendees - FRCC - Dave Menadue (Meet co-ordinator), Graham Townsend, Bob MacAdam, Ron Kenyon, Al Davis
 EVMC - Chris King, Eric Parker, Pete Botterill, Rob Illingworth, Alastair Rutherford
 Guests - Andy Cross and Loz Monckton

Left: The abseil down The Priest
 Right: The Priest (E1), Climbers - Chris King and Eric Parker, Photo - Ron Kenyon
 Below: The group ready to be collected after a week on island, Photo - Ron Kenyon





Kirkby Stephen MRT wave a sad farewell to the last Sea King from RAF Boulmer

Right: Cloud on the Aiguille Verte, *Barbara Swindin*

Accidents and Rescue

John Wilkinson

Christina Paul

Paul Exley/ Martin Carr

Richard Tolley



A Year to Remember

Nineteen forty-five was a memorable year, the year World War II ended. Now aged eighteen, I was fortunate that, as a university science student, my National Service was deferred until hopefully I graduated in 1947. However, this was the year that I was now old enough to apply to join the Fell and Rock. Over the previous four years I had acquired more than sufficient climbs to satisfy the committee (in those days 20 rock climbs, or twenty 2500 ft tops in the Lakes). Proposed by David and Ron Jackson, I was elected along with Jack Umpleby and John Jackson (Hon Member 2001), who was still on active service with the RAF in India.

The Easter vacation was spent at Middle Row farm, Wasdale Head. Getting to Wasdale by public transport was arduous at that time. This involved leaving Todmorden on the 4.40 a.m. train, with changes at Rochdale, Bolton, Preston and Oxenholme, followed by a bus from Windermere to Ambleside and then another to the O.D.G. Hotel in Langdale, arriving at 10.30 a.m., if things went according to plan. Wasdale was then reached via Rossett Ghyll, Esk Hause and Sty Head.

The high spot of the week was a day on Pillar Rock with Arthur Dolphin, who had joined the club the previous year, and was staying at Bracken-close with a party of the Leeds University Mountaineering Club. Arthur, one of the best rock-climbers in the country at the time, led up a greasy Hadrian's Wall in fine style. I had with me a description of Sid Cross's new route, Shamrock Tower (VS), and we made the second ascent of an enjoyable climb.

John Wilkinson

In July David Jackson and I were back at Middle Row. We had seen a description in the Bracken-close hut book of Bill Peascod's new route East Buttress on Haskett Buttress, a crag on the Ennerdale face of Great Scoatfell, so we decide to take a look at it. Descending from the summit of Great Scoat Fell into Mirk Cove we discovered, not Haskett Buttress but, by mistaken route finding, a previously unclimbed and unreported crag which was subsequently named Scoat Fell Crag. The crag looked inviting, with a clean buttress to the right of a dirty gully, and yielded a splendid 240ft climb Twin Ribs (HS), our first new route of the year. The following year we added another new route on the wall to its right, Octopus (VS).

In September my sister Barbara, Jack Umpleby and I had our first stay in Bracken-close, along with a party of the Leeds University M.C. To save carrying a lot of food to Bracken-close we had arranged to eat at Middle Row Farm, where Mrs Naylor put on superb meals for five shillings (25p), a real treat in a time of food rationing. In the hut I met up with Lynda Kellett (later Pickering, Secretary 1948-58, Hon Member 1968), with whom I had climbed on Pillar Rock a couple of years earlier. An excellent climber, Lynda expressed a desire to lead Botterill's Slab, so the following day found Jack, Lynda and I on Scafell. Unfortunately Botterill's was wet so we decided, misguidedly, to have a go in nailed boots. I led the first pitch and Jack carried on up the main slab without the benefit of any runners. About twenty feet up Jack came unstuck and slithered down the slab with sparks flying off his tricounis. As he passed me I managed to take in a bit of rope before arresting his fall. Suitably chastened, we retreated to Rake's

Progress, but after lunch we decided to try Hopkinson's Gully on the Pinnacle Face. It was a splendid route, which I led in nails, Jack being a bit bruised and stiff. We descended Slingsby's Chimney and returned to Bracken-close to assess the damage to Jack's leg. His thigh was skinned, badly bruised, and he was stiffening up fast. Dinner time was approaching and so we set off for Middle Row. Fortunately some kind member had donated a bicycle, so we put Jack on it and pushed him up the road to Wasdale Head. On arriving at Middle Row we discovered that there had been an accident on Pillar Rock involving a Club member, Joe Griffin, who was also staying at Bracken-close.

In 1945, with the exception of the RAF Mountain Rescue, there were no organised rescue teams in Britain. The first team to be formed in the Lakes was the Keswick Mountain Rescue team, organised by Rusty Westmorland (President 1950 - 57) in 1946. Those injured on the fells had to be rescued by scratch teams of anybody who happened to be in the area. Only the previous year Arthur Dolphin and I were making our way back to Wasdale after a strenuous day's climbing on Kern Knotts, when we were approached by a man who was en route to Wasdale to report a climbing accident. He asked us to carry the stretcher from Sty Head to Green Gable Crag, where we found the dead bodies of a couple who were staying at Burnthwaite Farm. It was my first experience of death in the hills, but sadly not the last. The alarm having been sounded in Wasdale Head, we had to await the arrival of a party from Burnthwaite with the stretcher from the hotel before we could carry the couple back to Wasdale.

Back at Middle Row a party including Joss Naylor's father, Joe, and some of the Leeds

climbers, had just left for Pillar with a stretcher, but more help was needed. I bolted down one of Mrs Naylor's dinners while Barbara cycled back to Bracken-close for my boots. Around 8.15 p.m. five of us set off for Pillar Rock, and the High Level Route was traversed as darkness fell. When we arrived at Robinson's Cairn we could see flashlights on Green Ledge, so we headed down to join the rescue party.

Joe had been leading Grooved Wall and was nearing the stance just below the crux overhang when he was carried down as a large block broke away. Not having any runners, and being about thirty feet above his second, Bernard Black, a Leeds University medical student, Joe fell about sixty feet before he came on the rope, which Bernard tried in vain to hold, injuring his hands in the process. Joe's fall was only arrested when he reached the foot of the crag, a fall of some ninety feet. He was suffering several injuries including spinal fractures, and on the stretcher he said that he had no feeling in his legs. We set off down the fellside and blundered our way through the Forestry Commission's plantation until we reached the river Liza, which we had to ford (the Fell and Rock bridge was not constructed until 1960). A runner having gone ahead to arrange for an ambulance to meet us at Gillerthwaite, a few more helpers arrived, including the YHA warden, who was unfairly critical of our efforts. We reached the ambulance at 12.30, which then took Joe to Whitehaven Infirmary, where he eventually made a good recovery. A farmer's wife kindly invited us in for tea and cake, and then the party set off up Ennerdale, carrying the stretcher back to Wasdale Head. It was a beautiful moonlit night as we walked back over Black Sail Pass and descended into Mosedale. We arrived at Middle

Row Farm at 6:30 a.m., where Mrs Naylor had a splendid breakfast waiting for us.

The weather was excellent, and since Jack was not sufficiently recovered to climb, I teamed up with one of Arthur Dolphin's protégés, the sixteen year old Des Birch. We had a brilliant couple of days on Scafell, climbing the Great Eastern route by the Yellow Slab, and Overhanging Wall by the White Slab; Linnell's piton for aid on the second pitch (of the latter route) had corroded away and so Des led it free, probably for the first time. We also climbed Central Buttress, alternate leads, and Des led the flake, laybacking the top block with ease.

Jack had now sufficiently recovered to second climbs, so we went round to Scafell and got our own back on Botterill's Slab, this time in rubbers. Round on the East Buttress I led Morning Wall without the benefit of combined tactics in the sentry box, as recommended in the current Scafell Guide at that time. We rounded off the holiday with a first ascent of Eagle's Chain (VS) on the Napes, a rising traverse starting at the foot of Abbey Buttress, crossing Long John and Eagle's Nest Direct, to finish up the last pitch of Tricouni Rib. This was our second new route of the year, and a fitting end to an action-packed holiday.

Christmas and New Year were spent fell walking from Brackenclouse, where we ran into Joe Griffin, now almost fully recovered. Joe went on to become one of the best and boldest climbers of his generation (Guide Books Editor 1964-67, and co-author, with Geoff Oliver, of the 1967 Scafell Guide), a great companion with whom I have shared mountain experiences over many years.

There have been other memorable years since 1945, but for me that year was special as it was the year I joined the Fell and Rock, had some

great days on the crags and fells, and began friendships which have lasted a lifetime.

Fractures on the Fells

We all know that bad things can happen at the end of a long day in the mountains; concentration wanders, dusk begins to fall, and the mind focuses on a 'good' cup of tea (in my case), food and a rest. It had been an excellent day out, walking the High Stile ridge, east to west, for the umpteenth time. We extended it a bit this day, as we had plenty of light, and were appalled at the condition of the descent from Red Pike, so we wandered down by the side of Scale Force, and from there across that rather unpleasant, boggy stretch of ground before you pick up the lower track running along Crummock Water.

The track was in sight, perhaps 500m away, when we crossed a slightly steeper section of morass. And I slipped, as I have done plenty of times previously, but this time was different. Somehow I pivoted as I slipped, sat back on my lower leg, and heard two great cracks as my leg gave way. I knew immediately that it was broken, and the urgency in my voice convinced Andrew of the truth of that fact – there was no suggestion to have a rest and then move on.

When you sit down in a bog, without waterproof pants, your nether regions quickly become cold and wet. And on cue, the cloud, which had been creeping in all day, thickened and began to dispense a steady, penetrating drizzle. Together we manoeuvred me on top of my rucksack, retrieved my emergency blanket and spare clothing, and attempted to phone the emergency services – but no signal. Andrew was then despatched to find one.

I was feeling fairly confident that help would arrive soon, and it did, in the shape of a young couple from Taunton, with a baby. They did have

a signal (all networks not being equal), and a waterproof picnic mat, which the young woman (I am ashamed to say I cannot remember her name) wrapped around me, and herself. She stayed to keep me warm. I was wet and in shock, and was getting pretty cold. The father caught up with Andrew, who by that time had obtained signal and contacted the rescue, and both returned. The rescue, having received two notifications, quickly realised that they were for the same incident.

Now this is where good fortune cuts in. It happened that Cockermonth Mountain Rescue were scheduled to have a training exercise that evening; not only that, it was to be a joint exercise with the Kirby Stephen team. We didn't know that when we called, but within an hour a blue light came flashing along the valley, then another. It was perhaps an hour and a half before the team came into view along the track from Buttermere, and my first reaction was that there appeared to be a cast of thousands.

Once they arrived it became clear that I was in the hands of a well-oiled machine. A temporary shelter was quickly erected (very welcome, as the drizzle had turned to heavy rain), one team member acting as primary tent pole, while the paramedic team went through a structured problem assessment, and put a temporary splint around my leg. I didn't realise at the time, but the rest of the team were assembling the stretcher and making preparations for getting me off the hill. When all was ready the tent was removed, and I was expertly lifted onto the stretcher, which was then lowered, via a rope around a tree, then carried down to the main track to the waiting

Christina Paul

ambulance, by which time I was verging on hypothermic, even with the heated insulated emergency bag. Thereafter the journey was very smooth, and I was in a older ladies' heaven, away with the fairies on gas and air, surrounded by fit young men (and women). All the talk on the way to the ambulance was of the Fred Whitton, the Bob Graham and other challenges which they were preparing for. My thanks were met with the response that I was in fact doing them a favour as, having had a real call-out rather than a training exercise, they could get to the pub earlier.

What I would have done without them doesn't bear contemplating, or what it could have been like had my accident been on the upper slopes of Red Pike, or in the Himalayas. It would have been a long, and definitely hypothermic, wait on the fell side, even with my emergency gear available, and a real challenge for those who might have carried me down. I have nothing but praise for the team who delivered me from the fellside and subsequently for the much-maligned NHS.

Postscript:

Once in the ambulance I was taken Whitehaven A&E, where my leg was put in a temporary plaster, then back to Birkness for the night. My especial thanks to Norman Haighton for vacating the bear-pit, as there is no way I could have climbed the stairs to the ladies' dorm. The following day saw a return to Bristol, then a visit to the regional Orthopaedic Unit, and an operation on the Tuesday. My thanks to all in the club who supported me over the subsequent months.

Dow Crag Incident

Martyn Carr/ Paul Exley

Pre-ample: On the weekend of the Coniston meet and dinner at the Crown Inn, June 2015, Martyn Carr and Paul Exley walked up to Dow Crag on a pleasant enough morning, with the aim of doing a route. The tops of the routes were in cloud but it was dry after rain the day before. Ron and Chris Kenyon walked up with them, as Ron was hoping to get some photographs for the Dow Guide book.

Martyn's story ...

I was happy climbing Abraham's Route on Dow Crag at Severe 4b, well within what I felt competent to do. Paul was leading, running the four pitches into two. When I arrived at the top Paul thought he may have climbed a few feet past the normal walk off and suggested I carry on through and find a level place to pull the ropes in. So I set off up what looked like steep but walkable ground.

Whatever happened next occurred so quickly that I have no clear memory of it. I must have slipped on wet rock or grass because I fell. I had the sensation of passing rock at high speed and suddenly coming to a jolting stop. At this point I believe I was upside down in my harness, because I was looking at my right hand dangling below me and wondering why so much blood was dripping from my fingers down the crag. I was not aware of any pain.

Quite quickly I realised being upside down was not a good idea, but hanging free made turning the right way up less than easy. I looked at my

hand and could see it was quite seriously damaged - I could see finger guides and bones exposed and a lot of bloody flesh. Looking down my right leg I could see that the sock and climbing shoe were quite red. During this whole episode I kept slipping in and out of consciousness.

I was next aware of a climber below (later told he was Rob Dyer of the BMC) talking to me. Then there was a young woman (Rob's partner) on my left, apparently secure and putting a bandage on my right wrist. She put a light coat over me because I was shivering - presumably with shock. She told me her name but I forgot it until more than a week later (she was Mel Brown). She said she would hold me to keep me warm, to which I responded I thought I might fall off again in that case.

They asked me the name of my climbing partner and after some thought I remembered it was Paul. They shouted for him to lower me a little way to a small ledge, and I think this happened, because although the ropes stayed tight I was no longer swinging in space.

Rob was then talking to someone abseiling down to me. This new arrival was from an RAF Mountain Rescue Team exercising on the crag and he was equipped with a radio. Whether I became unconscious or fainted I have no idea but cannot remember Mel and Rob leaving.

To me it seemed only a short time until I heard and then saw a helicopter nearby, and suddenly there was the winch man on the small ledge chatting to the other RAF guy and getting me into a couple of slings attached to the wire. He took a

knife and sliced through the ropes and I remember thinking that Paul's was quite new and 60 metres - but no more!

We swung clear of the crag, spinning slowly beneath the Sea King and rising towards it and into the aircraft. Before they made me lie down on the stretcher I was able to wave to Ron who I could see quite clearly, and hoped Paul could also see, to know I was alive and conscious. There are gaps in my memory of what happened. I was surprised when talking to Paul three weeks later that he estimated that the time from fall to being winched into the helicopter was about an hour and a quarter; I'd have said 20 minutes!!

What a lucky man I have been. First, that Paul was alert enough when I fell to lock off his Sticht plate, and fit and strong enough to hold my whole weight for a long time. Second, that there were lots of people about to offer assistance to us both, and third, that the kit we all invest in actually worked when needed.

Postscript

I was flown to Carlisle where after an assessment of my injuries in A&E they set up a video-link with the Plastic Surgery team at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, who advised on 'packing' the wounds ready for me to be transferred there. I spent twelve days in the RVI having the wound on my hand stitched up and skin grafts put on my right leg. I was fitted with a neck-brace to stabilise my neck, having fractured a vertebra on my unplanned descent. During the time I was in the care of the wonderful NHS, club members visited, offered and provided overnight accommodation to my wife, brought reading matter and strawberries, made phone calls both to me and Sue and sent dozens of cards, again to us both, and finally helped transport me home. What a club, what a great community of climbers and friends.

Paul's story ...

At Ron's funeral down in Sheffield I'd heard about the recent passing of Les, one of the club's most successful Alpinists. Only a week earlier at the funeral of John, a long-standing member of Leeds MC, I had heard about another friend who had terminal cancer. There seemed to be a lot of death about.

This recognition wasn't uppermost in my mind as I plodded with Martyn up to Dow Crag, grateful to drop the sack at its foot. It was good to see President Ron there - he was taking photos for the forthcoming guide book. The weather, although fine, wasn't as good as we had hoped and we knew that there had been rain recently. For a high crag it didn't bode well so we chose a route well within our grade, Abraham's. Our brand new copy of Lake District Rock described it as 'A fine classic route of increasing interest.' These last two words turned out to be prophetic. Martyn preferred me to lead and I ran the four short pitches into two longer pitches. Instead of belaying at the top of the last pitch, I thought to continue to the top of Easy Gully, scrambling up the still-wet grass until brought short by Martyn's shout telling me that I only had a few metres of rope left. I had forgotten that his rope was 50m; mine was 60m.

A descent of the slippery grass was uninviting and I was on a good ledge - fine, I thought, for just bringing up a second. Belays were sparse. The only one of any value was a large boulder embedded just above me, but I could only get my long sling round the right-hand side of it and partly over the top. Not ideal. It was a modern thin sling but I'd had it so long I'd even forgotten where I'd found it. Martyn climbed the pitch and set off above me to Easy Gully, passing an old,

mouldy sling and rusty karabiner which weren't worth liberating. Whilst keeping an eye on Martyn and paying out the rope, almost on autopilot, I was looking forward to lunch and wondering what to climb next. Martyn was about to step up between two huge boulders when I saw him slip backwards, out of my sight. I expected that he would land on his feet then continue upwards.

Instead, the next I saw of him was as he was cartwheeling downwards, a blur of arms, legs and white climbing helmet. He was several metres in front of me - exactly the wrong direction for my single belay sling. 'F*ck. I could die here.' My reaction, after that realisation, was to move as far leftwards as the sling allowed and brace myself in the best, death-defying, stance possible. Moments later, after Martyn had tumbled about forty metres, there was an almighty wrench on the rope. I found myself sitting on the edge of the ledge with the ropes wrapped round my legs, underneath me. Martyn's full weight was on the ropes because, it turned out, he was hanging free in space. I shouted down but there was no response except, perhaps, a groan and later a quiet plea of 'Help me'. Out of sight and semi-conscious, he was absolutely incommunicado. I was left with very few options. Martyn was hanging from my belay plate; I was hanging from the sling - which now looked even thinner. It twanged when I plucked it. But it was still there and looked as if it might stay there. So far, everything had worked. The ropes, my belaying, the sling. Failure of any would have had both of us falling to the sharp boulder scree sixty metres below, scree that doesn't take prisoners. Instead of reading this article you would have been reading about us in Obituaries.

Shortly afterwards, lots of activity began for, by great good fortune, an RAF Mountain Rescue Team was climbing on the crag and, after phoning for a helicopter, they moved over to where Martyn was hanging. Iain and his daughter from Kendal scrambled up Easy Gully and set up a couple of firm belays before Iain abseiled down to me, belayed me to Rocks in cracks out of my reach and put prussik loops round the rope down to Martyn. Ron also appeared and helped to direct operations, as well as calling out the Coniston Mountain Rescue Team. At last I felt that I could relax a little, helped by Iain's conversation. I still don't know how long it had taken to get to this stage - my watch was down in the sack, a habit developed during my apprenticeship of jamming up gritstone cracks. Iain grovelled underneath me and managed to free the ropes from my legs so that, when asked, I was able to lower Martyn a metre or two. This was, maybe, an hour and a half after the fall.

At length the helicopter was heard, then seen. After a few minutes of hovering, no doubt to assess the situation, it flew off for a circuit of Goats Water before returning, closer to the crag. The side door opened and a winch man was lowered several metres on an exceedingly thin line and well away from the crag. The helicopter - a Sea King on one of its last missions before being retired - inched ever closer to the crag so that the winch man could reach Martyn. I was becoming concerned about the helicopter's proximity. I could feel the down-draught and, looking up, could see the tips of the rotor blades directly above me and seeming to be not all that far away. Members walking on the Old Man saw the action and hoped it wasn't anyone they knew.

Some minutes later, I saw the winch man's line become slack and reasoned that he must have



had said, 'Just in case anything happens, the car keys are in my rucksack lid'. So I drove cautiously down to Low House to prepare for the Vice-President's dinner and to tell the tale of the day a dozen times, some of them to the Old Man team.

Since then, I have thought endlessly about the accident and a whole range of things that might have been better managed.

landed on the crag. After a further ten minutes or so, his line went tight again and the ropes below me went slack. Then the winch man was swinging on that thin line out there, with Martyn supported across him. I noticed that his climbing helmet was still on his head and looking intact - a blessing, as it probably meant that he hadn't suffered any serious head injury. The Sea King headed off to Carlisle. Just then the Coniston MR team arrived - a wasted trip as it turned out. Ron had taken a lot of unexpected photos.

Iain climbed back up and belayed me to the top of Easy Gully. On pulling up our ropes, I found that the ends of both were frayed where the winch man, presumably, had cut them. I reasoned that, after a long fall and Martyn's hanging for so long, it would have taken a long time to undo the knots!

My descent of Easy Gully was accomplished with great care and my sandwiches eaten very thoughtfully. Thence back to the cars with the RAF. As we were leaving Martyn's car earlier, he

Helicopters - their role in Mountain Rescue

Richard Tolley

The fast and skilful rescue of Martyn Carr from Dow Crag, last June, by one of the last RAF Sea King Helicopters was a timely reminder of the value and effectiveness of the service that gives reassurance to all who spend time in the British mountains.

Helicopters are an essential resource for Mountain Rescue teams in the UK. For 60 years they have been available at very short notice in almost all weather conditions, often assisting teams but sometimes completing the whole rescue mission without ground support. Speed is the key benefit. Typically taking less than an hour from initial alarm call to reach the casualty site, they can transport seriously injured casualties in the Lake District direct to life saving medical facilities in as little as 20 minutes.

Helicopters have significant advantages over fixed wing aircraft for work in search and rescue. They can work in bad weather conditions and they can hover and winch (if they have that capability); they can deliver injured casualties direct to hospital requiring minimal space for landing. Some rescue helicopters, such as the Sea King, are amphibious and can land on water to effect rescue. There are a few disadvantages - they create a lot of noise making communication difficult and also generate a very strong downdraft, when hovering, which can cause wind chill and blow equipment about.

The first RAF rescue squadron was formed in 1953 at Linton on Ouse flying yellow painted Bristol Sycamores. To the present day the RAF retained the bright yellow livery for all their SAR helicopters.

The first civilian rescue was made in February 1953. Devastating floods and tidal surges affected the east coast of England and large areas of Holland. Westland Dragonfly helicopters from the HMS Siskin Naval airbase at Gosport in Hampshire rescued more than 800 people, many from rooftops.

History of aircraft types

Up to very recent times all the military helicopters used for Search & Rescue were made under licence by Westland and based on American designed aircraft. Following the Dragonfly, the Westland Whirlwind was in service from 1955 - 1979. These helicopters had severe limitations of range and weren't particularly reliable resulting in several spectacular crash landings. The Whirlwind was replaced by the Westland Wessex which saw service from 1976 - 1997. The Wessex brought several major operational improvements, including twin engines, much greater range and also radar to assist low visibility capability. I remember watching and being very impressed by a Wessex carrying out a rescue in the Sgurr Alasdair Great Stone Shoot in the Cuillins in 1976. It was hovering between the rock walls and carefully ascending into thick mist to reach the casualty.

Although the Wessex remained in service for 21 years, they were gradually replaced by the Westland Sea King HAR3. The Sea King delivered greater range and airspeed, being able to stay in the air for six hours and having a top speed of 125 knots. The most significant operational improvement of the Sea King was the Decca Doppler Tactical Air Navigation System, allowing the

aircraft to operate at night and in virtually all weather conditions. Large passenger capacity and space for at least two stretchers and medical equipment also greatly improved the operational capability of the Sea King. In 1996 the Sea King HAR3a was introduced. This latest version carried a stabilisation and auto pilot system that allowed the pilot to perform complex approach and hover manoeuvres under auto-pilot.

In recent years a military SAR helicopter might have flown from RAF stations at Boulmer, Leconfield, or Valley on Anglesey and HMS

Gannet, Ayrshire. However, it's not unknown for a helicopter turn up from RAF Lossiemouth in North East Scotland. Both of the Sea King versions and their highly professional RAF and Navy aircrew have given fantastic and reliable Search and Rescue service until the summer of 2015. Affectionately known as Paraffin Parrots, it is not surprising that the mountain rescue teams of England and Wales viewed the eventual demise of the Sea Kings and the introduction of a privatised SAR service with some anxiety and concern.



Kirkby Stephen MRT assist stranded motorists into the Sea King. The only safe way to evacuate the casualties from the snow bound B6276

Looking back on my own experiences of ten years with Kirkby Stephen MRT, there have been times when the helicopter intervention has made the team's job easier by avoiding a long and difficult carry out and others when rapid transfer to hospital has certainly improved the outcome for the casualty. On a rescue on a snowbound road high above the Eden Valley, an RAF Sea King came in at night in very bad conditions to help us rescue a dozen or more stranded motorists. Without their help we would have had great difficulty safely evacuating the ill-equipped motorists as our Land Rovers were stuck behind huge snowdrifts half a mile away. In the winter of 2015 we were on Helvellyn searching for a missing walker in atrocious conditions. Whilst being pinned to the ground by 100mph winds on the ridge below Helvellyn Lower Man, I could see an RAF Sea King trying to hover below the summit ridge, attempting to winch the casualty from the slopes above Red Tarn. They were forced to give up and the stretcher had to be carried out by MR team members. When we spoke to the aircrew down at Patterdale base they told us that they were measuring wind speeds in excess of 90 knots whilst trying to effect the rescue.

In June 2015 Kirkby Stephen MRT had a final training session with the last Sea King based at Boulmer which was due to be taken out of service within two months. When we bid a sad farewell to the Sea King I couldn't foresee that the same aircraft would be lifting Martyn off Dow Crag a week later!

RAF Mountain Rescue

Alongside helicopter SAR, the RAF has also established four full time Mountain Rescue teams based at Kinloss, Leuchars, Leeming and Valley. Team members are known as 'troops' and are

expected to complete 80 days of training 'on the hill'. Interestingly team membership is seen as independent of service rank; the most experienced team member would be in charge 'on the hill'. The event that led to the formal setting up of the teams was the tragic crash of a bomber in North West Scotland. In March 1951 an RAF Lancaster bomber, on a night navigational flight, crashed into the rocks of Beinn Eithe. Its wreckage was located a few days later on the vast Triple Buttresses of Coire Mhic Fhearchair. The rescue services at Kinloss were inadequately equipped and lacked the expertise to reach the plane, which was balanced precariously on 2000 foot cliffs. The last of the crew's eight bodies was not recovered until August and the incident sent shockwaves through the highest echelons of the RAF and the Ministry of Defence.

The PTI instructor who was called in to head up the training of the newly formed teams became a well-known figure on the British climbing scene. At the time Johnnie Lees was a sergeant and physical training instructor in the RAF. That autumn he was asked to run a mountain training course for the rescue service in Snowdonia. Early the following year, he was posted to Anglesey as mountain rescue team leader; it would be no exaggeration to say that modern mountain rescue owes a lot of its sophistication and rigour to that appointment. After leaving the RAF Lees became a mountain guide, establishing a reputation as a strong climber, especially on outcrops, and also married climber and author Gwen Moffat who became the first female mountain guide in Britain. In 1955 Lees took part in the UK's first rock climbing outside broadcast. The very delicate Suicide Wall in Cwm Idwal was chosen for the broadcast and Lees climbed the route in bendy walking boots as second to Joe Brown

when George Band, the intended second, failed on the route.

Air Ambulance / Helimed

Helimed or the air ambulance is also a great resource often called to work with Lake District



mountain rescue teams. They have some limitations when compared with the military or Bristow aircraft. They aren't able to winch a casualty from mid-air hover and have limited space, allowing only one stretcher and perhaps two or three seated passengers. They also can only operate in clear conditions in daylight hours. Despite these limitations they are involved in many mountain rescue situations.

Local to the Lake District area is the North West Air Ambulance with three Eurocopter aircraft based at three sites in Lancashire. Great North Air Ambulance based in the North East also has three Eurocopter aircraft with the closest base to Lakeland being at Langwathby in the Eden Valley. On

balance the Helimed machines are probably most often used to assist Lake District rescue, especially on the more straightforward, land, package and go missions. However SAR aircraft are there for the more difficult situations requiring winching, bad weather or night operation that the air ambulance isn't equipped to handle.

Change for the future

By 2010 the Sea King fleet was between 40 and 50 years old and would obviously soon need replacement. Estimates for the cost of this change were in the order of £3 billion.

Following consultation in 2010-2011 the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Transport decided to outsource and awarded the contract to Bristow. The changeover would begin in April 2015 and be complete by summer of 2017. Bristow will operate out of ten bases around the UK. Bristow is no stranger to search and rescue. They have been providing SAR in several countries since 1971 - Australia, Canada, Norway, Russia and the Falklands. Operating in these countries they have

flown some 17,500 missions saving around 8,400 people. In 1983 Bristow started operations on behalf of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency at 4 bases around the UK - Stromness in the Orkneys, Sumbugh in the Shetlands, Lee-on-Solent and Portland. The helicopter used in those days was the Sikorsky 561, a close relative of the US military Black Hawk. From 2013 Bristow operated the Sikorsky S92 from Sumbugh and Stromness. These proved to be very capable in mountain rescue situations. As far as the Lake District is concerned, Bristow will operate the S92 from Humberside, Caernarfon and Prestwick.

We are one year into the transition and at the moment the progress is very positive and the new aircraft are a great step forward in rescue capability. I have had one training session with the S92 and was impressed. They are obviously very modern aircraft, faster at 165 knots and with greater range than the Sea King. An S92 can travel and return over a radius of 250 miles with 30 minutes on scene. Although very different to the Sea King they match or improve their performance in almost every area. Another reassuring factor is the fact many of the Bristow SARH aircrew have transferred from the RAF or Royal Navy Sea Kings. One problem that ground based rescuers have to deal with is the higher level of down wash. This is caused partly by the increased power but also the rotor disc design produces a more concentrated area of downward pressure. Reports from other Lake District teams suggest that the transition is going fairly smoothly. There have been one or two teething problems, however it is expected that these

minor problems will disappear in time. There was also a report that the down wash of an S192 caused a spindrift storm for rescuers on Swirral Edge this winter.

For the next few months or so we might still see the Sea Kings operating in the Lake District. However the Bristow aircraft will become increasingly evident as the changeover progresses. Of course the Helimed air ambulances will also continue to be a regular sight over Lakeland. We can rest assured that all these helicopters make the Lake District fells a safer place for us to enjoy.



Right: The Great North Air Ambulance attending an injured casualty in the Howgill Fells
Above: HMS Gannet hands over to Bristow - Prestwick, Jan 2016



Ski Tracks in the Snow. Photo - Bill Comstive

Mountain Adventures - Scotland and Overseas

Alan Hinkes

Mike Cudahy

Robin Hildrew

Paula Carter

Mark Gear

John Moore

Jim Gregson



Mont Blanc Range from Les Arcs. Barbara Swindin

St Kilda

Remote appeals to me and in the UK you do not get much more remote than the islands of St Kilda, poking up in the North Atlantic Ocean 41 miles west of the Hebrides. A friend of mine had spent a few weeks there one summer on a work party, had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and had enthused me to visit. Getting permission to stop over can be a problem as only a few campers are allowed at any one time, boats need to be booked and the weather and sea state has to be settled for a landing.

The main island of Hirta possesses the highest sea cliffs in the British Isles, a vertical drop of over 300m into the sea from near the summit of Conachair (430m) the highest point of the St Kilda archipelago. Nearby, rising 196m (643') straight out of the ocean is Stac an Armin, the highest sea stack in the British Isles. The whole area is known for its profusion of seabirds - Gannets, Fulmars, Puffins and Great Skuas or Bonxies, as well as rare Viking Soay sheep and sneaky beaky missile testing. The geology and topography is spectacular, with exciting walking and scrambling and maybe some rock climbing for the very adventurous and brave.

The locals climbed the cliffs and sea stacks to collect eggs and birds for food. Some Scots like to think this was the first rock climbing for fun and it is even possible that bouldering and traversing for training was practised by the St Kildans on their houses and lower cliffs. This would pre-date Haskett Smith's ascent of Napes Needle in 1886 by several centuries. There is no doubt that the St Kildans were brave and talented rock climbers, tackling guano covered, gnarly, V Diff climbs with extreme exposure on vast sea cliffs and stacks.

Alan Hinkes

Out of the blue, a random email arrived from a friend in the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club. John Dalrymple is a very keen birdwatcher and general font of knowledge. He had a ready planned mini-expedition to St Kilda ready to roll. All I had to do was tag along and share the cost.

I couldn't resist and we left North East England in mid-June, anticipating fine weather. Most of us know the long drive to Scotland, through Skye to Uig and across the Minch on Caledonian MacBrayne to Tarbert. We kept our spirits up, thinking of the tasty Puffin Pies and roast Soay lamb waiting for us on St Kilda. Apparently the locals who evacuated in 1930 snacked on Puffins as we do crisps. Puffins are now a protected species so Puffin Pie was off the menu, as was Soay sheep; we had to take all our own food across with us for the four nights we intended to camp on Hirta. We also had to take extra emergency rations in case the weather deteriorated and we became stranded for several days before a boat could return for us.

No surprise, as we arrived in Leverburgh it was raining, windy, clagged-in on the hills and quite a high sea state out in the Atlantic. In fact it had been a bad season in 2015 and not many trips had made the crossing yet. Holed up in the CalMac Ferry waiting room, out of the wind and rain, John cooked up one of the best curries I have tasted anywhere, including in Nepal, India or Pakistan. We had no option but to hang around and wait, which we were informed would be for a few days before the sea state was calm enough. Interestingly, Nick Ray was sheltering in the Leverburgh Lifeboat Station on his epic solo kayak trip round Scotland. He was visiting all 47

Lifeboat Stations and raising money for the RNLI. The 2015-mile trip took him more than four months. Now that's what I call a challenge.

Luckily there was plenty of walking and exploring to keep me interested in the area. Even low down there is the unique machair grassland, grazed by sheep. Above Leverburgh is Roinebhal, (460m), which like most of the big hills on Harris has a stark, bare rocky look about it, grey and mostly shrouded in clag while we festered in Leverburgh. I got John to drop me off at the other side of Roinebhal, near Rodel so I could traverse across its bare rocky summit plateau back to Leverburgh. Apparently the granitic anorthosite rock is similar to moon rock! There is an old quarry with white exposed anorthosite cliff faces, where I started my walk on the south side of the hill, which I couldn't resist exploring and scrambling on. In the 1990s there was raging controversy here as a super quarry was planned, to extract the anorthosite and ship it away from a purpose-built harbour as hardcore for motorway construction. The giant quarry, worked over 60 years, would have eventually left a scar five times the height of the White Cliffs of Dover, blasted out by over 30 tons of explosives a week. Now that would be incongruous in somnolent South Harris. Legging it back down the rocky slopes to Leverburgh, there was good news waiting. The boat to Hirta was on at 7.30 a.m. the next morning.

After four nights in Leverburgh, John and I boarded the boat with a few day trippers and sailed out into the foggy, choppy Atlantic. The sea is not really my medium. I am more of a terra firma chap: mountains, crags, caves, potholes etc and the two and half hour crossing was choppy. I mostly clung on outside in the spray to prevent vomiting. There was nothing but fifty shades of

grey, mist and sea merging into one amorphous mass. Pure Battleship Grey.

Suddenly the sickening bouncing and bucking ceased, so I reckoned we must be in the lee of the main Island. Sure enough we had sailed into the natural harbour of Village Bay and in the nick of time. Another few minutes and I would have puked. We were ferried in dinghies to the shore jetty as the cloud lifted like a welcoming tablecloth being pulled aside, to reveal the stark rocky outline of the island. Village Bay has the only flatish land for buildings and National Trust Scotland has renovated some of the dwellings. There is also an incongruous military base built in the 1950s and manned mostly by civilian contractors.

Fortunately for us, John's daughter was based on the island for the RSPB so we had a local knowledge to help us make the most of our limited time. With no time to waste we went up to recce the highest sea cliffs and bag the summit of Conachair. I had hoped to be impressed and enthused to possibly return to climb the highest sea cliff. After seeing it I psyched out. It is very steep and scary, covered in Sea Campion and other vegetation, as well as puking Fulmars and a terrifying drop into the wild North Atlantic. Steep and scary - the Lake District it is not.

My plan the next day was to walk round most of the island in one long airy ridge walk. Perched on top of the island, looking out onto the vast expanse of the Atlantic, I imagine this could be an agoraphobic's nightmare. Brave souls can emulate the scarily brave antics of the long gone locals, who used to balance on exposed cliff edges 300m above the water. Some prominent rocks are named for these challenges such as the Mistress Stone and Lover's Stone. I decided to tackle a less dangerous feat, the Chimney Challenge, which is a short fell run up a grassy gully



on Clash na Bearnaich, from sea level to over 220m. I even got a certificate with my time on it.

There is a great variety in such a compact area on Hirta - geology, geography, history, biology, flora, fauna, bird life and more. There are still wrecks from crashed aircraft and thousands of cleits, which were storage sheds for bird carcasses and eggs. The Bonxie or Great Skua is one of the more dramatic experiences on Hirta, some might

think it frightening. I have never known such an aggressive bird. The Bonxies are mainly on the western side of Hirta and had virtually colonised Gleann Mor, which I nicknamed Bonxie Valley. Venture in it if you dare! The innocent fluffy young chicks are hatched on the ground and if you approach the Bonxie parents will ferociously dive bomb you. Personally I got a grip and fought back with a trekking stick, which also make a

good decoy sticking out of your rucksack, acting like a barrage balloon in an air raid. It made me imagine a fantasy land of Bad Bonxies in the west and harmless St Kildan Wrens in the east.

We only had three nights on Hirta, but got to check the sea stacks out on the return boat trip.

The sea was calm as we approached the humongous bulk of Stac an Armin, (196m). It would have been possible to make a landing or jump onto the slippery seaweed covered lower rock; I reckon crampons, slip-on snow spikes or nailed boots would help. There was a 50m fixed rope anchored to the sheer looking face, but I did not fancy the jump or the guano and bird infested climb. No doubt it might be slightly better when the nesting season had finished and a big Atlantic storm had cleaned the rock a bit with crashing waves. Being a Marilyn, Stac an Armin must be a very frustrating summit to bag. Nearby Stac Lee (172m) looks even less appealing to climb. I was glad I had left my cragging gear at home and had happily enjoyed some fabulous varied hill walking,

scrambling, fell running and good food and craic with John.

I did not find Crag X but had a great adventure on the edge of the world.



Above: Ruaival - rocky exposed ridge leading up to the Mistress Stone

Left: North-West Hirta, Glen Bay on the left

Below: Stac Lee, Stac an Armin & Boreray



For those in Peril on a Ski

Mike Cudahy

Skilful, with superb balance, daring but with perfect judgement and a fine eye for line, always in complete control; these are just a few of the ways it would be impossible to describe my abilities a'ski. While I have enjoyed some repute as an ultra-distance hill runner, few are aware of my career as an adventure skier; there may be reasons for this. However, it does not do to hide one's light under a bushel. I hope a little modest light shedding is permissible, particularly if it inspires readers to emulate my feats.

My skiing career began some 50 years ago on a plastic slope in Ellis Brigham's basement. In my early 20s I was a natural and had almost no difficulty descending the 20yds of plastic several times. It would be misleading though not entirely incorrect to say along with T.S. Eliot that 'In my beginning was my end'. Officially, I never did any downhill skiing again. It wasn't, again to quote Eliot, that I got bored with 'arriving where I started', simply that I could not afford skis, boots or ski holidays. In any case emulating a stair tread on an escalator was less appealing than gliding through lonely snowy wastes. I was thus, at least by ambition, a natural cross-country skier cum ski mountaineer. What I mainly lacked was skis.

One day at Coire Cas car park my mate Len produced a pair of skis: red ones. He said he'd 'liberated' them from the lower car park the previous night because they were leaning all alone against a rail; sort of 'abandoned'. A very subtle ethical discussion followed which culminated in us scuttling off up the hill with the skis. We reached some suitably benign slopes where I pointed out to Len that he'd failed to liberate any

ski sticks or ski boots. He said something enigmatic and started building an igloo.

Remembering my easy mastery of the subterranean plastic slopes, I thought my balletic grace would eliminate the need for sticks and I found my old boots could be held in place by pressing down on a lever at the heel. They were not exactly secure, but some instinct told me that insecurity of tenure might be no bad thing where downhill skiing was concerned.

From the start the only thing the skis wanted to do was follow the 'fall line' downhill. What I had more in mind was sweeping curves as I'd observed on 'Ski Sunday' on TV. I tried various techniques starting first with sheer will power, something I've always been good at. Using graceful visual imagery (my academic speciality) and projecting my dominant will I invariably and inexplicably finished directly below where I'd started; increasingly Eliot's words (he was no great skier himself) echoed in my mind: 'And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.' I even tried cheating by starting off pointing well across the slope, to no avail. Always the ski tips would nose out the fall line like hounds on a fox trail.

By this time Len's igloo was half-finished. I told him his liberated skis had been abandoned for good reason, they wouldn't go round corners.

'Try using the edges,' he advised.
'Edge of what?' I asked.
'Those metal strips along each side.'
'Ah! But how?'
'Dunno.'

Still, a nod's as good as a wink. Off I went again and this time extending a leg forwards with the ski tilted so the edge caressed the surface - or sometimes dug in. In the latter case there would usually be a violent crossing of the legs followed by equally violent contact with firm nevé. After numerous bruising and near castrations patience was exhausted. A bold approach was required. Had I not seen graceful ski jumpers gliding through the air to effect perfect landings? I would allow the skis to take the fall line then, at not quite terminal velocity, leap skywards. With my consummate body awareness skills I would swivel mid-air and come down facing some other direction.

I now achieved some spectacular results, not all of them expected or welcome. One outcome produced observable disturbances in the piste. Occasionally, I remained upright having achieved a change in direction. The most alarming result was when I overdid the airborne swivel and landed facing uphill with the skis gleefully taking the opportunity to resume the fall line, this time backwards, though not for long.

Len had now completed his ice palace and we took refreshment within. I asked for his observations on my tussles with the skis. 'An honourable draw,' he said, 'but you have the moral victory as you haven't broken anything.' He paused. 'Not yet, anyway.'

On our way back down we left the skis perched nonchalantly by the fence ready to snare their next victim. A decade-long hiatus in my skiing career then followed until at some time in the 70s (not my age, you understand) I acquired a pair of 'skinny' skis (a bonafide present, since you ask). They were very rudimentary with no metal edges and fish scales underneath, so no wax required. They did well enough over the local golf course,

especially when it snowed, but I took them into quite impossible places covering all my familiar running ground in the Peak District. The only time they performed graceful, curving runs was when I took them off to have lunch and they set off back home solo on a glazed surface of sloping moorland. On another occasion I was enjoying white-out conditions on the Cat & Fiddle moors and feeling very disorientated. This increased when I observed my ski tips above my head. Next moment I was on my back having briefly hurtled down one side of a grough and half way up the other. Being older and wiser I decided not to go back and try for the full somersault.

I started taking the skis to Scotland, where they revelled in a sense of freedom and occasionally ran amok. Seeking expert advice I called in at the outdoor shop in Braemar. By now I had abandoned 'fish scales' and was immersing myself in the mysteries of wax. 'What I want,' I told the young chap behind the counter, 'is a wax that will help me go uphill quickly and downhill slowly.' A look somewhere between scorn and pity passed across his finely-cut outdoor features. Completely ignoring my request, he sold me some sticky and some not so sticky stuff and brusquely told me it would meet all contingencies. As I began to challenge this on both practical and philosophical grounds I felt the missus tugging at my sleeve.

I proved him wrong, however. Coming down a steepish track I intuited my speed was exceeding both the drag of the wax and my, as yet, embryonic snow plough brake. A curve in the track made it imperative I convert the brake into a turn. I had seen my missus do this with some ease and exerted my mighty will, to the usual effect; the plough disintegrated into first parallel then diverging lines. Resist panic and split trousers, plan B needed. Directly ahead was a tall post; the

skis, complete with my legs, were inevitably heading either side of the post. A painful anticipation crossed my mind, but I was still in control of my arms. Commending my spirit and other parts to the gods I made a determined grab at the post. The result was spectacular. As I embraced the post with all the passion of a desperate lover there was a loud 'crack' and the post and I hurtled into a deep ditch. The missus, gliding to an immaculate halt, looked aghast into the ditch. The sight, dreadful as it was, reduced her to tears - of laughter. I was still wrapped around the post which, in an effort to save itself, now lay on top of me. Leaving post and dignity in the ditch I extricated what was left and re-assembled myself.

'Thought you deserved a little amusement,' I said.

'How clever,' she said, 'I'm sure I couldn't do that.' 'I'd really like to see you try,' I replied.

But she didn't.

Now, I do not wish to depress you or put off any putative skiers out there. Outstanding in my list of jolly adventures is one where nearly everything corresponded to one of those fireside dreams we all have but frequently fail to find a counterpart in reality. On this occasion we had an opportunity to ski from the Glenshee ski area across the White Mounth Munros to our base in Glen Muick. 'Go for it, youth!' said my very experienced and rather (too) devil-may-care mate Neil. 'Will we need crampons up Glas Maol?' I asked. 'Nah! Why burden yourselves?' he scoffed. (He was not coming, by the way, just me and the missus).

Half way up Glas Maol's bald dome I was interested to observe the missus slowly sliding back towards Glenshee, skis and sticks still tucked determinedly under her arms. Before I could say 'ice axe' she'd regained control; composure she'd

never lost. After that we had nothing but pleasure skiing over what my SMC guide calls 'subdued eminences'. From Glas Maol and Dreish in the south to Lochnagar in the north this is a sort of extended plateau with bumps. Our route took us over Carn a'Claisie, Tolmount, Fafernie and t'Sagairt Mor, rarely dropping below 3,000ft (900m). Then came a long descent under the black, beetling crags of the Dubh Loch down to Glen Muick. Several times I was able to look back to slopes where I'd described elegant sweeps and turns, each change of direction punctuated by a neat hole in the snow.

After taking early retirement I moved up to Scotland and was able to imperil myself on ski each winter. For several years I laid on a winter adventure¹⁾ for those few of my mates whose 'winter green'²⁾ bottles had not fallen off the wall. These cheerful escapades would typically entail a few days journeying across various areas of the Highlands. Locomotion was by foot, bike and, occasionally, ski. One such adventure had seen us visiting a couple of remote bothies plus a novel ascent of a steep hillside where one of us (ex fell-runner, not a mountaineer) found it expedient to attach his crampons to his hands - mainly because they kept falling off his feet. Possibly unnerved by this experience he took to clutching the shoulders of the man in front during the ensuing descent, thus unnerving 'two for the price of one'.

Perhaps this was why there was worried snickering and whinnying when I outlined my plan for the final day. This was a ski traverse across the Moine Mhor from Glen Feshie to the Linn of Dee near Braemar. This wonderful desolate high plateau lies under the gaze of Braeriach and Cairn Toul, Monadh Mor and Beinn Bhrotain at an elevation of around 900m. It would, I argued, be

akin to a proper Arctic experience (not that I would know). I'm afraid I waxed my words too liberally. He of the hand crampons turned pale and opted for a low level walk instead, albeit on the wild trail from Feshie through to the Geldie and the Dee. The man I most welcomed to my side was a proper skier and survivor of the Mt Blanc 'Haute Route'. He insisted on driving our van round. I was left with Geoff, who was my only rival in the incompetence stakes, plus the missus, whose reasons for joining us were obscure but unlikely to have included my liberal waxing.

Our adventure¹⁾ began inauspiciously. My little party had started up the lower slopes of Carn Ban Mor when the missus realised she had failed to instruct our driver in the arcane ritual of bringing our temperamental van to life. Leaving her sack with us she departed to convey the appropriate incantations to John. Treating her sack and ski gear as a relay baton, Geoff and I struggled upwards. She reappeared as we were about to tackle the long steep bit, thus depriving me of delivering the noble speech of self-sacrifice I'd been composing. Soon however, we were entering into the majesty of the Moine. We were also, unfortunately, heading into the mystery of the Moine. There are few landmarks up here and a drifting mist was obscuring all of them. Never mind, good chance to show off my navigation skills, though triangulation would be difficult with nothing to triangulate on and, obviously, step counting would be out.

Assuming my VAV³⁾ I said my estimates placed us 350m south of Carn Ban Mor summit. (This was swank since we had been following a beaten trail

and could not be anywhere else.) Continuing with the VAV I said I'd set a SE bearing aiming for a col at least 200m wide where I would re-adjust.

'How will you know you're at the col?' asked the missus.

'Because we'll be swooping down about 80m and after that the ground rises to a spot height. When we've gone up a bit I'll know where we are.'

'Gone up a bit doesn't sound very professional,' she said.

'It's a technical term,' I explained.

'What happens if we miss the col?' asked Geoff.

'We'll either end up in Coire Garbhlach or the River Eidart.'

I should not have said that. It's 'Negative Rehearsal' and introduced a maggot of doubt into the proceedings. However, placing my trust in my compass and my compass safely in my pocket, I pointed the skis SE down the fall line and set off into the mist. Everything worked perfectly! If I had been sure beforehand that it would, I could have enjoyed it. But that would not have been an 'adventure', would it?

As if rewarding our audacity, the mist began to shred. The whole vast area came alive with shifting patterns of light and shade. Far above the shining shoulders of Cairn Toul were partly revealed, reminiscent of Marvell's 'Coy Mistress', unwilling yet unable to resist displaying her beauty. Maggots of doubt vanished. This was adventure and dream enough.

Our progress E across the rest of the Moine Mhor was without major incident, just an occasional punctuation mark from Geoff or me. Soon

1) In contradistinction to trendy outdoor organisations promising 'adventure', my definition of the word retains the 'outcome uncertain' aspect.

2) Wintergreen: pungent embrocation popular with harriers - similar properties to snake oil.

3) Very Assured Voice.

however, we faced the cross-country skier's dilemma: how to lose 500m with minimum loss of dignity and zero loss of working parts. My first line of descent was to a hallowed spot, Loch nan Stuirteag ⁴⁾. Beyond this the contour lines jostled for space and great skill would be needed; or possibly parachutes.

We descended to the snow-covered lochan in good order, then it was every man for himself (apart from the missus, of course). The snow was good and I began to execute a series of very gently descending traverses across the slope, sometimes not even stopping for punctuation. Just as I was muttering to myself 'Jean-Claude Killy ⁵⁾, eat your heart out,' a wisp of mist rustled clear of my ski tips. Instantly revealed was a huge, steep-sided re-entrant with a tiny black pool far below. Like those red skis long ago my current numbers made a bolt for the fall line.

At this point the information processing department went catatonic. I was about to hurtle into the abyss when, what we call in the trade 'stimulus-response compatibility' kicked in. Before you could say 'ice axe' I found myself making a hole in the mercifully soft snow. If you've worked up your S-R compatibility you don't need much brain power; handy for both Pavlov ⁶⁾ and me. As I lay there checking various parts and wondering if the depth of the re-entrant was an illusion (it wasn't), I looked back to the missus and Geoff. The former was under the control of her snow plough. Geoff was mainly under the control of gravity, which was certainly having its way with him, more often down than up; he was looking like the Abominable Snowman.

4) I think a Stuirteag is a Gaelic sturgeon

5) A start of Ski-Sunday

6) Not astar of Ski Sunday

Rather to my surprise we all reached the floor of Glen Geusachan in one piece. There were still 14km to go to the van and daylight had begun to wane. The glen floor was a mix of wroughty heather and soft snow. In these conditions the snow began to stick and ball up underneath the skis. To say this impeded progress would be a polite way of putting it. We were not polite. Sometimes both skis would ball up to an astonishing height; sometimes one ski would free itself and power ahead, leaving the other behind with painful consequences. With 14km of deep snow to traverse I was not going to abandon ski and post-hole all the way home. Geoff and the missus had no-wax (fish scale) skis, but I'd applied some of the stuff I'd bought in Braemar. It never had done what it said on the tin and now I decided to get rid of it. Extricating my multi-function Swiss army knife, I used the tool for removing boy scouts from horses hooves to scrape off most of the wax (and some of the plastic) from the skis. This was modestly successful and I drew ahead of the other two, who were removing their skis after a particularly bad balls-up. Pausing to dip into the nose bag, I was accosted by the missus who demanded I also remove my skis in the name of team spirit and democracy. I was well aware it was what she would have done, but I was surprised to find her applying equally high ethical standards to me. I soon disabused her of the notion.

Drawing ahead, I could see we were about to debouch into the lower end of the Lairig Ghru. Ahead lay the River Dee, completely hidden under snow. With the better snow cover I got into my stride or, rather, slide. What I failed to observe

in the waning light was that I was poised to drop down a 1m high river bank. With a quite unexpected and stomach churning lurch I shot down the near vertical bank and crashed onto the river ice which promptly gave way. Near the top of my quite lengthy list of horrible ways to die is falling through a snow bridge into a raging torrent and being dragged under. What saved me this time was not S-R compatibility but that evolutionary implanted reflex you see in babies when you lift them up and suddenly drop them: they fling their arms out. (Do not try this when mum is around and always try to catch the infant before it hits the deck.) Anyway, I instinctively flung my arms wide as I landed on my back. This wedged me across the hole but did not prevent my nether regions from a dip in the Dee, the icy Dee. My predicament was like that of the elderly gent who 'phoned Boots and asked if they stocked heavy duty incontinence pads. 'Yes, Sir', said the assistant, 'Where are you ringing from?' 'From the waist downwards!' croaked the old gent. At the moment this was the least of my worries. My legs and skis had combined to form a reef knot and if I moved my arms I would be snatched forthwith into the icy tunnel of death. I was snookered!

It was at this point that my abiding faith in team spirit was vindicated. Having resumed his skis, Geoff was sufficiently close that, although he had lost sight of me (for obvious reasons), he could hear my piteous wails. I remained calm, apart from the odd screech as the Dee infiltrated my trousers. I gave Geoff precise instructions on how to release the ski bindings (in case he'd forgotten), then, with a heave-ho from him and a mighty bound from me I was free! When I stopped trembling I cautiously thrust my stick into the hole. It might well have been torn from my grasp by the force of the water. But it wasn't

and this was because the water was about 8cm deep and flowing gently over granite slabs.

However, I really was wringing from the waist down and I swear I could hear a diabolical chuckle from over by the Devil's Point (it might just have been the missus). The wings of darkness were beating around us and hypothermia was stalking through my under-garments. I set a furious pace over the remaining miles, slowing only for a cautious crossing of the Luibeg Burn.

Soon we were scrunching down the stony track from Derry Lodge to rendezvous with the others at the van. 'Have a good trip?' asked John. 'Not bad; pretty uneventful, I replied.

FOOTNOTE: I have now retired from adventure skiing. In my case, this means any kind of skiing. However, quite recently I acquired (a gift, since you ask) two sets of snow shoes. Noticing they had knarly saw-toothed under-parts I thought they might also double up as crampons. So one day, with the missus tagging along, I went on a mission to check them out on the Fiacail (ridge) of Coire an-t-Sneachda. But that's another story.

Into the Wilderness of Fisherfield - May 2014

Robin Hildrew

My fascination with the magnificently situated and remote peak of A' Mhaighdean (The Maiden) began in April 1969, when I was teaching at Gordonstoun. The school Mountain Rescue team responded to a colleague's challenge that we couldn't manage to do A' Mhaighdean in a school weekend. We did, of course, with two camps in different sites along the SW shore of Lochan Fada. I returned to the area in March 1975 with a Sedbergh School CCF expedition. We trekked in from Loch Maree and camped in snow on the NE shore of Lochan Fada about 2 km from its NW end. The following morning the tents were buried in soft fresh snow, but after digging ourselves out we all climbed A' Mhaighdean and enjoyed splendid arctic views and trekked on through to Shenavall bothy the next day.

My third visit to the mountain was in March 1992, again with Sedbergh CCF, but approaching this time from a base at Shenavall. On a gloriously sunny day of hard frost a colleague and I moved at a brisk pace up Gleann na Muice and cramponed our way up the eastern slopes of A' Mhaighdean, rounding the trip off with my first ascent of Ruadh Stac Mor on our way back to Shenavall. No ascent was the same, and the peak has retained its fascination for me because of the combination of remoteness, spectacular situation and panoramic views, especially to the north.

I completed my Munros in 2005 and embarked on an open-ended plan to climb in the years to come as many Corbetts as time, energy and good health allowed me. My long-term friend and climbing colleague from Sedbergh School, Steve Smith, still needed to reach the four westerly

Munros in the Fisherfield Forest. These presented significant access problems, but ones which could be solved by approaching the hills from Kinlochewe on the western side of the Forest and placing camps beside Lochan Fada. I saw the opportunity of a fourth chance to climb A' Mhaighdean, and also of tackling two equally remote Corbetts, Beinn Lair and Beinn a' Chaisgein Mor, by extending the back-packing trip beyond the western end of Lochan Fada to the Bealach Mheinnidh (at a height of 1500'), a convenient starting point for both hills, and returning to Kinlochewe via Letterewe and the eastern side of Loch Maree, a six day back-pack, with five nights in the Wilderness. Steve generously agreed to join forces in the attempt on these six hills. He also offered to provide mountain bikes, so that two further Corbetts could be tackled on day trips using private estate roads to enable the long distances to be made more feasible. So the plan took shape.

Steve researched and acquired lightweight freeze-dried meals to reduce the weight carried and we both prepared individual ration packs to suit our tastes and pared down the essential kit to what we felt were acceptable limits. Our differing approach to this exercise meant that Steve's pack was noticeably lighter than mine.

We left Sedbergh on Wednesday May 7th, aware that with a dubious weather forecast the trip was not going to be an easy dry run. But you can always hope! The first night was spent in the excellent surroundings and comfort of the Torridon Youth Hostel. A clear evening gave us

splendid views of the Torridon hills and particularly the mighty bulk of Liathach.

Day 1

A promising morning, dry, and with a very light breeze. We drove to Incheril, 1km from Kinlochewe, where the car would stay for the next 6 days, shouldered our packs and set off towards the east shore of Loch Maree. We tried to keep to a regime of a rest every 30 minutes, but it didn't always work, especially on uphill section. As we climbed up Gleann Bianasdail patches of sunshine broke through, making it very warm work; the track climbs high to avoid a gorge before dropping again to the shore of Lochan Fada. The SE end of Lochan Fada was the notional campsite, but as we'd descended to the loch we had spotted a promising patch of grass about ½ km further along the shore in a better position for the first two Munros. Once established in my Thermarest chair I could comfortably survey the scene and start on the evening meal. The food packs were easy to prepare if not beautifully tasty. The first signs of pattering rain were heard on the tents, and this continued steadily, though not heavily, throughout the night.

Day 2

By dawn the rain had stopped and the scene outside was breathtakingly beautiful – a completely windless morning, with the surface of the loch like a mirror. It was the sort of morning where in a few weeks time the midges would have made life unbearable. No such problems today – too cold. Steve was sure he had spotted red-throated divers on the other side of Lochan Fada. There were a few patches of sun, but also the threat of showers developing, but only one short heavy one as we climbed up the SW ridge

of the first Munro, Beinn Tarsuinn. The top was sufficiently clear to give us some views, though not a full panorama. After descending steeply to the Bealach Odhar, we followed a rising traverse line to avoid the knob of Meall Garbh, between Beinn Tarsuinn and the mighty quartzite-capped pile of the highest of our targets, Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair. I have to confess a low moment as we reached the base of its steep S ridge - I felt pretty weary and wondered whether I shouldn't just let Steve go on up on his own, as he was always faster than the older man, especially uphill. However, a rest and some high energy food, plus a determination not to quit this early in the game, persuaded me to climb on and strangely, the steep scramble up steep sandstone steps, then large quartzite blocks, concentrated



The ring of stones - see overleaf

the mind so that I forgot about tiredness. En route we met a party who were on their way round all the Fisherfield Munros in a day. We didn't envy them this marathon! We got some views from the top of the Mullach too. Any

memories of my last ascent up here (in 1966!) had completely vanished. Shortly after leaving the col we found a most strange sight: a neat and carefully constructed artistic creation of stones in a kind of ring about a foot high on a base of a large flat sandstone slab. Why anyone should have built such a thing in such a remote location, and what its purpose is, was quite baffling.

Day 3

The rain had returned, not heavy, but insistent. We rose at 6a.m. and, inevitably, we had to strike camp in the rain (at least there was no wind too), and made an early start along the loch shore. There was a hint of a path, but it was hard to

follow and we found ourselves often traversing steep grass or heather. Steve spotted a skein of geese overhead in a perfect V-formation, heading NW above Lochan Fada – perhaps heading for the Arctic. With relief, after two hours we reached the next campsite and pitched tents in the rain. It was tempting to linger over a brew but Steve was keen to be up and off in pursuit of the plum Munro of the trip, A' Mhaighdean. The ascent was not particularly steep, but involved 3 km of continuous grass and heather (quite a change from the soft snow of 1975), with the spectacular views saved for the very end, on reaching the summit rocks and seeing the whole magnificent panorama of Fionn Loch, Dubh Loch and Carn More thousands of feet below us. On this, my

fourth ascent of A' Mhaighdean, the magnificence of the panorama had not diminished.

The rain continued intermittently. This was not the best moment to discover that my newly re-proofed Paramo jacket was not waterproof. At least I stayed warm so long as I kept moving, which was necessary, as we had still to ascend Ruadh Stac Mor. From the col below this summit the ascent through steep sandstone cliffs looked fearsome, but there was of course a way - up rock steps and scree, followed by a tortuous slope of huge unstable sandstone boulders. On the summit by mid-afternoon, we were still blessed with some views, despite the swirling cloud and insistent light rain. By 6p.m. we were back at the tents and I was able to change into a welcome dry shirt. The rain stopped about dinner time. There were even a few patches of brightness but we did not expect any better for tomorrow.

Day 4

We had intended an early start, but overslept. The light rain continued all night; by morning there were still rain showers passing through, so we packed up once again in the wet. The route led us along the lochside, once more over rough and tortuous terrain, until reaching the end of the loch, from where we were able to move easily along Gleann Tulacha, over almost level grass and bog vegetation. Gradually we began to climb, all the time marvelling at the beetling line of crags along the NE side of Beinn Lair which totally dominate the glen. A somewhat steeper section led up to the Bealach a Chuirn as we followed an intermittent but helpful path. From the bealach we picked up the stalkers' path and the going was so much easier at last; it led round below the final crags of Beinn Lair, joining the main Carn More – Letterewe track. A short final uphill section

deposited us on top of the Bealach Mheinnidh. The rain ceased for a time and we selected a site on level and seemingly not too boggy ground and pitched camp. After a quick brew we left the camp for Beinn Lair. We climbed steadily up to the edge of the stupendous cliffs we had traversed below, up to the summit plateau, pausing on a promontory to savour the truly awesome views back down towards Lochan Fada, Fionn Loch and Carn More. In an hour we reached the huge summit cairn, visible for a mile or more as we crossed the plateau.

As we cooked dinner the rain became heavier, and we were glad to be snug in the tents..... Only we weren't. The rain increased, the water table



Left: Dubh Loch and Fionn Loch from A' Mhaighdean
Above: NW end of Lochan Fada with crags of Beinn Lair

rose, little streams began spreading and at about 8.00 I discovered water flowing under my ground-sheet. Immediate evacuation was essential! We packed up, unpegged the tents, and moved

them bodily to higher, somewhat drier ground near the stalkers' track. All the while the rain was lashing down! If there was to be a low moment on the expedition, this was probably it, but all our concentration was focussed on re-pitching camp, keeping essential clothing and bedding dry, and getting once more hunkered down for the night. We succeeded and survived. The rain finally stopped at hours later.

Day 5

At last a change in the weather! It was a cold night, hardly surprising at 1500 feet, but the day dawned dry. Unusually, the day began with a long descent to Carnmore along a very rough and storm-damaged track. We were now enjoying real sunshine for the first time. What a change it made to the landscape. The steep climb up from Carn-



more went well, following the fine stalkers' track which then led up more gently to its high point above Lochan Feith Mhic-lillean, where we left it for the 2½ km climb up to the rounded plateau of Beinn a Chaisgein Mor. The views from the summit were breathtakingly beautiful. We had a complete panorama in wonderful light encom-

passing whole Fisherfield Forest, with all the Munros. To the north Poolewe was visible, and beyond it, and across the sea, the Outer Hebrides. This one day made the whole trip and all its discomfort utterly worthwhile. After recrossing the causeway we had the tiring final ascent back up to the Bealach Mheinnidh. It had taken 8½ hours to reach this most remote of all Corbetts, but what a day we'd had! There was no question of moving camp. Dinner and bed were the only two things needed.

Day 6

The full moon appeared for the first time last night! We'd known it was there, as it had never gone fully dark, but it was lovely to see the clear, moon and starlit sky, even though it was another pretty cold night. We rose to a still and dry morning, with some early cloud which promised to clear into another sunny day. We packed up and set off down towards Letterewe. After some uncertainty we managed to locate the public track through the Letterewe grounds onto the Loch Maree shore path. Although sunshine could be seen everywhere, a rogue shower suddenly appeared, dampening us for a short while, until the sun and warmth happily reappeared. A steep descent brought us to the Gleann Bianasdail bridge. Full circle! There was however another one and a half hour's walking to put behind us before we could recover the car and check into the Kinlochewe Hotel bunkhouse to enjoy the delights of a shower, shave and change of clothes. After six days we felt like new men. We finished the day with a splendid three-course meal in the hotel dining room. The *pièce de résistance* was of course the dram of Macallan or Dalwhinnie which rounded off the evening!



Left: Fionn Loch and Beinn a Chaisgein Mor from Bealach Mheinnidh

Above: Torriddon hills from camp on Bealach Mheinnidh

Sadly the good weather was not set to last. After a rest day and establishment of a camp at Gairloch we had two more Corbetts to tackle on day trips, using mountain bikes to shorten the approach. The first, on May 15th, was Beinn Airigh Charr, saving 7km each way on the estate road from Poolewe to Kernsary. A good stalkers' track led most of the way, but rain and wind intensified as we reached the summit in thick cloud, so we did not linger there. The return ride was largely downhill and amazingly speedy, arriving in Poolewe within twenty minutes!

The final day, May 16th, dawned bright and sunny, an encouraging, but misleading, start. We followed the Gruinard River for the 9 km ride up the estate road to Loch na Sealga. Our target, Beinn Dearg Bheag, lay a further 5 km away. With some difficulty we traversed the rough eastern slopes of the mountain, until we could climb very steeply through breaks in the crags at its south-

ern end and eventually emerge onto the summit ridge, just below a large rocky block surmounted by the summit cairn. We crouched below it to shelter, had a bit of food, and visited the cairn for the obligatory photos. The next problem - which way down? Reversing the ascent route was distinctly unattractive. The alternative was to find a way down the NW flank of the mountain

along the line of a burn. We left the summit ridge via steep grassy gully, and emerged from the mist and to see the burn below flowing in the right direction along a grassy bottom. We were then able to take a traverse line across to the col to the north of the mountain, before a 3km bog-plod back to the bikes. Mercifully the rain abated when we were about half-way there; life began to feel more agreeable. Once back in camp at Gairloch the reviving showers, warm, dry clothes, and a good meal were all that was needed to restore our spirits, and we were able to reflect on how our survival instincts had enabled us to deal with probably the toughest mountaineering challenge of the whole trip.

It was a time to celebrate the successful conclusion of the whole ambitious plan: four Munros and four Corbetts in a ten-day spell of sustained physical activity, in the face of some distinctly unpleasant weather conditions. We felt we had good reason to be well satisfied with our achievements.

The Final Countdown

Paula Carter

The slog uphill began through snow that had built up into increasingly deep and expansive drifts. Spindrift whipped up more forcibly as height was gained. The tops were more in than out of clag, but it was lifting often enough to see the route clearly.

Tackling the snow on the leeward side of the ridge resulted in knee-deep wading and constant sinking up to my thighs. I was getting tired. I wanted this top but was it worth the effort in these conditions? Occasional gusts of wind hit me like hammer blows. I decided to try for the shoulder on the skyline ahead and make my decision there. Plodding up and up with a curtain of ice crystals spinning overhead, I stopped for a breather just below the shoulder. A violent gust of wind hit me and I was blown over backwards – my head down the slope but still knee deep in snow. Within seconds my face was encrusted with spindrift and fresh snow as a blizzard set in. Taking control I righted myself and sat huddled, protecting my face from the icy onslaught. Seconds later the barrage weakened. So did my resolve. A glance upwards indicated increasing wind force and I took the first opportunity to plough back down through the drifts – doing as much ‘bottom glissading’ as possible.

One nil to the hill, Sgurr a’ Bhealaich Dheirg.

It was February half term. Mike and I had headed once more up to Kinlochleven, with high hopes that I would at last complete the Munros. I only had six to bag and seven days in which to do them. Day one over and I’d failed on the first one already.

Sunday

I woke up at 7.30 looking straight up the mountainside from my bedroom window. Trees were at an angle of 45 degrees, only just visible through a horizontal blizzard. Snow continued to fall until 12 p.m. when skies cleared and turned blue. Idyllic? Not quite – what clouds there were travelled at exceptionally high speed.

An afternoon’s walk beneath Beinn a Bheithir witnessed two adventurous figures disappearing in vast clouds of spindrift, which swept from the ridges and summit crest. Rather them than me.

Listening to the radio later that evening we heard that someone had gone missing on Ben Nevis over the weekend – last seen on Friday. Sobering news.

Monday

Due in Killin today – a prepaid booking so we have to go. Gone is the chance to complete the Munros this trip. A glorious morning but the wind is still boisterous. Yesterday’s dump of snow makes journeying dubious. But we do not encounter any great problems, just spectacular views through Glencoe, Rannoch Moor, Orchy and onwards. Cobalt skies, shimmering snow.

We arrived at Killin and established ourselves at the bunkhouse, then set off to tackle Meall Corrainach and Meall a’Choire Leith. Frustration level was reached when we realised that the road over to Glen Lyon was impassable and we queued behind a cohort of vehicles to ‘about turn’. There was one last chance for the day, Meall Ghaordie.

Clear road, blue skies and we had found a parking space. Things were looking up. The ascent was in the lee of the mountain – still looking good. Well above the snow line we decided to don

crampons and extricate ice axes from our baggage. Twenty metres below the summit it was cold and windy but O.K. Mike held back to allow me to gain the summit first. Thanks! As I top out I am rammed by a wall of wind that stops me in my tracks. The summit and its shelter are only 10 feet away but I can hardly move. Almost crawling, I eventually reach the shelter but its entrance is on the windward side and the trig is inside it. I edge round the side of the shelter and am brought to a complete standstill. No chance of moving forward – just standing still was an effort. Mike hunkers down behind the wall – smugly – as he has no need to go nearer, having already been there. The trig is only four feet away but might as well be a mile. I move in next to Mike for a rest.

I risk lifting my head above the shelter of the wall and then, summoning all my resolve, tackle the rime-covered wall straight on. I use my ice axe to anchor myself and gradually ‘ascend’ the wall, throwing myself over to land at the foot of the trig point. Five more to go.

Tuesday – Ben Vane

Tuesday dawned with azure sky, sunshine and no wind. Still very cold though. It was time to head off for Ben Vane. Perfect conditions prevail, but it is a very steep climb. We gained the summit without resorting to crampons but there were one or two dicey moments. The summit is spectacular – flat, glassy iced and calm, with 360-degree views. Now there are only four more to go – including Ben Lomond, which at this moment is standing out tantalisingly in the distance.

It’s nearly sunbathing temperature, but we need to get down. We make a slow descent to appreciate the Alpine-like panorama – a contrast of deep blue and shimmering white. Blades of grass glint with diamond encrustations. Cramponed boots break through creaking, crusty slopes of snow. Ice axes puncture the drifts, leaving deep blue holes. We pass fantastic ice sculptures reminiscent of wind sculpted sandstone from the Grand Canyon, but in shades of blue and dazzling white. What an exquisite day.

Thursday – Meall Chorrainach/ Choire Leith

This is our third attempt this week. The road was still completely blocked on Tuesday. A slight thaw allowed us to get the car close enough, but a 2km trek up the road was required to reach our starting point. Snow on the hill was soft and awkward. A thin veil of mist hung over the highest ground and a very defined cloud level skimmed the top of Corrainach. Breaks in the cloud created a patchwork of sun and shade on the surrounding snow-spattered mountains and glens, although the mist did not create the navigation problems we had anticipated. Meall a’ Choire Leith was a much lower top and well clear of the cloud base.

A speedy descent down the snow slopes was cancelled out by a struggle over tufty peat hags and bogs to regain the road. Our progress along the dam road was more efficient for us on foot than for the ‘4 wheel driver’ who had tackled one drift too many and had become well and truly stuck. We picked our way past and condescended to inform the police on our return to Killin.

Half term had ended with four down and now only two to go. I was happy with that, considering the conditions we had encountered.

May – Sgurr a Bhealaich Dheirg (and Sgurr Fhuairail)

We left Kinlochleven at 9 a.m. to skirt the loch on its northern side, blue skies above with a thin crescent moon held high. Sunlight gilded the tops.

A haze of bluebells spread beneath a woodland canopy, which included every hue of green imaginable - bright lime to deepest viridian. The carpet of bluebells was interspersed with whorls of ferns whose unfurled bronzed fronds sported tightly coiled tips. The loch was held by a stillness which created perfect symmetry: two moons, two Paps, two of everything. A perfect prelude to the day. Could it be matched?

Passing Ben Nevis gave a view of gullies packed with old snow and a recent smattering of new.

We reached the beginning of the walk already elated. My elation momentarily declined as I saw Mike paying too much attention to a rotting stag which had a fantastic pair of antlers. He was threatening to behead it and carry skull and tines on his back. Thankfully he thought better of it and backed off.

The day maintained its perfection and a couple of hours later we sat on the summit enjoying an exhilarating panorama. To the north-west lay Torridon with the white pointed massif of Beinn Eighe highlighted in a spot of sunlight. Flurries of snow showers skimmed all the tops, leaving them freshly dusted. To the west, the Cuillin of Skye were silhouetted against a pale blue horizon. The surrounding sea was deep ultramarine and there, far in the distance, were the hazy shapes of the Hebrides. To the south, the Ben dominated the skyline. Gullies filled with snow were evident even from this distance. A sudden shaft of

sunlight lit up the domed top of Aaonach Mor, still sporting the morning's snow fall.

We sat and sat and sat. Other Munroists joined us and left us as we sat mesmerised. Eventually the decision to move was made and we followed a mica-encrusted path that glittered and twinkled as we made our way up Sgurr Fhuairail for the second time, before our final sharp descent to the car. Only Ben Lomond left but it would have to wait. The weather turned against us again the following day.

August

So, here it was, the day of my final Munro. The forecast said that all the clag and showers would dissipate over the day – but who believes Scottish forecasts? – Fickle at the best of times. I decide that I will keep going as long as I'm not walking in thick mist. I have promised myself that my last Munro WILL have a view from it.

The walk by Loch Lomond is not promising, but as we turn off the West Highland Way to zigzag through bracken and birch towards the knobbls of Ptarmigan Ridge, the mist swirls and reveals a shoulder of Ben Lomond – so be it – I go for it.

Approaching from the Ptarmigan Ridge gives superb views north and west and has to be preferred to the slog up the tourist route. It is easy going all the way, but with sufficient drop off either side of the ridge to create interest. A final short sharp climb leads directly to the summit.

Clouds scudding across the sky reveal distant peaks, a classic view of the Cobbler, mountain tops appearing and disappearing from of sight. It was going to be left to luck as to whether we would see anything from the top. As the trig point came into view, the wind strengthened and the clouds closed in. We tucked ourselves down

on a grassy ledge and waited. Ten minutes later the panorama opened up for us – and port and whisky somehow found its way into our hands. Celebration was duly done!

Eventually we began the descent, following the crest of the corrie ridge to enjoy views back to the top, where the cliffs dropped steeply from the summit ridge. The long path down gave a superb vista of the southern end of the loch – I'd never realised how many islands there were.

My first Munro (unknowingly) was Maol Chean-Dearg in Torridon, in 1984, before the term was known to me and when I was a novice with Clitheroe Mountaineering Club. Doing the Munros has taken me to places in Scotland I might never have visited and made me realise how much more there is to be done, but please, No Corbetts!

Argentinian Lake District

Craving sun, warmth and multi-day hut-to-hut walking, but don't fancy the jet lag incurred visiting New Zealand? Then read on ...

Having handed over Warden duties at Waters Cottage to Assistant Warden Dee Gaffney for seven weeks, I was on my way to South America, straight after the last series of Committee Meetings for the year. I was away from late November 2014 to mid January 2015. The idea was to visit the Argentinian Lakes District ahead of the busy period from Christmas through to the end of February, which is also before the tabanos - horseflies - become a menace. The trip started with a couple days at Iguazu Falls on the Argentina/ Brazil border, then I flew to Bariloche, close to the border between Argentina and Chile and hub for the Lago Nahuel Huapi National Park. This is quite a commercial place, with a thriving ski season - they see a lot of snow here during the Southern winter - and arriving in early summer, the white stuff was much in evidence. Indeed, there had been a snow storm in town, elevation 770m above sea level, only a week or so before.

Whilst I had booked my flights for this trip back in February 2014, I had suffered a blood clot - a DVT, or deep vein thrombosis - behind my right knee in late August. My only risk factor was being the wrong side of age 50, and for a few months I did not know if I would even be able to travel to South America; I could barely walk for a fortnight. Two trips, one to Central Asia and the other to Morocco, had to be cancelled - thank heavens for BMC Travel Insurance - but things slowly improved with the help of anti-coagulant drugs

and compression stockings, and in early November the hospital gave me the all clear to travel.

The problem was, three months of relative inactivity had robbed me of my fitness. So after a day ferreting out info around town, my first day on the hill was going to be an easy stroll at most. It was cool and clear, so I stayed at low level, riding the local buses to Bahia Lopez, at the extreme west end of the road network in the Park, then doing a short walk to a viewpoint - or mirador - overlooking the Brazo Tristeza arm of Lago Nahuel Huapi. After, I discovered an unsigned path to another mirador above the main part of the lake, and went up a wee wooded hill, Cerro Llao Llao, for views back to my earlier wanderings. Nearby I caught a different local bus back into town. A four hour warm up, feeling good, so next day I took a bus to the ski area of Cerro Catedral, only to find that the uplift was not in operation today. NOT expected, on a Sunday! Undeterred, and feeling the need for a decent cardiovascular workout, I plodded up the approximate line of the lifts - 1,000m elevation - in a couple hours. This gave access to a high level ridge, mainly walking, occasional use of the hands, but not really scrambling. The views all around were impressive, particularly to glaciated Monte Tronador on the frontier range. My reconnaissance ended an hour or so along the ridge, followed by a return to the valley through the sad summertime detritus of an out of season ski area.

But the recce had been very worthwhile. The main objective in the area is the traverse of the high ridges, hut to hut, in the National Park and it was obvious that for the moment there was too

Mark Gear



Above: View W from Penthouse 1004, Bariloche

Right: Cerro Lopez from Cerrito Llao Llao, Nahuel Huapi NP



much snow to attempt this. So I took the bus south two hours to the town of El Bolson, 400m lower and more in the rain shadow of the high frontier peaks. The mountains are still quite high here, though... A week doing a four day route and climbing a couple of 2,000m+ tops followed, and after that I reckoned the thaw was now well enough advanced, and the dicky leg sufficiently tested, to warrant a return to Bariloche. What's more a spell of fine, settled weather had become stationary over the region - not to be wasted.

My bible was the Lonely Planet guidebook 'Trekking in the Patagonian Andes'. Whilst this describes the high level route in Lago Nahuel Huapi NP over four nights, staying at Refugios Frey, Jakob, Laguna Negra and Lopez, this seemed slightly illogical to me, as on day one you must descend 250m to Frey, and then on day two reascend to the same point in order to continue; my solution was to plan on four days, heading directly to Jakob on day one. However, before setting out there was some doubt about whether the route from Jakob to Laguna Negra was feasi-



Laguna Jakob and Cerro Cuernos del Diablo, Nahuel Huapi NP

ble, given the early season snow conditions. The lie of the land is a twisting ridge with five main arroyos - valleys - descending east towards Bariloche as possible escape routes, and by the end of my stay here I was to be familiar with most of them!

So on the intended first day of my four day traverse I signed the necessary disclaimer at the NP office to allow me to do the route as described above. I caught the bus to Catedral ski area, and the cabin/chairlift up onto Cerro Catedral at 2,000m.

The weather was perfect as I took an hour to reach the point where I turned back on my earlier visit, the snow patches noticeably smaller than they had been 10 days ago. Then onto new ground, although more of the easy scramble same, to reach the pass of Cancha de Futbol in another hour. There are large flat gravel areas here, but not really big enough for a game of football ... At this point Refugio Frey is down to the left, Jakob to the right. The latter was my way, a long descent into Arroya Rucaco, steep and loose, although runnable scree/dirt near the bottom. Then into the cool forest for a stretch, hearing the 'Clonk! Clonk!' of Patagonian woodpeckers. I imagined the refugio was at the head of this valley, but I had not looked at the map in enough detail. The path came out into more open scrubby forest, then onto a plateau of scree, and finally climbed an easy snow slope with thawing zig-zag tracks to another crest! Jakob was down the other side of this, and the view was incredible, with the lake far below and the pinnacles of Cerro Cuernos del Diablo on the horizon. Another steep, loose descent - not runnable this time - then away through forest, the path all tree roots, to reach a bridge over the lake outflow and so the hut. The place was quite busy, with maybe

twenty folk in residence; perhaps a foretaste of the busy period to come.

Although the warden had very little English, I managed to query the route ahead with him, and the story was that you needed crampons, an ice axe, helmet and a mountain guide! At the time I didn't entirely believe him, thinking that this warning was designed to discourage the international backpacking brigade, many of whom have never even seen snow, although what I saw the next morning bore it out. But on the strength of what he said I decided not to risk the high level route, and instead return to Bariloche. This would complete a circuit through the southern end of the range; I could then come back and do a northern circuit to conclude my exploration.

Overnight it was cold, and there was a frost outside the refugio on rising. After breakfast (cooked on a wood burning stove) I went for an hour and a half side trip to Laguna de Los Tempanos. Very nice, although to reach it involved crossing some hard frozen snow slopes of icy névé. From here, I could see the way up onto the crest - looked very steep and intimidating - and the route beyond appeared to be a typical Alpine ridge. Not the sort of thing to do wearing Yaktrax and using a trekking pole! Perhaps it will not be until later season (January?) that the route becomes 'doable' by walkers rather than properly equipped climbers.

The way out of here was a long, long walk down Arroyo Casa de Piedra. That said, it was quite nice, and something new. Mature forest high up, more open lower down, with lovely views of the river and the mountains. I reached the gravel road at the end after four hours, with still 5 km to go to where I could catch a bus. I managed to thumb a lift for a kilometre or so of this - in a beaten up junker (always pays to say

'Buenos dias!' to people you see parked by the side of the road) but still rather foot sore on reaching tarmac.

So after an afternoon and evening of R&R in the fleshpots I was back out on the morning of day three. I didn't start too early, given what I had seen the day before; it would not pay to reach the snow line until the morning thaw was underway. I took the local bus to Puente Lopez, and started walking up the eponymous arroyo to Refugio Lopez from there. It's a steep 1,000m climb from the road, taking a couple hours. For a good way the dusty trail cuts through the line of the hut access track, until finally joining it to approach and spiral around the hill on which the hut (painted pink) sits. They have a wee swimming pool round the back for their water supply ... I took a breather here, loaded up with more water for the rest of the day and advised the guardienne of my intentions.

The climb up from the refugio to Pico Turista is only about 300m, but it's steep and rocky - a tad scrambly - for a fair way, following red paint dots. Eventually it is easier to plod up snow slopes, already tracked, but higher still it was back onto rock (less tiring) before a final snow crest and a pass to the left of the prominent dark triangular peak of Punta Negra. From here it is just a stroll to the right to the summit. Fantastic view, including Monte Tronador nearby, further out Volcan Osorno and further still Volcan Puntiagudo, both the latter in Chile. Think I saw a condor too ...

Returning to the pass, there was a long, long descent of a bouldery slope into a bowl south west of this branch of the range. The path was only intermittent, waymarking poor, and the rocks sharp, angular and unstable; any slip would probably have resulted in a blood letting. Suffice to say, I took my time and was very careful. While

busy with this, it occurred to me that the only thing worse than coming down here would be going up it! Eventually I was able to run some snow patches, cut right to a stony plateau, and descend to a marshy meadow fringed with stunted Southern Beech. This was the only shade between Refugios Lopez and Laguna Negra, so a good spot for a late lunch, even if there were buzzing tabanos.

The way ahead looked daunting to jaded legs, now on their fifth consecutive hill day. Cerro Bailey Willis rose like the Red Cuillin on steroids... The sometimes indistinct path climbed into a corrie on its north side, and I slowly slogged up to the head of this and a prominent cairn at a pass. Joy of joys, the route did not go to the top of the peak, but instead traversed more stable blocky ground to the next col, and the first view down to Laguna Negra. There was a short ascent, then a long descent to below the great rocky tower of Cerro Negro, before cutting left down more snow and then gentle slopes to the sometimes peaty corrie above the lake. From here the refugio appears only a short way across the water, but to reach it you have to walk two thirds of the way round the shoreline to the east, quite a bit of this following tracks across old thawing snowdrifts. A few of these seem to overhang the laguna, so someone might be in for a wetting on the day they collapse! There was even a little mauvais pas, a rocky step equipped with (slack) fixed rope and mini stemples, before more snow and at last a path over a rocky knoll to the lake outflow and the hut.

This is an unusual place. It has a triangular footprint, which helps it survive avalanches in the winter. The warden had a smattering of English, and I had the Pension Completo; DB&B. This was reasonable value, and the dinner particularly

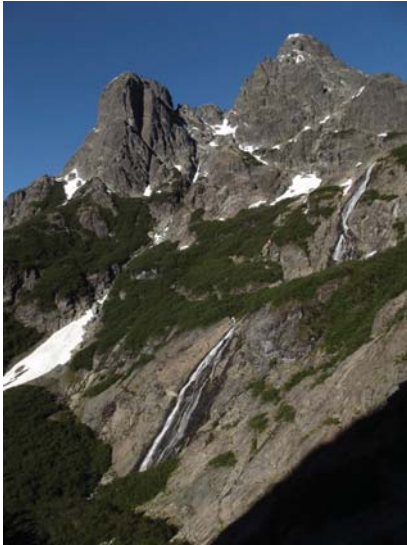


good; the menu, which I include here to give the reader an idea what to expect, was vegetable soup with bread, followed by meat and bean stew with white rice and more bread, finishing with a dessert of tinned peaches, dulce leche (the caramelised sugar and milk spread that is popular in this part of the world), nuts and wafers.

There were only three other folk staying when I crashed early, totally knackered. Unfortunately three more arrived soon after, and sat up chatting and laughing with the warden until past midnight!

Cerro Bailey Willis from descent of Pico Turista, Nahuel Huapi NP

Day four was another gorgeous day; it was hard to believe that rain and mist were forecast tomorrow. After breakfast and observing a fox sitting on the rocks nearby I was away early for a long, sometimes rocky descent of the path to Arroyo Negro, fortunately soon in the shade. There was a two tier water slide/fall to enjoy, and then a couple hours down the valley to Colonia Suiza. This arroyo is quite different from Casa de



Waterslides between Laguna Negra and Arroyo Negro, Nahuel Huapi NP

Piedra; it feels wilder and rougher, with a greater number of boggy bits crossed by tree branches, and more mature forest. It also drops at a steady angle and is shorter. For much of the way down I was accompanied by a friendly dog, a Border Collie/Greyhound cross; I think she had come up with a couple of local runners, and decided to go back down with me! Argentina seems to have a lot of semi-stray dogs about, some running in packs, others begging titbits at bus stops and outside shops. I lost her at the village, which has a sleepy Swiss log cabin vibe about it. An hour to look around, and I was on a bus back to Bariloche.

The day after the predicted rain arrived, and I had a good fester. It was now time to move on, and the next day I rode the buses again into Chile for more trekking destinations. The trip wound up with Hogmanay on Easter Island, and visiting Santiago and Valparaiso thereafter - but that's another story.

How to do it:

- KLM out of Amsterdam is usually the best airline to fly from Europe to South America. Direct overnight flights from Schipol are available to Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, but if like me you are time rich, money poor, consider a routing with more stops. This saved me several hundred Pounds. On the way out I had an eight hour layover in Sao Paulo, Brazil, not a bad thing. With my thermarest and a travel pillow in cabin luggage, and Tamazepam in my money belt, I managed a few hours shut eye, so was a lot fresher on arrival. On the way back from Santiago I had a stop in Panama City, although without the layover this time.

- Once at Buenos Aires International, you will have to transfer to the Domestic terminal for an onward connection to Bariloche. MTL run shuttle buses every 30 minutes, starting at 6 a.m., but BA traffic is awful, so allow 90 minutes for the journey!

- LAN appear to be the most punctual domestic airline, certainly better than Aerolineas Argentinas.

- Once in Bariloche, there are buses every couple hours or so - last at 10.15 p.m. - into the centre. The airport is 15km out of town. Better is probably a taxi, known locally as a remise, but this will cost up to A\$200. US\$1 = A\$12.5 at time of writing (but see tips below).

- In town I based myself exclusively at the hostel known as Penthouse 1004. This is very central, on the 10th (top) floor of the Bariloche Centre, with lovely views across the lake to the mountains - particularly at dawn. Not the cheapest place avail-

able, but very relaxed, no TV, free Internet and Wifi, a filling breakfast starting at 7 a.m. included in the price, firm mattresses and helpful English speaking staff.

- Consult Club Andino Bariloche for trail conditions, Tourist Information for bus timetables, and at the National Park office register your plans. All are a short stagger from the Bariloche Centre, and you can usually find someone speaking English here too.

- Weather forecasting in the area seems to be quite reliable. Try:<http://es.snow-forecast.com/resorts/Catedral/6day/midor>;http://www.windguru.cz/int/index.php?sc=27282&sty=m_spot

- Best map for trekking is Aoneker San Carlos de Bariloche, 1:50,000. You CAN buy it in advance in the UK at Stanfords or similar, but it is much cheaper - only A\$50 - on arrival. Main trails shown on the map are generally easy to follow, being equipped with signs and paint dots on rocks and trees; secondary trails don't exist!

- Reservations cannot be made at the refugios in the National Park, but in early season they are only busy at all at weekends, particularly on Saturday nights. Most are a 3 - 4 hour walk from the nearest road.

And some tips:

- Don't change your US\$ at the bank. There seems to be a semi official black market, operated in shops on the main drag - Mitre - where the rate is 50% better.

- Refugios are equipped with mattresses, of variable quality; you may prefer to bring a thermarest. Hut slippers are not provided, so flip flops are a good idea for boot-bruised feet.

- Bariloche uses prepaid magnetic cards for most bus journeys. The cards can be bought at newsagents for A\$11 each, and the minimum credit

chargeable is A\$10; most bus journeys cost either A\$6 or A\$12. At the end of your stay give away your (hopefully exhausted) card.

- Argentina is a great place for carnivores, but vegetarian options are pretty good too, and for dehydrated trail food veggie is the way to go.

- Good cakes at Jauja on Moreno; Selva Negra - Black Forest Gateau - particularly recommended.

- At roughly latitude 40 degrees south, dawn is at 5.30 a.m. and dusk at 9.30 p.m. in December. Afternoon temperatures in the valley are a comfortable mid 20s Celsius. The area does not seem to be prone to the high winds experienced in the better known areas of Fitzroy and Paine, ten degrees of latitude further south.

- If it comes to it, don't let the idea of going alone put you off; I met lots of interesting folk to chat with, and my Spanish is minimal. And when you feel the need to speak to someone at home, buy a prepaid international telephone card for A\$20; 50 minutes talk time on a Sunday morning!

*Actually, it's The Lakes District - but why spoil what is a good title for the F&RCC Journal?

Ras Dashen and a Geological Ramble in the Simien Mountains of Ethiopia.

John McM Moore

Ras Dashen (4543m), the highest peak in Ethiopia, seemed an attractive addition to my ever more slowly accumulating collection of four thousand metre peaks. I was therefore very pleased to team up with a trekking friend and a group of jolly, entertaining and well-supplied (with Jameson whiskey) Irish mountain walkers for a trek in the Simien Mountains, in a plan culminating with a scramble to the summit of Ras Dashen.

Ethiopia, a strange, Christian country, has fascinated me since reading tales of Prester John. Evelyn Waugh's satirical novels and his autobiographical account of time as a war correspondent, during the ruthless Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, are good light reading for anyone interested in the country's relatively recent history. Apart from the short and brutal Italian occupation, Ethiopia is the only country in Africa which maintained independence from the colonial powers, under the governance of a series of eccentric emperors culminating in the famous Haile Selassie. In later years it became a Soviet client state and there are still signs of the former communist connection today – in the form of hard-drinking Russian 'advisors' who one occasionally encounters in Addis Ababa social life.

Our travels began with a bumpy local flight from Addis to Gondar, ancient capital and the starting point for our mountain journey. From there we continued with a much bumpier five hour/100km mini-bus ride to Debarq, where the bureaucracy of national park permits and porter team assembly caused the usual tedious delay.

Finally we departed, accompanied by Kalashnikov and Lee-Enfield 303 toting 'park rangers' and a gaggle of cheerful urchins.

This part of Ethiopian countryside is desperately impoverished but the people, despite their circumstances, are touchingly friendly. Tourism has not yet created the beggar class and the only dishonesty I encountered on the whole trip was an attempted pocket pick while travelling in a micro-bus in central Addis.

From Debarq, we rambled eastwards across open, gently rolling country to our first night's camp at Buyit Ras on the upper plateau. The Simien Mountains are dominated by an impressive 2000m, north facing escarpment along the edge of which the trail to Ras Dashen switch-backs, making the trek more like an exaggerated coastal cliff path than a normal mountain walk.

From Buyit Ras, the trek followed the undulating escarpment crest, mostly about 3500-4000m elevation, took five days, with overnight camps at Gich and Chenek before a big descent to cross the valley to Ras Dashen base camp at Ambijo. The trail is a great experience with views south across the plateau to central Ethiopia and north towards Eritrea across badland terrain far below. We encountered locals making shopping trips by walking 1500m up the escarpment to reach Debarq. The dramatic cliffs are formed by innumerable basalt lava layers. The rock itself erodes to spectacular towers and pinnacles, up several of which we scrambled for views. Where the path is on bare rock, dykes and veins of basalt criss-cross

the lavas and faults have eroded to form cliffs and gullies.

North East Africa is cut by several branches of the Great Rift Valley system. The Simien Mountains plateau lies in the northern part of the Ethiopian Dome, an area of uplift, formed during early stages of the crustal rapture which caused the rifting. The Simien and other ranges in East Africa are not 'real' mountains in the geological (orogenic) sense. Rather they are volcanoes or uplifted fault blocks of metamorphic and volcanic rocks erupted as rifting began to split East Africa.

Another natural historical attraction of the trek is the ease with which the animals and birds can be seen at close quarters. The central Simien area is a national park but still has its local crop farming and herding inhabitants. Wildlife is protected and plentiful. It includes troops of surprisingly relaxed but ferocious-looking gelada monkeys who have the unfortunate habit of wandering into camp to graze and rummage. We saw ibex, klipspringer gazelle and an Ethiopian red 'wolf'. Overhead are eagles and Lammergeier vultures. The 'dip' slope of the escarpment is rolling country with the exotic flora typical of East African uplands, including giant groundsel and lobelia.

The ups and downs of the traverse gave us a good programme of acclimatisation. It is surpris-



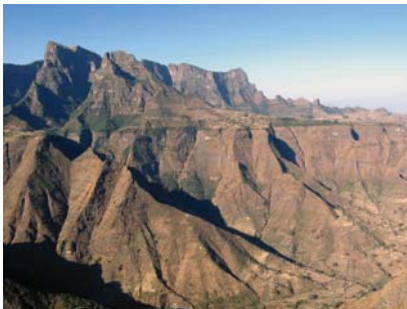
The Simien Escarpment. Ras Dashen in the distance. The trail follows the edge of the cliffs.

ing how 'living' and exercising at altitude can make life almost normal at 4000m. This was fortunate since at the end of the escarpment was a steep descent to Greenland 'hotel' in Chiro Liba (2700m), then across the river and at the end of the day a hard 450m climb to Ras Dashen 'base-camp' at Ambijo on the edge of a scruffy village called Misma (3150m).

A cold 5.00am start next morning was followed by seven hours steady, sometimes breathless, uphill walking ending with a shortish but quite



Above: The Greenland hotel. Chiro Leba
Below: The Escarpment from below Sona on the descent to the river Ansiya Wenz.



exposed grade 2 scramble over fractured basalt to the summit of our mountain. An ascent of nearly 1400m starting from over 3000m is a memorable experience and certainly not one to take on without a reasonable amount of acclimatisation, as I have learned the hard way on other occasions.

Views from the summit were dramatic, extending across miles of open country to misty, distant

horizons. This is an unusual landscape – no jagged mountains, only tens of kilometres of rolling, scrub-covered hills and dramatic black cliffs. We were glad to return dusty, after twelve hours walking, to Dashen beers and an improvised shower.

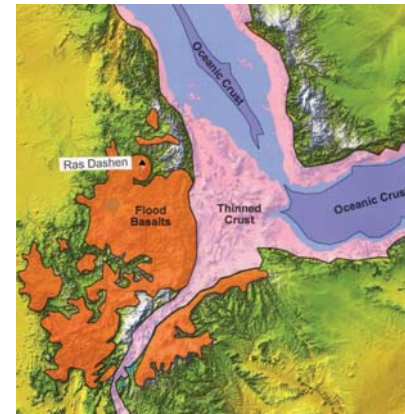
The return journey entailed another twelve hour trudge across country, with calls to sample home grown coffee, to another camp on the edge of the escarpment at Sona. Next day the downhill began seriously with a 1200m descent to the river and Mekarabya. It was warmer along the river with views upward to our route along the escarpment edge 1500m above, ending at Mulit from where the evening light of pastel colours highlighted a world of towers and pinnacles, complete with an Old Man of Storr look-alike needle. The last section brought us back to the world of fields, walls and barking dogs, ending at a very scruffy bar in Adi Arkay whence after much hand shaking and back slapping we were bussed back to Debarq along a mountain road which would not be out of place in Nepal.

Then it was back to Gonder for some sightseeing among the seventeenth century castles and a scary tail wind take-off to Addis, as the culmination of great and highly recommendable peak bagging trek. For me it ended with a couple of drinks with the Russians and frankincense (Christmas present) purchase at the Addis souk.

Geological Note

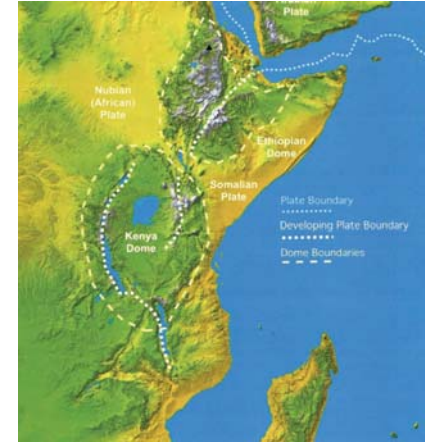
The area where the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and East African Rift Valley meet is a unique geological curiosity. Tectonic plate boundaries in the floor of the Arabian and Red Seas encounter the northern end of the rift system near the Ethiopian coast in what is termed a 'triple plate junction'. This is an area of intense tectonic activity where the Arabian plate is

separating from Africa and the African plate is dividing into two along rift fractures. During the process of plate separation, the crust stretches and thins before it breaks apart allowing eruption of 'new' volcanic, ocean floor along what is the beginning of a mid-oceanic ridge. The area of crustal



stretching and thinning includes the low lying, arid terrain of the Afar adjacent to the Red Sea and Arabian Sea coast.

During the period of crustal stretching, thinning and uplift in the early stages of rifting enormous quantities of 'flood' basalt lavas are erupted. The Simien Mountains lie in the northern part of an extensive area of lavas erupted as early rift faults which split the Ethiopian Dome. On-going movement keeps faults active. Uplift and erosion during and after faulting created the plateau, scarps and many other dramatic geomorphological features in the Simien Mountains.



Map: Simien Mountains, Ethiopia 1:100k Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern, CH. 2010.

Wood J. and Guth A. East Africa's Rift Valley: A Complex Rift System. Michigan Technical University. Geology.com

<http://geology.com/articles/east-africa-rift.shtml>
A short illustrated description of part of the Great East African Rift for the non-technical reader.

Geol map jpeg Tectonic Geology of the Ethiopia, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden Area. Wood J. and Guth A. <http://geology.com/articles/east-africa-rift.shtml>

Structure map jpeg Tectonic Plate boundaries and dome structures in North East Africa. Wood J. and Guth A. <http://geology.com/articles/east-africa-rift.shtml>

To The Tops - and Even a Bit Over The Top 2015 - Norway and Greenland

Jim Gregson

With plans firmed up and arrangements in place for a return trip to Greenland, it was time for us to think about another lengthy ski mountaineering venture over in Norway - a telemark skier's fix, which would also double as good physical preparation for the Arctic.

Sandy and I had talked about the possibility of using pulks (a sort of sled for moving kit) in Norway and we had made a deal to rent two small ones, towing which on hut transfer days would be an interesting experiment. Off we went, then, to the Jotunheimen mountains, which in this year, 2015, were heavily snowed up. We found our ski legs and had some good days out until the time arrived to load the pulks and move on. Our route would take us along a big frozen lake to a small hut, then another day's travel to a full-service hut further west. Traversing the lake was a long haul over bare ice into a head wind so it was good to arrive at the small hut, already warmed up as there were other occupants. The pulks seemed to work well.

The following day brought deteriorating weather - hill fog and rising wind - but the route was known to us so we set off in any case. Early in the winter season, not all of the routes between huts are marked so we were not surprised eventually to stop seeing the marker sticks. Visibility began to get very poor and Sandy and I actually got separated for a while and out of contact. After we'd found each other again, we decided to link the two pulks together with a few metres of thin rope so that we would remain in contact. The fog thickened further and the wind strength and

speed increased. Without at first realising it, we were pushed off course onto the wrong direction.

Later on, by the time we'd expected to be descending, a fortuitous lifting in the fog revealed mountain features we recognised and we could re-orientate ourselves, but at the cost of a change of route, albeit another one we had experience of, so we pressed on. The hours passed but the storm did not. Perseverance ground down the distance and we regained a marked trail section. The quantities of snow coupled with the high wind had though, caused many markers to fall and disappear, so we used slow compass work and memory to move forward. Knowing that at a certain point we'd need to make a pronounced left turn into a small valley, we strained to see as the wind redoubled its efforts to knock us over. We did turn left, and after a short while I realised that the location was not correct, but I also knew that this way rejoined the intended route a bit further on. In gloomy light I pushed my skis forward to a point where the slope fell away more steeply. As we had the pulks, choice of line was more restricted so I called to Sandy behind me that a few sidesteps down would be needed.

One step, two steps - then a muffled "whumpf". The slope released and took me, then the pulk, then a second later because of the thin linking rope also took Sandy and her pulk down in a frightening rush. Luckily the avalanche did not bury us and we tumbled to a halt after a scary slide of forty or fifty metres. We established that neither of us was hurt, but in sorting ourselves

out from the tangle we found that one of Sandy's skis had released and a pulk tow-bar was badly damaged.

As the storm raged on and the hour grew late, with darkness now approaching, we re-assessed the situation and decided that the least risk lay in digging in for an emergency bivouac to wait for daylight. This we did after checking that the rest of the slope above us would not send down further debris onto our position. After the effort of digging we got under cover and into shelter, insulated from the snow and wind. The night would be cold for sure, but survival skills and experience count so we were not unduly anxious.

In the early hours the winds abated and quiet calm took over. The clouds cleared to a bright moonlit sky and looking out we could work out our precise position - annoyingly just three kilometres from our destination. As the dawn came, bringing sunshine, we harnessed up for the last lap. One short sharp uphill stretch led to the long run down to the big hut. Reaching the door, I encountered an old friend, the lovely lady who runs the place. She was overjoyed to see us, having worried somewhat over our non-arrival the previous day, and we were ushered inside to an immediate enormous breakfast.

We actually then stayed for a whole week, with day after day of superb weather which allowed us to make some splendid mountain outings. I also found time to repair the damaged pulk bars. As is often the way, we found that other hut guests



Above: Falketind and Hurrungane peaks from Langeskavlen, Jotunheimen
Below: Approaching summit of Bukkehoe, central Jotunheimen.

included friends from Australia and Germany so we had good company for the evenings. We also met a few others - two young Norwegian women soldiers who had turned back from the storm we'd endured, and two Danes who'd had a sleepless noisy night in another small hut while we were sitting in our snowhole. We smiled indulgently at their tales.

After our great week we moved on again, over two days via a small remote hut. From there we had to cross over a high pass with the pulks. In the course of a steep descent, fog again rolled in, complicating things as we sought a gentler line. All of a sudden, my skis tipped down and I fell, followed by the pulk. I immediately thought "This might hurt!" then was pile-driven into deep snow with the pulk crashing into my chest. It did hurt, as I frantically yelled to let Sandy know that I was alive. Without even seeing it I had skied straight over the top of a small crag! I might say I was fine having landed in snow rather than boulders, but all was not well. Another pulk tow-bar was wrecked, but worse, for me, I now had severe bruising and one or more cracked ribs - and only halfway through our holiday.

Sorely, we pulled to the next large hut and gave ourselves another week of comfortable stay. There was another workshop session to fix the second busted tow-bar set, but despite my rib problem we did get out most days for some good skiing, including an ascent to one of the big mountains we'd eyed up for several years.

The rest of our Jotunheimen trip was mostly very good apart from some awkward pulk work on a couple of days. My ribs were sore, but more of a problem when turning over in bed rather than out on the hill. We met more friends and got some excellent skiing done. On reflection the pulks were not ideally suited to the Jotunheimen

mountains; the terrain is a bit too much up and down and neither steep ascents nor steep descents are very easy when towing a loaded pulk, so more thought may be needed about shedding weight from rucksack loads to be carried.

After returning from Norway only three weeks were to elapse before we would leave for East Greenland. I'd pulled together another group, from friends and Alpine Club contacts, making us six in all. Sandy and I were making a third visit to the striking and beautiful mountains of North Liverpool Land. By the time we flew out to Iceland my ribs were almost back to normal. From Reykjavik we drove for six hours to the northern town of Akureyri and from there took a charter flight over the ocean and pack ice to the small airstrip at Constable Pynt. Straight back into markedly sub-zero conditions.

We had to wait for a day for the Tangent Snow Dragons snowmobiles to return from extracting another group from the Staunings Alps. This group had been quite seriously avalanched and sustained some injuries so were pulling out early. The next morning we loaded up the 'train' of four snowmobiles and their big Siglin cargo sledges to go north for about 80km to the icecap of North Liverpool Land. By using GPS steering we were taken to and dropped off at a spot just 50m from our basecamp location of 2014. This position allows very good access to the mountains on skis, but more importantly maximises the time when tents are in sunshine. This is very important in the tail-end of an Arctic winter.

Conditions, both of snow and weather, got better and better after the first couple of very cold days. We spent a day or two on shakedown trips, and then had a prolonged spree of wonderful skiing and climbing. The long sunny days



Basecamp 2015, North Liverpool Land

allowed us to make an impressive bunch of first ascents of unclimbed peaks, plus some good new routes to previously climbed summits, with variations on days when we made some great ski tours with fabulous descents.

Our outings included four north face firsts on peaks in the Seven Dwarfs group, a new route and traverse on Castle Peak, a first ascent of Farfarer Peak (the Dennis Davis Memorial Route) plus first ascents of the south faces of Hvithorn and Lewty Peak. We also made a big new route on the north face of Mount Mighty (Snake in the Outback), a repeat of Longridge Peak and a new

route on it from the east (Cryogenic). Two people made the very lengthy approach and return to make the first ascent of the big Lancstuk peak.

When we returned from Cryogenic on Longridge Peak, there were some anxious faces in camp. Their owners had skied out west from camp and after only a short distance had discovered a fresh set of polar bear tracks coming down the glacier. The ski tour was aborted in favour of a return to camp with its firearms. The next day we went to inspect these tracks and, yes, they were impressive. Obviously, a BIG polar bear had gone by, leaving very large and deep footprints with characteristic dragging clawmarks. Fortunately he didn't see us and we didn't see him but he had

been close - while I slept with a loaded rifle, one of the group admitted to a couple of sleepless nights!

As our time ran down we made a few more ski tours plus a visit to the two prominent nunataks in the glacier close to basecamp. A satphone call informed us that due to some mechanical/electrical problems with some of the snowmobiles we would in fact be picked up by ski-plane right from basecamp. The Twin Otter aeroplane duly came in to land close by the tents and we had a quick and comfortable twenty-minute flight back to Constable Pynt, and then onward over to Iceland the next day.

This closed out one of our very best Greenland expeditions where we'd had a lot of laughs, lots of good company and plenty of enjoyable climbing and skiing. Maybe the rigours of Norway earlier in the year had in fact, been very good preparation and training for our latest Arctic adventure.



Above: On first ascent of Farfarer Peak
Left: Longridge Peak
Right: Farfarer Peak seen from Longridge Peak, N Liverpool Land





Above: The Coniston Fells from the Langdale Pikes. *Photo - John Pulford*

Right: The Langdale Pikes. *Lesley Comstive*

The Club and the Lake District

Hatty Harris

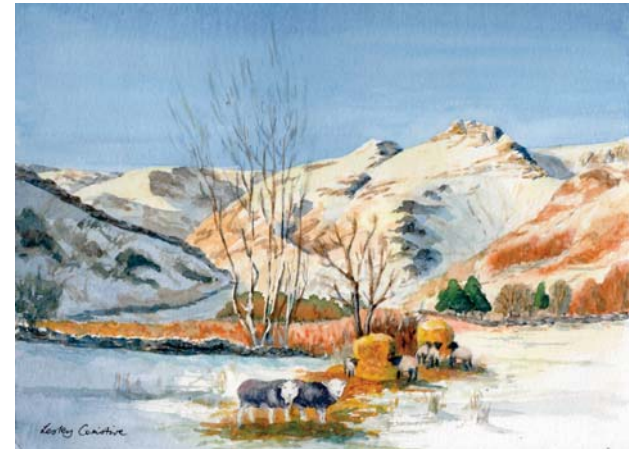
Steve Scott

Ron Kenyon

Martin Cooper

Richard Tolley/ Phil Elliot/ Chris Sherwin/ Ron Kenyon

Peter Lucas



Two Years in the Life of the Club

Ron Kenyon, Chris and Ellie Sherwin, Richard Tolley, Martin Cooper, Phil Elliot, Pete Lucas

Ed Note: In past years it was customary to include within the Journal a short record of the principal events and changes which had taken place in the life of the club, over the period of the Journal. For whatever reason, this convention has fallen by the wayside for several decades now. We thought it was time to revive it ...

Overview - The President

It has been interesting viewing the Club as President. When John Barrett telephoned me many months ago about whether I wanted to be President there was much trepidation when I said yes. The Club is well established with a long history of activities on the fells, crags and mountains. The position of clubs in the current world has changed, with many having less physical links, using modern communications. However, at the end of the day, members have a liking to get out, whether on those fells, crags or mountains – in summer or winter – on their own, on a meet or in others groups.

Being President gives you a chance to look behind the scene. It is an amazing mix of people, many giving much time for the Club in the many areas involved – huts, guidebooks, meets, archives, website etc. As with many mountaineering clubs, and voluntary organisations generally, the age profile of the club is a concern; to address this concern a Membership Group was set up to look at ways of attracting new members; I would like to thank Dale Bloomer for chairing that group. Many ideas have been put forward – some taken forward – other perhaps left for a future date. Having said that, there is some room

for optimism in the attendance at youth meets, and in the age profile of contributors to this Journal – there are some outstanding exploits undertaken by younger members.



BMC Youth Meet 2015

I have had a long involvement with guidebooks and I was really pleased with the publication of the Lake District Rock selective guide and delighted when it won best guidebook at the Banff Mountain Festival in 2015 (see Steve Scott's article later). Following on from this, the new Borrowdale guide is shaping up to be a real cracker – how things have moved on since I first made ventures to Shepherd's Crag in the 1960s! The next guide, Lakes South – will be the last of the current definitive series – will these be the last hard copy definitive guides to the Lakes? We now have a selection of crags on apps which are proving popular – are these a sign of the future?

At long last the book on Scafell by Al Phizacklea and Mike Cocker is getting close to being finished and will come out this year. This looks



FRCC Young Persons Meet 2015 - in Doves Nest

like a tremendous publication. There is such a knowledge of Scafell in these two and in others in the team.

One of the jobs of being President is to lead the service on Great Gable on Remembrance Sunday, which I was looking forward to. Unfortunately I fell off a crag during 2014 and was in hobbling mode in November so I attended the service at St Olaf's at Wasdale whilst Hatty led the service on the summit. I was not going to miss the 2015 service. However, the weather was probably one of the worst days for this event ever. Initially it looked good but a storm came in, deterring many going to the top, though about 250 persevered. Unfortunately the local rescue teams were also in action, helping people down from the mountain.

On the huts front we had two near misses:

The floods in December 2015 were probably the worst local floods ever and Beetham Cottage was flooded – luckily the carpets were lifted and the damage was limited – however, a warning about what nature can do!

In March 2016 there was an electric fault at Brackenclose, which set fire to the storeroom (containing paint) at the backdoor – the storeroom is no more but we still have the hut.

The Lake District National Park owns a lot of property in the Lake District (about 4% of the land). They are looking to sell some of this and concentrate on the control and running of the National Park. One of the properties they own is Hassness, with Dalegarth, adjacent to Birkness. The Club has made use of the entrance (and exit) at the Hassness end ever since we bought Birkness in 1951 and, at the time of writing, we hope that this can be formalised before a new owner is in place.

What about the Lakes in general? The Lake District has continued to be a major people attraction, although it is understood that only at most 10% of people go more than 100 yards from the road (onto the fells).

The Lake District National Park was established in 1948 with the nearby Yorkshire Dales in 1954. The area between them, around Shap Fell and the Lune Gorge, is an important area of natural beauty and after a long campaign it was finally agreed in 2015 to extend and, in effect, join the two National Parks along the line of the M6.

At the end of 2015 Storm Desmond devastated Cumbria with flooding on a much higher scale than there had ever been known before. There were other floods created throughout the county during the winter. For example, in Appleby the flood level was about 22 inches higher than a previous high in 2005 (remember a cubic metre of water weighs a tonne!) The most notable effects were the removal of the A591 road over Dunmail (re-opened in May 2016), the washing away of the bridge at Pooley Bridge (temporary

bridge in place from February 2016), the closure for some time of the bridge at Eamont Bridge, displacement of bridges in the Greta Gorge; three separate sets of flooding in Glenridding.

West Cumbria has developed into the 'Energy Coast' with the planned development of three new nuclear reactors at Sellafield. Views on this project will undoubtedly be mixed, depending on your views of nuclear power, but it is undoubtedly the case that it will increase investment in the area. It is projected that there will be £15 billion invested in West Cumbria in the coming 15 years. Transport links are seen as important and improvements in these, including the reopening of the Penrith to West Cumbria Railway line (North Lakes Rail), are being considered.

One of the highlights of the year is the annual dinner, together with the AGM. I was pleased to welcome the various guests to the top table at the 2015 dinner, especially Leo Houlding, who I have known for many years in various guises, and we were entertained by some of his many 'near the limit' adventures. Dave Birkett will be the guest speaker after the 2016 dinner, and I am really looking forward to his tales. This year will also be the final year of the hotel manager, Steve Simpson, and we thank him for his many years of looking after us.

Finally, some members have received recognition for their exceptional contribution to the club, or more broadly to society, in the last two years; their efforts should be noted:

Honorary Members

Audrey Plint
James McHaffie
John Barrett
Maureen Linton

Sir Chris Bonington

Chris was awarded the Piolet D'Or Lifetime achievement award in 2015

Cokie Van der Velde

Cokie was awarded the Barclays Bank Outstanding Woman of the Year award, for her work helping with the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa.

Betty Cain

Betty celebrated her 100th birthday in 2015. She joined the club in 1936, with life membership purchase by her father, Darwen Leighton, Club Secretary from 1912-20. Her first boots were made by K Shoes, and delivered to her home by Howard Somervell, who also nailed them for her.

Richard Hargreaves

Richard has been involved, for many years, in the establishment of the Balkan Peace Park, stretching over the borders of Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo.

Angela Soper

Angela was made an Honorary Member of the British Mountaineering Council in 2015.

Guidebooks - Richard Tolley

We are experiencing an interesting and challenging period in the long history of FRCC rock climbing guidebooks. The increasing influence of the digital age and other factors have caused a significant drop in sales of the printed guidebook. Despite this decline, the FRCC has a strong commitment to continue its role as the provider of Lake District Guides.

It is, however, vital that this important activity doesn't become a financial burden on the club and we are therefore trying to prevent this in a number of ways. We should ensure that the content is up to date, accurate and interestingly presented so as to encourage climbers to buy the book. We should also consider the shelf appeal of the guides and limit the print runs to ensure that we aren't left with excessive stock. I am pleased to report that this strategy is working well and guidebooks have provided the club with healthy profits over the last two years.

In June 2015 we launched Lake District Rock, featuring the best rock climbing in the district. This volume has proved to be extremely successful, winning first prize in the guidebook category at the prestigious Banff International Mountain Festival. Lake District Rock is selling in such numbers that a reprint will be required within two years. Guidebook Editor Steve Scott has written more about this guide elsewhere in the Journal.

Since 2014 Al Davis has been producing software to work with the Climbers Club Guidebook Application. The App is free but the crag package software is being sold through the CC and FRCC websites and allows users to download all the information needed for climbing on a crag to smartphone, tablet or other device. The range of crags available is increasing all the time and is being extended outside the district to include well known venues, such as parts of Stanage Edge. The individual crag packages sell for modest amounts but they are providing a steady income stream for the club and they allow us to develop expertise in a technology that might eventually replace the printed guide.

Throughout 2015 the five-strong Borrowdale guidebook team worked hard to finish their allot-

ted tasks to ensure that the guide would be ready for this summer. Helped by good weather a great number of final route checks were completed and also many crag photos and action shots were taken. The Borrowdale Guide will be launched in late July 2016 and from a personal point of view this will mark the end of nine years work on the guide.

Once Borrowdale is launched our attention will be turning to the remaining areas in the seventh series. Much of the work for these areas -covering Coniston, The Duddon Valley and Eskdale is complete and it is hoped that their launch will be a highlight of the next two years.

The Huts -Martin Cooper

The past two years have been times of celebration for the Fell and Rock Climbing Club huts and a time of near disaster. In the meantime, of course, members and hut wardens have worked hard on routine maintenance and improvement; new septic tanks installed and a new car parking area at Birkness. The huts are one of the club's greatest assets. The diligence and hard work of members in looking after them is much appreciated by all.

October 2015 witnessed the Fiftieth Anniversary of the opening of Beetham Cottage. A celebration event took place a few weeks earlier, attended by sixty members, including some who had been present at the opening of the hut in 1965. An outdoor buffet was enjoyed by those present, who were then entertained by a speech by Guy Plint who had known Bentley Beetham personally. The speech was well received and is available to listen to in the club's Oral Archive.

The Huts: A Story of the FRCC huts from the 1930s, by Maureen Linton-Lee, was published and

sent to all members in October 2015. Maureen had tasked herself with updating the existing history of the club's huts, published previously in the Journal and to 'Provide a framework on to which members may attach their own memories'. Maureen's booklet contains a mine of information about the huts and is superbly illustrated in older black and white photographs as well as with excellent more recent colour pictures. It is a labour of love and something members will treasure.



Mountaineering Challenges - Phil Elliot

Helen Elliot and I were the FRCC Peak District representatives from 2005 to 2012. The first few years were during a period of change in the BMC, moving from the club block vote to one member one vote. Interesting times, trying to put the club's views to the meetings, where the dominant voices were those of established climbers and those with commercial interests in climbing. I felt at that time a number of those present at these meetings had a negative opinion about the activities of the FRCC, perhaps as a result of our membership being a mix of climbers and walkers. It shows how progressive we are when we look at

the March 2016 issue of the Summit. There is a mountain scene and in bold letters it says RUNFREE. Currently the BMC has had to acknowledge the importance of encompassing the activities of runners, walkers, climbers and mountaineers.

At one of these Peak District meetings it was asked if anyone was doing the High Peak Marathon and would be prepared to write an article for the local news letter. Helen offered to write the article and a senior member said to her, 'Do you know how far it is?' Helen pointed out that it would be the fifth time she had done the event. I felt it was the unfounded opinion some people have of the FRCC which prompted the comment and we therefore needed some sort of record of our members' fell walking and climbing activities to promote the status of the club. Also, many members are very modest about their achievements. After discussions I started to record the activities of our members. A list of the challenges follows, with the number of achievers (in brackets) at time of writing:

Bob Graham Round (31)

The Bob Graham Round is a nationally recognised 24 hour challenge. The distance and ascent creates frequent discussion at around 68 miles, 26,000ft, traversing 42 Lake District summits.

Lake District 3000' Tops as a continuous Round (23)

This is a natural challenge for most mountaineers and fell runners interested in distance running. A description is included in The Big Walks by Ken Wilson and Richard Gilbert.

100 Different Climbs in the Lake District (25)

Surprisingly very few members have requested their name be added to this list – I am sure there are many more out there.

Joss Naylor Challenge (14)

The route is from Pooley Bridge to Joss's house in Nether Wasdale, 48 miles, 17,000' of ascent and 30 tops. The challenge is for the over 50s

Fell and Rock Lakeland Fells 244 listed tops (22)

Strong arguments were put to me to include those listed in the FRCC's book The Lakeland Fells, where the book includes the Wainwrights plus the 2000' tops and supports our own publication.

Wainwright Listed Tops (31)

These had to be included because of the popularity of doing the Wainwrights.

Munros (57)

When I first joined the club there were two main topics of mountaineering conversation in huts: the rock climbs members had done and the number of Munros climbed. For those who had done few of either it would be a quiet night.

Corbetts (12)

The hard core of the Munroists were also doing Corbetts. Both the Munros and the Corbetts require a lot of long term commitment to complete.

Alpine 4000m Summits (5)

When it comes to mountaineering, completing these by any notable list is a fantastic achievement and requires recognition

Classic Rock 24 Hour (14)

In my opinion, for a fit fell runner and climber, it would be a harder challenge than the Bob Graham Round. To my knowledge, no one else in our club has attempted it, other than those recorded.

Cuillin Ridge (34)

A mountaineer's challenge

8000m Peaks ascended by FRCC Members

The record is not for those doing all but for doing any. This was included as a result of Alan Hinkes being made

an Honorary Member.

As part of the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War the 'Memorial Round' was established, being a walk over all of the twelve summits purchase by the club in 1924 in memory of the members who died during the war. The 'round' can be done (17 miles/ 21 km) or two days (21 miles/ 33km) overnighting at Brackenclose or Salving House. The following members have completed the round:

Lynne Mullington	4-5 August 2014
Phil Mullington	4-5 August 2014
Simon Jefferies	17-18 March 2015
Les Meer	2015
Alan Dickinson	3-4 January 2016
Amanda Turner	3-4 January 2016

The list of challenges and those who have completed them will be on the new website. A link will be included in the Chronicle and the newsletter when available. I apologise for any errors in the list of achievements and I will edit them if you draw my attention to them.

Archives - the Gable Plaque - Chris and Ellie Sherwin

Club members and/or journal readers will be aware of the installation of a new memorial plaque on Great Gable (FRCC Journal No. 84, 2014) and the effort made to retain its integrity and that of the surrounding summit area.

But what of the old plaque?

A year at the Imperial War Museum North in Salford as a key display item in their anniversary exhibition: 'From Street to Trench' in 2013/14 enabled some 430,000 visitors to the museum to

share our club's heritage. To extend the opportunity to view the plaque it is now embarked on a 'grand tour' of The Lake District.

The intention is to give as many Lakeland residents and visitors as possible, a chance to see the plaque and appreciate the story surrounding it. Many may not have been able to make the walk up Great Gable to see it in its original home.

The result has been a healthy response from the community allowing a self-funded, criss-cross journey around the park for the remaining years of the First World War commemorations. From libraries in Kendal to county archives in Carlisle; from a museum in Coniston to a visitor centre in Keswick, the plaque will honour those named on it who fell in the war a century ago.

I think we all knew that this would be a popular excursion for the plaque but it is the fruits of this journey that are of particular interest to the club. Could we find out more about those members affected by the war and would our efforts instigate others to investigate their own connections to this period in history?

At the most basic we are raising money – via a donation box for copies of the club's 'We Remember' booklet telling the story of this plaque and its replacement. Money collected at each venue is being given to The British Legion. This booklet was also circulated to all schools in the towns and villages surrounding Great Gable, some of which have made trips to see the display and more, we hope, will be encouraged to venture up to the summit to see the new version in situ.

Whilst at Kendal Library the plaque was accompanied by an exhibition created by the in-house staff and focused on the Lakeland members who were killed in action or later lost their lives due to injury. Here we came across an independent military researcher, David Shackleton, who has spent



the better part of ten years clarifying records of those from the Lakes killed in action during 1914-18, for the War Graves Commission. He has helped to pin-point some question marks in our own records, particularly when men changed regiments in the blur of the frontline exchanges. David had recorded each and every one of our members listed on the plaque and visited their gravesites, where possible. This information has been kindly passed onto our archive as another part of the jigsaw. Looking at the photographs Rupert Brooke's lines from The Soldier came flooding back:

'If I should die, think only this of me: That there's some corner of a foreign field That is forever England.'

Through our new friendship David has also investigated newspaper reports of lectures given by our member Howard Somervell. One at Kendal Town Hall in January 1915 which was a fundraising event for his medical work in India. These soldiers were convalescing after being wounded in the Great War. Somervell believed this to be the first time that India had helped our country.

The Wainwright Society has also made a link with the plaque, following a visit to the display, whilst at the Armit Museum and a feature followed in their magazine 'Footsteps', issue 52, Winter 15/16.

AW gives pride of place in his summit description in The Western Fells to the Memorial. Great Gable's summit is held in special respect by the older generation of fellwalkers, because here, set in the rocks that bear the top cairn, is the Bronze War Memorial tablet of The Fell and Rock Climbing Club ... It is a fitting place to pay homage to men who once loved to walk in these hills and gave their lives defending the right of others to enjoy the same happy freedom ...'

The plaque is about to be unveiled at the Ruskin Museum, Coniston ready for the spring season of visitors. Another link here is that the founder of the museum, W. G. Collingwood, designed the relief map which is such a tactile feature of the plaque itself.

The tour will continue until winter 2018 and we are currently in optimistic discussions with the Benefices of St. Mary, Gosforth; St. Michael & All Angels, Nether Wasdale; and St Olaf, Wasdale to secure a final location for the plaque in the churchyard of St. Olaf's. Ideally when viewing the

plaque, the backdrop of Great Gable would be most fitting for those remembering:

'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.'

We hope that this journey will continue to stimulate the attention of a generation who have lived in a time of relative peace and prosperity.

The unveiling of the plaque in 2019 is intended to coincide with the centenary of the Peace Day



commemorations in which the club was actively involved on Scafell summit 100 years ago.

'Looking up at the night sky,
I gaze at the stars as I lie.
I hope for peace,
For now at least.'

The Library Move - Peter Lucas

When in late 2012 and after 45 years, out of the blue, Lancaster University announced they wanted the Club Library removed from their premises, I suspected my quiet life as Honorary Librarian was about to come to an end. Subsequent events over the next two years did nothing to dispel my misgivings. Fortunately, we had until July 2013 to find alternative accommodation and formulate plans for the library's relocation. The Club swiftly moved into action and at the instigation of John Barrett, a Library Working Group was set up comprising Hatty Harris, John Holden and Peter Latimer and me to plan our campaign.

From that first meeting, it was clear a considerable amount of work would be involved. Several pressing issues were immediately apparent - where was the Library going to go and if we did find somewhere, would the new venue have sufficient space to accommodate nearly 5000 books and other items, all of which needed over 70 metres of shelving? One further issue which we hoped we didn't have to address was also raised: if no suitable place could be found, do we dispose of the Library and if so how?

From the outset it was agreed by the Working group that to make it more convenient for FRCC members to access, the new location for the Library should be in or close to the Lake District. Hence, the next few weeks involved a series of emails and telephone calls to libraries and museums in Cumbria, including Carlisle, Coniston, Kendal, Keswick and the University of Cumbria. All of whom, although very sympathetic to our plight, for a variety of reasons were unable to help. At one point, there was even serious consideration given to housing the Library in a

National Trust property in Grasmere. The only bit of good news I received was that Lancaster University wouldn't start their reorganisation programme until the beginning of 2014. Nevertheless we still hadn't found a new home for our library; was the closure and disposal of the library going to be become a reality?

However, a short time later even better news arrived, in the form of a short note from Audrey Plint who had recently visited the Armit Library and Museum in Ambleside. Deborah Walsh, the curator, had told her that the Armit were keen to build up a mountaineering research collection at the Armit and would be interested to hear from the FRCC. Whilst I was aware that the Armit held a collection of books donated by the late Muriel and Bobby Files, I mistakenly thought that as a small museum and library they wouldn't have the space to accommodate our books. However, it transpired that the Armit were very keen to accept our collection and following meetings with representatives of the Armit, an agreement was reached to amalgamate the two collections, henceforth to be known as the FRCC-Files Collection. It was also agreed that the FRCC would finance some new shelving for the combined collections and pay an annual donation towards their upkeep. In future, members of the FRCC would unfortunately no longer have unrestricted borrowing rights; the Collection was to be for reference only.

The only drawback to the arrangement was that shelf space at the Armit would be limited, even with the new shelving. In addition, there was a significant amount of duplication between the two collections; hence some severe pruning was going to be necessary. The question was, how do you reduce nearly 5000 assorted books, guides, maps and periodicals to half that

number? Obviously some form of criteria were needed.

In her excellent article, written to celebrate 75 years of the Club and the Library, (FRCC Journal, 1981), Muriel Files questions the value of the Library to the Club. She makes clear that the Library contributed to the sense of authority and responsibility of the Club, not only to itself, but also to the Lake District and to the wider mountaineering world. It was clear that we needed to retain this ethos in our selection of items for the Collection. Reasons for retaining items would include: rarity, historical interest, member authorship, relevance and finally, monetary value. Whereas, criteria for removal of titles were: duplication, easy availability elsewhere, low probability of need, e.g. foreign language guides and journals, and irrelevance - potholing, travel guides etc.

So it was that in early February 2014 a rather fraught Librarian, accompanied by a merry band of helpers, assembled in a building curiously known as the Beehive which was part of the University of Cumbria at Ambleside and, conveniently, was only about 200 metres from the Armit Museum. Confronting us were 150 large, labelled, cardboard boxes representing the entire contents of the FRCC Library which had been brought by removal van from Lancaster University. Over the next few months a variety of volunteers, fortified by tea and cake assisted in unpacking the boxes, assessing which books were to be kept and putting those marked for disposal to one side. The system seemed to work and eventually, from out of the chaos, order was restored and the boxes selected to form the major part of the collection were removed to their new home in the Armit. Here, Alan Jackman and a variety of assistants worked tirelessly

to re-shelve the books amongst the original Files Collection.

All that now remained to be done was to dispose of the unwanted books and create a catalogue of the titles in the Collection. It had been decided that, following valuation by Geoff Cram, those titles earmarked for disposal would be offered initially to Club members on a first-come, first-served basis. From the hundreds of titles listed surprisingly only 200 were purchased. Fortunately we have managed to sell most of the remainder via the Armit's second-hand book shop and all the proceeds have contributed towards the upkeep of the Collection. The task merging the two collections and of creating a new computerised, searchable catalogue for the collection was carried out over a period of several months by Alan Jackman and the Librarian.

Finally, to celebrate what I hope will be a long and fruitful association between the FRCC and the Armit Museum, the FRCC-Files Collection was officially opened by the mountaineer Alan Hinkes OBE on 6th June, 2014 at a party attended by many of the Club members involved with the move, including Trustees and staff of the museum.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the many members and non-members who turned out to help with the huge task of relocating the library. Special thanks go to John Barrett, Hatty Harris, Alan Jackman, and Deborah Walsh and her staff at the Armit. Space prevents me from listing the names of all the other volunteers who gave their support so generously; they know who they are.

Some Events in 2015-16 ...
 Above - the Beetham Anniversary Celebrations.
 Below - New Year at Rawhead.



Less of a guidebook, more a way of life

Steve Scott

Becoming involved in guidebook work for the FRCC seemed to happen quite by chance with an almost throwaway comment from Nick Whar-ton about the editorial vacancy. Flooding had seriously damaged Stephen Reid's house and the refurbishment and repairs were taking up a massive amount of his time, which, together with his business and other personal commitments, meant that after 13 years and 9 titles he was making way for a new editor. During this period of rapid technological change the Club's rock climbing guides had been transformed, the most obvious development being the move from meticulous hand-drawn diagrams to full-colour photo-diagram coverage together with paper and print improvements. Under Stephen's editorial command the FRCC had introduced a selective climbs guide, Lake District Rock, in 2003. This included 500 routes and was largely culled from the existing definitive series with Al Phizack-lea's diagrams enhanced by the addition of colour. At the time that I came on board in 2012 the guidebook team met only once a year, traditionally in The Golden Rule. The meetings were comfortably laid back, yet the commitment and enthusiasm of the volunteers shone through.

In Stephen's transfer briefing there was no indication that a replacement for the hugely successful 2003 selective climbs guide 'Lake District Rock' was planned; indeed stock levels were still reasonable. Steadily selling 1,000 copies each year, the book had proved the popularity of the concept but was starting to look outdated.

During late 2012 and early 2013 the pressing work was to publish the updated winter climbs



guide and the new edition of the (then long out of print) Langdale guide. With these out of the way I felt that we should be planning for the replacement selective guide and initial ideas were presented towards the end of 2013. The proposal was for a book with a completely revised format and layout to give a modern clear look and feel. The other significant factor driving this decision was the anticipated appearance of a selective guide to the District from Rockfax and the likely impact that this would have on our sales revenues. Competition from such a strong established brand would have a clear negative impact on our revenue and the ongoing ability of the Club to fund a definitive series of guides to the area.

With support from the Club's committee it was agreed that work would start and a crags and routes list was prepared together with design work. Ben Ranson, at a loose end between jobs, agreed to take on the design and page-setting,

and by the end of the year a template had been developed together with sample pages using material from the (soon to be published) Scafell & Wasdale guide. Ben then found proper employment and the project stalled. Much discussion had taken place regarding whether the material included would be routes or crags driven. Many of the guidebook team preferred a routes-driven publication, although a number of others were concerned that a crags approach would be better. In the end a spreadsheet was produced that listed routes by crag for all of the authors to comment on and, with 1500 routes listed, this was finalised as the content.

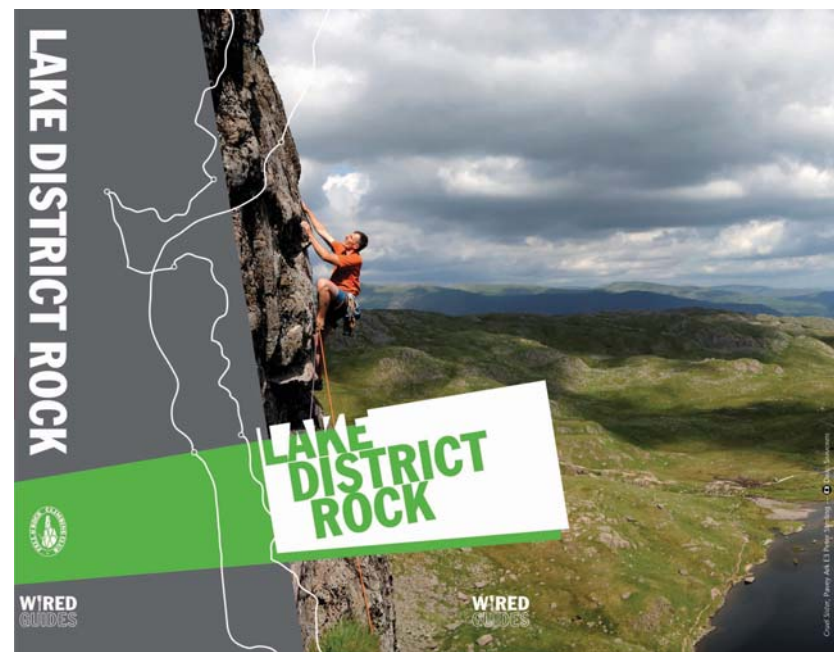
A regular meeting of the guidebook producing clubs to discuss issues and share ideas had been mooted in the past and during the winter of 2013/14 Neil Foster resurrected the idea. A symposium of all of the 'not for profit' guidebook producers was arranged early in 2014, the BMC would host and all of the clubs that produce rock climbing guides were invited to attend. The main theme was a discussion about the state of the market and how definitive guidebook production could be supported for the future. Within a few months it had been agreed to work in collaboration on a branded selective guide series to underpin the definitives and a template was to be designed that all of the clubs would use. A name for the brand was needed and, from a comment overheard at Kendal Wall, Wired was chosen.

The Climbers' Club had been working on a Pembroke selective guide for some years and it was thought that this would be the first Wired guide to be brought to the market. The FRCC had their list of crags, yet the page-setting had not moved beyond a couple of sample pages. By December 2014 we had a template but no available in-house technical expertise for

photo-diagram production and mapping. In addition the current series, started under Stephen's guidance, that included photodiagrams had yet to be completed with Borrowdale and most of the South Western area 'under construction'. It was critical that a strong enthusiastic and efficient technical team was created. This team included Don Sargeant, who had produced maps and diagrams for the Scafell & Wasdale guide, Peter Sterling who had edited and produced the CC Tremadog guide and Jane Beagley of Vertebrate Graphics. Necessarily, all of the existing authors became involved with checking and editing existing text and diagrams. Phil Rigby, who had completed much of the original photo-diagram production, Max Biden and Al Phizacklea all provided crucial photographic material.

Being a new and untried concept with joint publication between FRCC/Wired and a significant financial investment, this title was a massive risk for the committee. They backed the proposal and the authors and technical teams had a project. An ambitious summer 2015 deadline for publication, a mere six months away, was then embraced by the whole team.

One of the major issues that we faced was the larger size of the book. The new guide would be A5 (portrait) and none of the existing material was in that format. All of the existing photodiagrams that were to be used needed to be re-sized to match this larger format. This involved collecting original images for all of the crags and Phil Rigby and Al Phizacklea were key to achieving this. We also garnered material from various other sources and are indebted to all of the photographers and Vertebrate Graphics for their support and assistance with this task. Once we had this material the resized diagrams were created and checked.



Another feature of the Wired template was the use of Ordnance Survey mapping data. This of course meant that all of the maps would require creating from scratch, a task taken on by Don.

Finally, as 1500 routes were to be squeezed into the 480 pages of the guide, the text was edited or completely revised to shorten descriptions, especially for single pitch routes.

Preparation and meticulous checking of all of the material prior to any page-setting is the normal process for producing a guide. Yet by

Christmas 2014 Peter Sterling was already page-setting the Langdale section that he and Max Biden had been working on, in order that the guidebook team had a proof to consider at their February 2015 meeting.

This sample met with universal praise and approval and the various authors were starting to deliver their corrected texts. David Simmonite once again agreed to embellish the guide with his stunning action images and, despite the mountain of re-sizing and new photodiagram

work, together with gathering original action images, the various sections, one by one, slowly took shape.

The distribution of Wired guides was to be on a larger and more commercial scale using major outlets such as Waterstones and Amazon. This required a corresponding commercial marketing effort. An article was commissioned by Climber, poster and advertising campaigns were developed and extended social networking established.

Another key innovation, although not unprecedented in FRCC guidebooks, was to sell advertising space. Trevor Langhorne agreed to take this on and successfully arranged for the sale of ten pages of advertising including the rear cover. This enabled the Club to offset £4K of the £25k production cost. Printing is undertaken from data files that are transferred electronically. The publication date required the .pdf file to be with the printers by early May to meet a planned publication date during June. To shorten the lead time and simplify administration a European printer was chosen and Latitude Press were instructed.

By early April almost all of the material had been gathered and much of the book created for final checking by a much smaller proof team. This work, together with the inclusion of the high resolution action photographs, advertising and covers, was completed by the beginning of May and the file was copied onto a memory stick for delivery to the printers. To-ing and fro-ing over the next fortnight meant that significant revisions were made to the print file and the final version was downloaded overnight from the internet router in Mallaig Harbour office during a joint CC/SMC meet. Another first!

Then everything goes quiet...

The existing guide was declared 'out-of-print' and any remaining copies recovered from the retailers. The guidebook committee took a decision to pulp the remaining 2,700 copies. This meant that in 12 years 12,300 copies had been sold, a stunningly successful guide and probably the most popular guide the Club has produced. A conservative decision was made to print 5,000 copies of the 'new' edition, although due to a glitch in the finishing process some 4,400 copies actually became available.

Pre-publication marketing activity was stepped up. Two separate articles appeared in the June 2015 edition of Climber with some 12 pages of coverage and a national advertising and local poster campaign began. Lake District Rock FRCC/Wired arrived at the Cordee warehouse in mid-June and the pre-ordered copies hit the bookshelves. It was the first Wired guide to be published and by late summer it had become another best-selling FRCC guide following in the wake of its predecessor. Declared by most commentators to be fresh and inspirational by December, some 1500 copies had been sold.

During September I received an invitation to submit a publication for the Banff Book Competition and with the deadline for entries rapidly approaching I responded with some detail and images and Ron immediately arranged for books to be delivered to Canada. We soon learned that Lake District Rock had been shortlisted, with five other titles. In mid-October I received an email from Banff to tell me that the judges had chosen Lake District Rock as the winner of the Guidebook category – but that I wasn't to tell anyone! For a week I kept this to myself until the category

winners were announced, at which point I was able to let Ron in on the secret, and he was able to announce this amazing news at the Annual Dinner on October 31st. The following week I was standing in front of over 1,000 people on a stage in Banff, representing the Club and the Guidebook Team, receiving the magnificent Banff Book Award trophy presented by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides.

Postscript

Lake District Rock has retained its popularity and, with almost 2000 copies sold in the first year following publication, it has been a huge success inspiring many to visit and climb in the Lakes. Wired now has another

title, Pembroke Rock, from The Climbers' Club. The rapid appearance of these titles has generated surprise, enthusiasm, support and awareness of the Wired concept and motivated the other member clubs to start work on titles in their areas. The confidence shown by the committee in the guidebook team and their support and willingness to accept the commercial risk has paid off. Lake District Rock (2015) will be out of print by 2018 and we are now collating corrections for a revised 2nd edition.



A BRIDGE TO THE PAST

Ron Kenyon

At the beginning of December 2015, after months of wet weather, 'Storm Desmond' dropped 1.15 trillion litres of water on Cumbria – this was equivalent to 22 inches across the county. This was on a scale much higher than any previous storm and brought about devastating damage throughout the county with flooding and landslides, as well as specific infrastructure damage such as the washing away of a large section of Dunmail Raise and the bridge at Pooley Bridge.

The Greta Gorge between Threlkeld and Keswick contains the old railway line which was used as a popular walk and cycleway. The railway was built in 1865 and a number of steel bridges crossed the river at various points. During the

storm two of the bridges lost their supports and were washed along by the tremendous power of the raging river. One of these bridges is near Brundholme, accessible from the A66 above. A visit is recommended to appreciate the destructive power of nature with its ability to move such a huge structure.

The bridge, in the past, has carried many people on trains until 1972, and latterly on foot or bicycle. In the 1910 FRCC Journal there is an article by the then FRCC President George Seatree entitled 'Reminiscences of Early Lakeland Mountaineering' which recounted George's exploits back into the 19th Century. He lived near Penrith and some of the exploits made use of the railway from Penrith to Keswick – one of these was a grand day out to go and look at Pillar Rock and Mickledore, two locations which had not then been seen by him and were shrouded in mystery. The following is his account of that day -

In the early 'seventies it was my good fortune to become associated with Stanley Martin, a native of Under Skiddaw, then resident in Penrith. He was a keen lover of the fells, a wiry and untiring pedestrian, good for almost any distance over any type of country. Together we took counsel, and being equally keen to try our luck among the crags, we pondered over the vague and mythical stories about the 'Pillar Stone' in



Ennerdale, and 'Mickledore Chasm' on Scafell, as they were then termed. Guide books, ancient and modern, were eagerly scanned for information, but in vain. There was none to be obtained. A report reached us that some local friends, the Westmorland Brothers and Miss Westmorland, had actually scaled the Pillar. The rumour was verified in the columns of a local newspaper, in which the party published a clever rhyming account of their intrepid exploit. We determined on a reconnoitring expedition, and Good Friday, 1874, the one and only day available, found us leaving Penrith at 7 a.m. for Keswick, en route to find out for ourselves all we could of the terrible Mickledore Chasm— whatever that might be—and the whereabouts and character of the Ennerdale Pillar Stone. Much was crowded into those memorable twelve hours. In good weather we tramped by Derwentwater, Borrowdale, Sty Head Pass, and Esk Hause to the summit of Scafell Pike, our enthusiasm increasing with every foot of the way. Mickledore Chasm we found to be the ridge connecting Scafell Pike with Scafell, and dividing Wasdale from Eskdale. We crossed the narrow neck, scanned with care the wall of cliffs barring our progress westward, and agreed upon trying to surmount the difficulties when time and opportunity permitted. Down by what is now known as Hollow Stones and Brown Tongue, we scurried to the Huntsman's Inn at Wasdale Head, then kept by Auld Will and Dinah Ritson. There was not much time for resting that day. After a hurried luncheon we bade adieu to the inn and its occupants, crossed Black Sail Pass into Ennerdale, and from Scarf Gap Pass viewed the rugged and steep northern side of the Pillar and its Mountain. Yes, there it was to our intense interest, but more like some vast cathedral pile than a 'pillar stone'. The famous rock was not for us that day, but we had located the stronghold. Over the summit of Scarf Gap we plodded down to Buttermere, scampered on to the village for a hurried tea at The Fish, and then tramped through Newlands to Keswick, where

we arrived in time to catch the 8 o'clock train for Penrith.

Those guys could walk – some day out making use of the railway which created the need to get back to Keswick for the 8.00pm train – a true 12 hour challenge – 'The Seatree Challenge'!

The link provided by the bridge has now gone – I am not sure what will happen to the bridge. It is probably not feasible to build the supports and lift it back into place; it will probably be dismantled and removed or it may just stay there. It was part of the cycle/walk way and another bridge will probably be built as a replacement. For a number of years there have been moves by Cedric Martindale and the company CKP Railways Ltd towards the reinstatement of the railway. Recently there has been another group, linked the CKP Railway Ltd, looking to bring all the dices together for this reinstatement of the railway, either from Penrith to Keswick or all the way to Workington. Possibly pie in the sky but time and other factors will tell if this happens.

In the meantime this bridge lies there to remind us of the tremendous forces of nature which were let loose in December 2015.

Naming of Routes: The Changing Language of Lake District Climbing Guidebooks

Martin Cooper

The first time I came within the vicinity of Scafell Crag I didn't know where I was. I had set off from the foot of the Hardknott Pass on a brilliant, sunny Easter Monday, aiming to walk the Eskdale Skyline over Crinkle Crag, Bowfell, Esk Pike, Scafell Pike and Scafell, before descending to Wasdale Head. There were blue skies, distant views and enough snow in Lord's Rake to make the last peak of the day interesting. What I mean is that at that time I had no knowledge of the historical significance, in rock climbing terms, of Scafell Crag.

The next time I found myself in Hollow Stones, again traversing between the two Scafell peaks, I had begun climbing and had read *Hard Rock*. Above me were two American climbers setting off up the climb which I now knew to be one of the most famous and most sought after routes in the Lakes, Central Buttress. I don't know how I knew they were Americans. They weren't carrying much gear. They slowed down at The Oval and by the time I had ascended Lord's Rake and returned to Mickledore by Foxes Tarn, they hadn't made any further progress. They abseiled back down.

I had already decided that I would probably never climb Central Buttress. It seemed such a world away from the climbing I was doing. But Scafell Crag had become important in my ambitions and imagination. If I was ever to consider myself a real Lakeland climber I would have to climb here. The guidebooks were so full of the history of the sport in the Lake District. The pull of the rock, the locations and the history were too

strong. Eventually I could resist no longer; Botterill's Slab and Moss Ghyll Grooves were ticked off, Slingsby's Chimney on a damp and greasy day eluded me.

What is it about the Fell and Rock Climbing Club's rock climbing guidebooks that are so persuasive? How can such small (no longer), pocket-sized and esoteric books have catapulted generations of climbers onto the fells and crags? In the *Centenary Journal* (2006) Stephen Reid provided an excellent and comprehensive overview of all of the climbing guides which have been produced for the Lake District, by the FRCC and by other groups and individuals. I do not wish to cover the same ground. Instead, I want to look at the language and stylistic features of nearly a century of guidebook writing. How has the style of Fell and Rock Climbing guides changed? How do changes in the language of guidebooks reflect both changing times and changing attitudes to the sport?

The motivation to write this article came from two directions. Added to my own personal interest in the topic, a series of extracts from the first *Langdale Guidebook* (1925) had been sent to the *Journal* editors, a submission far too homely and humorous not to use somewhere. But what relevance does the language of the nineteen twenties guidebooks have to the present day?

Before the publication of the first Fell and Rock guidebooks, new route descriptions appeared regularly in the *Journal*. In 1918, B. Martin writes about two new routes on Dow Crag, including the route that became known as Murray's Route.

Nearly two full pages of text are devoted to describing the route (my 1984 *Dow Crag Guide* devotes just 208 words to the same route. *Lake District Rock* in 2015 uses 121). How was Murray's Route originally described? First of all, there is a level of formality created by the use of the third person: 'Here one starts with a good right foothold,' and by the use of the now grammatically unfashionable pronoun, 'Whom'. Added to this is a choice of nouns and verbs which to the twenty first century ear are distinctly archaic: 'aforementioned', 'excellent anchorage', 'has to be effected', 'would not yield'. A not unexpected gender bias occurs in the choice of word for the second climber, throughout the description referred to as the 'Second Man.' (Female climbers were involved in some new routes climbed around this time).

Most significantly, the use of adjectives to describe the climbing is in complete contrast to more modern guidebooks. A useful distinction may be made between adjectives which are essentially informative and those which are more clearly evaluative.

'The traverse is continued into a crack on the left which is followed for 12 feet' gives information only.

'A very awkward change of feet has to be effected with the aid of unsatisfactory hand holds ... round a most unpleasant bulge,' evaluates the climbing for the would be ascensionist in a way which is no longer adopted by guidebook writers.

The 1984 guidebook description of Murray's Route limits its evaluative vocabulary to 'with difficulty (crux)' and two uses of 'awkwardly'. The rest of what is written is a series of factual descriptions of where the route goes next; information rather than evaluation. The one point at

which this more modern convention is dropped is in the description of the pitch two belay as a, 'Comfortable Haven'. The 1918 description was equally evaluative, calling the belay 'Excellent anchorage.' I well remember feeling comfortably anchored there, in Abraham's Cave in May 2004. Of more concern was how I would get out of such a comfortable place.

Many of these same features are to be found in the Fell and Rock's early guidebooks. For example, the route descriptions in the 'Guide to Pillar Rock and Neighbourhood' (1935, Second Series) uses the formality of the passive voice, chooses to describe the second or third climber universally as male and liberally sprinkles the route descriptions with evaluative as well as informative adjectives. On Walker's Gully, 400 feet, Severe (first climbed in January 1899 by O.G. Jones, G.D. Abraham and A.E. Field) 'An exposed trough with very poor holds,' is to be found on pitch three, while pitch eight, the 'Through Route,' is described as an, 'Arduous and energy-wasting job.' Finishing the route via pitch eleven is both 'Exacting' and the setting up of a suitable belay, 'An exhausting undertaking.'

The guidebook writers were, if nothing else, painfully honest in their descriptions. A modern guidebook using such language would do a perfect job in making sure that such a route was seldom, if ever climbed again. Unfortunately, for the climber of 1935, there were far fewer routes to choose from, a total of forty five routes only on the whole of Pillar Rock in the 1935 Guide and only fourteen routes at Severe or harder. Compare that to a hundred and nine routes in 2016, with seventy-one graded Severe or above. (UK Climbing, 2016)

The following extracts, compiled for the *Journal* by Graham Hoey, from the *Langdale Guide*

1925, give a flavour of the style of the First Series of Fell and Rock Climbing Guides.

Regarding History

I feel that, with regard to the history of this valley and its environs, the wayside flowers in their scattered nooks and corners give a greater joy than if I plucked them ruthlessly and attempted a clumsy bouquet.

Approaches

Socially, in their favourite haunts, climbers may be termed democratic aristocrats, for while they attain to proud and lofty heights, they at the same time are usually to be found 'on the rocks.' So let us to the rocks!

Gimmer

The grips, mostly, are conveniently spaced, in-cut, and comforting, though not always grateful from the point of view of size. Belays, though not obtrusive, are very effective, and are to be found practically on all stances.

The writer would advise careful attention to belays, for, apart from the Amen Corner, Gimmer holds out no saving interception to the unfortunate climber who has once lost contact.

Aids to progress (Artificial)

Rope: I would advise for all climbing a 100 foot rope for two climbers; this gives 90 feet of 'the embracing trinity of strengths twixt thee and me'

Footgear: Build up a solid apprenticeship in nails: it will prove valuable when rocks are wet, greasy or iced. It is more pleasurable to adopt nails than to rubber round on easy, rough, or unwieldy rocks. When rocks are dry and in any degree difficult or severe, take to rubbers and sense the intense delight of ideal rock gymnastics.

Chimney Buttress (South Face Route)

Traverse again to the left about 8 feet, and rise to what is known as the 'piano pitch'. You may here

execute an oratorio, or be satisfied by a short bar such as 'rock of ages cleft for me'; it all depends on your form and ability.

Bracket and Slab (South East Face)

First surmount a minaret of rock and step left to a small heather ledge; then proceed up the centre of the slab to a bilberry ledge. Continue up the rocks on the right to a bilberry garden. If fruit is in season, gather handfuls while you may.

B Route (West Face)

A belay of unpretentious quality is to be had under the wall at the top.

...the congregation assembles in Amen Corner, and secures itself to the juniper roots with which the floor is festooned.

...The devout second will sympathetically murmur 'Amen' to any remarks let fall by his leader whilst struggling with this wall, eight cubits in stature.

This cleft is really an indefinite crack, and, like the matrimonial state, is more difficult to enter than to remain in...

C Route (West Face)

A very interesting climb, and as full as good things as a Christmas pudding.

Thomson must have been a man with small feet to choose such a ledge; (as a belay) the best one can do is stick one's heels against the small rock projections on the sloping floor, place the rope under and over, and beg your second to your side with a smile and confidence.

If the second has received his first introduction to Gimmer over this course and is feeling easier for having 'got it over' he may, with more justification than the man who ascended Slab and Notch, write some postcards, for he may now untie and wend, as most men do.

E Route (West Face) – Very Severe; rubbers.

On arrival at this point give thanks for past blessings and pray for future favours.

Diphthong (West Face) – Very Severe; rubbers

The whole course is very steep and tentative, and should only be climbed on a dry, windless day, when one is in perfect training and with a pair of new nice-fitting rubbers.

Ash Tree Slabs

The author of this climb and the D Crack climb suggests a combination of the two; covering as they do, practically the whole length of the Western face, they prove a full course of soup, fish, meat, and 'afters,' with a cigarette or pipe on the balcony at the finish.

Juniper Buttress

...and above it an Insurance Company's Class A belay. From it, those lacking in pertinacity may traverse into the gully on the left.

Pallid Slabs

The slabs now steepen considerably, but good in-cut holds promote ascent for some 35 to 40 feet to a point where incipient overhangs point to a grizzled mantelshelf on the right... Mounting on this, an invigorating stride is made to the left.

...to a derisory thread belay is obtainable, to which an adhesive second may be bought as a safeguard for the next move on the right, which commences with a high step and continues up steep turf.

A number of the features identified earlier are also present in these Langdale descriptions: archaic vocabulary, a mixture of third as well as first person narrative, detailed information about the routes and an excessive amount of evaluation, albeit in a more light-hearted style. What was going on here in the first attempts by the

club to provide guidebooks for the growing climbing community?

It is, of course, almost impossible to really appreciate what the experience of climbing long routes in the Lake District a hundred years ago was actually like, despite the extensive literature from the time and the survival of excellent photographs. Nobody pulls on nailed boots any more, to climb in the rain on greasy rock, without any significant gear or protection. The tone of these guidebooks, however gives us some pretty good clues. It was important to share information about just how difficult certain pitches might be, how unpleasant the experience might turn out. At the same time, the Langdale descriptions above use a good deal of metaphor and humour, conveying an attitude to rock climbing which belied its seriousness and level of risk, suggesting instead that the users of these guides were predominantly concerned with having a good day out, a successful ascent perhaps being regarded as a bonus. Are we, by comparison, too serious about climbing?

The First Series of Fell and Rock Guidebooks followed a similar format: opening acknowledgements, history, topography and approaches to the crag, before the description of the routes. For the Second Series, a wider perspective was adopted to introduce the historical section. For me, the opening paragraphs of the Scafell Guide were an enormous inspiration as I sat in the sunshine at the campsite at Wasdale Head in June 1996, contemplating an ascent of Botterill's Slab.

It is probable that the sight of the great cliffs of the Scafell massif has sent a thrill of awe to the hearts of more than any other scene of savage grandeur in the British Isles. For the climber there is still an atmosphere of romance, of the historic wanderings of the pioneers over these rock faces,

but also from the feeling that there are secrets that the mountain has kept through all these years ... (CF Holland, 1936).

While Holland's words may seem like unjustified hyperbole eighty years later, the grandeur of his prose style does captivate the reader and convey the special place which is Scafell Crag. This introduction was retained in subsequent editions of the Scafell Guide but disappeared with the publication of the 2014 Scafell and Wasdale, CB Centenary Edition. I would not like to argue with that decision, particularly in the knowledge that Al Phizacklea has now edited a whole book for the club on the subject of Scafell. I would, however recommend to readers the whole of Holland's introduction and I would certainly recommend Botterill's Slab.

More recent guides have been produced with different pressures bearing down on the guidebook writers. The sheer number of routes to record and describe, the ability to reproduce far better and far more colour photographs, the existence of competing guidebooks and the desire (until very recently) to still produce guidebooks small enough to take on a multi-pitch climb, have led to a compression of the amount of written text allowed to each climb. This has meant that evaluative adjectives have been limited to the overall route introduction: 'A delicate climb, 'A fine route', 'Enjoyable and exposed climbing. 'Route descriptions now more straightforwardly describe routes. Here the use of adjectives is extremely limited: 'difficult,' 'steep', 'harder', 'more easily' and 'awkward' being the most common.

But it is not only the need to use fewer words which has changed. Modern climbers want to climb, not read the guidebook all day, but they still want adventure. Setting off for Dow Crag,

Gimmer or Pillar is simply not as adventurous an undertaking as it must have been in the nineteen twenties. Modern guidebook writers have obliged by providing just enough information on each route, but not too much. The occasional use of a more striking adjective will indicate that something out of the ordinary should be expected. The top pitch of Chartreuse, Scafell East Buttress, was described as a 'brutal crack' from the outset (first ascent 1958). Subsequent guides, including 2014, have still used the same word, 'brutal'. The route is still on my list.

The 2014 Scafell and Wasdale Guidebook, brought out to coincide with the first ascent of Central Buttress on Scafell Crag, is a superb production, with a host of new features, too many to mention here. However, there is one new departure worth a mention in the context of this article, the use on occasions of gently humorous and ironic comments in route descriptions. For example, Saxon is, 'Serious, bold but, mercifully short,' The Great Flake on Central Buttress now requires 'large cams' and 'fat wallets', and 'Awesome finger strength and raw talent' are cited as minimum pre-requisites for the E9 (Dave Birkett) route, Return of the King. A more user-friendly approach to language, as well as the tremendous colour photographs, make this more than just another guidebook but also a special book about a special place. I bought it as soon as I saw it. So I will admit to Fell and Rock Climbing Club bias at this point. The club's next guidebook, The Lake District Rock selected guide (2015), not to be outdone, won an international award.

Will these superb new guidebooks signal a massive revival in climbing on the Lake District's high mountain crags? We will have to wait and see. Two other pointers to the future which should be mentioned are the publishing of new

routes and archived material on the club website and the availability of downloadable apps. The website allows the whole climbing community to browse the wealth of material that there is to read on the history of climbing in the Lake District. More interesting, for the first time it allows open debate about routes. For an example, Walker's Gully on Pillar Rock, mentioned earlier, has been the subject of a recent debate on the website about the feasibility of climbing the last pitch 'back and foot'. This will perhaps not help much in practice, if you are actually keen to go out to do the route. How many people climb Walker's Gully? Instead, it is something else to read on a dark winter's evening.

By contrast, a downloadable app is definitely intended to aid your enjoyment at the crag. Were you wondering why everyone at Shepherd's Crag these days is on their mobile, not climbing? As such, it seems unfair to comment on the use of language on the app. It tells you what you need to know, and no more. It was never intended to be good reading. The photo diagrams are clear and well produced. I haven't tried it at the crag yet. Personally, I doubt if the appearance of route information on apps will stop climbers wanting to write more fully and eloquently about Lake District rock climbs in other forms. You have to throw your phone away eventually.

I will end - for the sun has come out and I wish to use my guidebooks to go climbing - with a subject which could have been an article in itself. As climbers, in the Lakes and elsewhere, first began to make their way up steep rock faces, they chose the obvious topographical features that they had ascended to name their climbs. Thus the first routes on Pillar were called, 'Slab and Notch Climb', 'Old Wall Route', 'East Pisgah Chimneys', and 'The Arete.' Next, climbs were

named after the first ascensionist, 'Slingsby's Chimney, Jones Route Direct from Lord's Rake.' By the end of the nineteen forties more daring, alliterative names with classical references appeared. From the nineteen sixties and seventies, all hell broke loose as the naming of climbs became almost as important as the climb itself and waves of references to death, drugs, sexual exploits and deeply worrying psychological states of mind were appended to a particular line up an obscure rock face.

'The North Climb' on Scafell was first claimed by Robinson and Seatree in 1869. (T. Jones, Cumbrian Rock, 1988. The route is now also called The Penrith Climb). On recounting their feat to Will Ritson, proprietor of the Wasdale Hotel, Robinson and Seatree were met with the famous retort,

'Nowt but a fleein' thing cu git up theer'

It was therefore a very fitting name for Dave Birkett to give to his 2005, E8 route on The Gully Wall of The Screes, linking his incredible feat of twenty-first century climbing to a phrase first allegedly used in the same valley over a hundred and thirty years earlier. I'm sure that Dave was particularly pleased to use a piece of Cumbrian Dialect.

The naming of new climbs

About the naming of new climbs,
they were very conservative, the old masters:
the first excursion on a crag
might be christened Route A;
you could guess what the second would be.
Northeast Buttress was easy to find
if you were properly orientated
and Diagonal went from bottom left
to reach top right, or vice versa.

They kept a sense of decorum, too.
It would have been quite inappropriate
for a gentleman to call two of his new routes
on Pillar Rock, Sodom and Gomorrah.
They appeared eventually in the guidebook
with the more becoming titles
Route 1 and Route 2.
you knew where you were
when they named climbs like that.

John Maguire

Bryan 'n Pirie of the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut.

Hatty Harris

Introduction.

In one episode of their eventful lives a remarkable pair of sisters with a passion for mountains, Mrs Helen Bryan and Miss Evelyn Pirie, ran a climbing hut strategically placed for Dow Crag in Coniston. This was the 1930s: climbers such as Bentley Beetham and Ruth Hargreaves took them out on the crags. Both became Fell and Rock members with a unique relationship with the climbing world.

After the death of Helen Bryan's last surviving daughter in 2006, the first Visitors' Book and Log Book of the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut came into the Fell and Rock Archives. With them was a bundle of typewritten poems by Helen, most of which relate either to love of mountains, or to her wartime experiences. These papers unleashed many memories: my brother George and I knew Helen and Evelyn when we were children in Coniston. The ladies were nicknamed Bryan 'n Pirie in the Club and the village. Books, memories and poems, augmented by information from Fell and Rock, and Pinnacle Club publications, form the basis of this article.

Formative influences.

Pirie men were in the Indian Army for several generations. Helen liked to say flamboyantly that she was born on the North West Frontier (between modern Pakistan and Afghanistan) where her father was serving at the time. Both daughters were born rather further from the front, in the Punjab, in 1892 and 1896 respectively. Helen and Evelyn thus grew up as memsahibs in the heyday of the Raj, with an ayah

and knowledge of Hindi. Adventurous tastes were nurtured by stories of Great Uncle Colonel Harry Tanner, of the Survey of India, who ran pundits on the Sikkim – Tibetan border. The girls also acquired experience of the hills, a view of Everest, an acquaintance with Buddhist monasteries. Their mountain passion was established in the highest places.

Father married Alice Ida Keller in England in 1890. The Keller family were wealthy. Helen and Evelyn's grandfather, Leopold Keller, was a goldsmith and diamond merchant. The sisters had a large family of affluent cousins living in the south of England.

In the first world war, Major General Pirie served with the Indian Army Ambulance Cavalry Brigade. Helen, aged 22, unsurprisingly also chose war service and became a Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.) nurse. By 1915, she was in northern France, based in one of many British general hospitals in Boulogne, in the former casino.

Helen's war contained plenty of intensely hard work, blood, death and the sound of guns. Evelyn, meanwhile, lost the man she might have married, killed in Flanders.

During the war, Helen met and married Lieutenant Charles Walter Gordon Bryan, R.A.M.C., a surgeon stationed at no. 14 General Hospital, Wimereux. Their eldest daughter was born in 1917.

The Doe Crag Climbers' Hut.

I know little about Helen and Evelyn's life between 1918 and 1932. Helen had two daugh-

ters, but her marriage was not a success. Evelyn remained single. There were visits to the Alps: both ladies became proficient skiers and read mountaineering books. Then in 1932 they bought land from the Le Flemings (the Coniston manorial landowners) at Parkgate, south of Coniston village on the Torver road. They built an unostentatious house with ex-military wooden huts in the grounds, and opened a climbing hut.

The choice of location was logical. The legendary Mrs. Harris (no relation to H.H.) 'this ideal hostess of the fells' had died in 1928 and with her, hospitality at Parkgate. W.T. Palmer paid a warm tribute to Mrs. Harris in the Fell and Rock Journal. Behind Parkgate, a track leads straight up onto the Walna Scar Road and so easily to Dow. Bryan 'n Pirie thus filled a gap in the market for climbers on Dow seeking comfortable accommodation, cheaper than a hotel.

Bryan 'n Pirie had a personal Fell and Rock connection too, that very likely put them in touch with the concept and location of the Hut. A Keller cousin, Phyllis Evelyn Keller, married Denis G. Murray in 1918. Murray had joined the Fell and Rock in 1913 and Dorothy Pilley Richards remembered him as a climber of dashing style. During the First World War he served in the Royal Naval Air Service, was shot down in Dutch waters in 1915 and interned. In 1918 he did first ascents of Murray's Route and Murray's Crack on Dow Crag, both Severe, with W.J. Borrowman and Brian L. Martin. The latter in particular became a close friend of Bryan 'n Pirie. Murray died young in 1930; his widow, Phyllis, and daughter lived at Castle Carrock near Carlisle. This gave Bryan 'n Pirie a Cumbrian mountaineering connection: incidentally a Fell and Rock one also.

In October 1932, the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut opened. The first page of the Visitors' Book signals several interesting connections. The columns are headed Name, Address, Dates of arrival and departure, and then 'Notes' crossed out and 'Climbing Club' substituted in red ink. This was not a B & B or Guest House (as suggested by A.H. Griffin) but a climbing hut. The first guest was Major General C. Pirie (father) from London, who stayed three weeks. Next came Phyllis Murray, Denis Murray's



widow, with her daughter Pamela aged about 12, both from Castle Carrock, and Phyllis's sister Rebie. The Murrays wrote Fell and Rock as their club affiliation, although not members themselves.

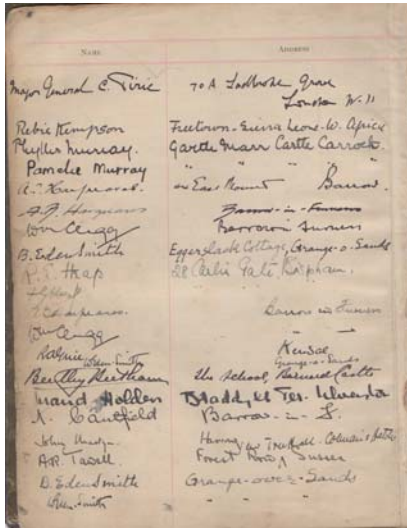
After family came business. A.T. Hargreaves and A.B. Hargreaves visited together, along with William Clegg. The Hargreaves (who were not related to each other) quoted as their clubs Rucksack and Climbers' Club respectively, although best known to us as Fell and Rock. Clegg specified Fell and Rock. All were leading rock climbers of their day and pillars of this Club. A.B. Hargreaves was noted as a leading proponent of the provision of cheaper accommodation for climbers in the Lakes, rather than the reliance on hotels common at the time. He was instrumental in setting up the Robertson Lamb Hut (Wayfarers) in Langdale and was its first warden. A.T. was the first warden of Brackenclose from 1936 and Vice President 1943-5. A.B. did two stints as Fell and Rock Treasurer, the first of ten years from 1934, and went on to be Vice President (1947-1949) and President (1952-1954). This first visit to the Doe Crag Hut, on which they stayed a night and spent a day on Thunder Slab above Levers Water, was surely a tour of inspection of the new premises.

Blanche Eden-Smith, a leading woman climber, arrived next from Grange over Sands. She played a leading role in both Pinnacle Club and Fell and Rock (Vice President 1935-7) and like the two Hargreaves, had a practical interest in the accommodation available. Then came R.E. Heap, 'Little Ruth', who later married A.T. Hargreaves and was a fine climber in her own right, with her then husband Frank G. Heap. Lower down the page Bentley Beetham, of the 1924 Everest expedition and a teacher at Barnard Castle School, recorded

his first visit: he became one of the most loyal guests. An unconventional visitor, he played with his listed 'Climbing Club' affiliation, once writing 'most' in that column. Early in 1933, Wm. Heaton Cooper (usually a day visitor), W.G. Milligan and H.M. Kelly all put in an appearance. Subsequent hut use implies that their inspections were satisfactory. Milligan, with A.B. Hargreaves, was instrumental later in buying the land for Brackenclose, so he, too, had a particular interest in the working of a Lake District climbing hut.

The pages of the Visitors' Book show that the hut was quickly accepted as a centre for Coniston and Langdale climbing, and Dow Crag in particular. Between 1933 and 1938 it hosted nine Pinnacle Club meets, eight Fell and Rock, six Rucksack Club and five Preston Mountaineering Club. Other clubs with between one and three meets each were the Gritstone, the MAM, Oxford University Women's M.C., the Tricouni, the Westmorland and Cumberland Rock C.C., the D.O.A.V. (sic) and Bentley Beetham's school club, the Goldsborough. The maximum number of resident guests at a time may have been as high as 21. Individual visitors, with and without climbing club affiliations, also came.

The Doe Crag Climbers' Hut acquired special status with the Fell and Rock. Before Brackenclose was opened in 1937 the Fell and Rock had no huts of its own but listed 'Official Quarters' in each climbing centre in the Handbook. These were usually hotels. In 1934, at Coniston, Official Quarters moved from the Sun Hotel to the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut ('proprietors Mrs Bryan and Miss Pirie'). In 1936 a Club bookcase is now at the Dow (sic) Crag Climbers' Hut, not the Sun Hotel! In 1938 First Aid outfits (proposed by a sub-committee of the Rucksack Club and FRCC) should be available at 'the various rock climbing



centres. These included The Old Hotel, Langdale and the Dow Crag Climbers' Hut. By this date, Helen Bryan had served a stint on the Fell and Rock Committee and the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut was firmly, though not exclusively, a Fell and Rock base.

Special features of the Hut were the strong focus on climbing, thanks to its convenience for Dow Crag. Furthermore it offered cheap accommodation: four shillings and six pence for B&B in 1938, teas one shilling and three pence. A significant attraction too was the welcoming kindness of Bryan 'n Pirie, often mentioned in the log, so that they created a social focus also. A couple of 'New Year meets', and an 'Easter Meet' crossed club boundaries with partying for all as well as days on the hills. The Hut achieved prominence

with both Pinnacle Club and FRCC, displaying an easy mixed-gender ambience, which was unusual in those days, when most clubs (but not the Fell and Rock) were single-sex. It is interesting to contrast the hut of A.H.Griffin's Coniston Tigers, on the lake shore, which was male-only and mostly for a Barrow-based friendship group. A comparison with Brackenclose, the first Fell and Rock hut, which the Doe Crag hut pre-dates by a few years is surely pertinent too. Here the emphasis on climbing, the mixed gender ambience and sociability were (indeed are) also found. A.B. and A.T. Hargreaves and others set up Brackenclose with recent experience of the Doe Crag Hut.

Sid Cross first visited 1934, when at the height of his climbing powers. He became a frequent visitor, sometimes with Alice Mary Wilson, who later became his wife 'Jammie' Cross. During this period, Sid Cross and A.T.Hargreaves were working on the 2nd Fell and Rock Dow Crag Guide published in 1938. The Doe Crag Hut was probably the main base from which Sid and A.T. worked.

Other prominent FRCC members either called or stayed. Tall, shy Brian Martin (see D.G.Murray), with a strong reputation for both Alpine and Lake District climbing, became a close friend. George Basterfield and Graham McPhee, Howard Somervell (Everest 1922 and 1924), Jack Longland (Everest 1933), R.G.Plint, Charles Pickles, John Appleyard (who lived close by), E.O. 'Bones' Harland his brother in law, Charles Tilley and W.G. Milligan are all listed. A huge day party brought by Sid Cross to tea included Geoffrey Winthrop Young as well as G.R.Speaker, the Pollits, the Heaton Coopers, and Willy Pape. Among the women, many were both FRCC and Pinnacle Club. Dorothy Pilley, despite living in the south, was a

frequent visitor and a stalwart supporter of both clubs. Nancy Ridyard and Molly Fitzgibbon both lived locally but called quite frequently, as did Mabel Barker. This hut was a major climbers' centre for Dow, with many guests heading for the Langdale Craggs as well, or even Wasdale for the day.

Bryan 'n Pirie were complete novices to rock climbing. They never became of more than moderate ability, nor led, but many climbers, often eminent, took them and Helen's daughters out. They were not the conventional Lake District landladies: the climbing world that they hosted reciprocated by including them in their activities. Bentley Beetham started them off, taking Evelyn up C Buttress on Dow on April 11th 1933 and Helen up D on the 17th. Evelyn went out more often than Helen and participated in Pinnacle Club and O.U.W.M.C. meets. However, both ladies sampled several different crags. There was a day on Kern Knotts and Needle Ridge Arete with 'Bones' Harland, Langdale (Middlefell Buttress and Gimmer) with Brian L. Martin, Burtness Coombe with A.T. and R.E.Hargreaves and a day on Pillar with H.M.Kelly (North Climb, Central Jordan and Slab and Notch). They provided the Hut and several very fine climbers repaid with ascents. In 1933, Bryan 'n Pirie joined the Pinnacle Club and, in 1934, the Fell and Rock.

Helen, the elder and dominant sister, could be impetuous and imaginative, as well as severely practical. Her mountain poems attempted, sincerely if not always very successfully, to capture her passionate love of the hills; at the very least they document their mountain destinations. Bryan 'n Pirie were enthusiastic travellers and explorers. They visited Scotland, including Skye and Torridon, with the Pinnacle Club. From the early glimpses of the Himalaya, their experi-

ence of higher mountains had expanded to the Alps and the Pyrenees. There are references of a trip to Iceland, although unfortunately no details.

Much better recorded is a trip to the High Atlas. Bentley Beetham started to explore the Atlas Mountains of Morocco in the 1920s when they were virtually unknown mountaineering territory. In 1934 he had confidence in the Bryan 'n Pirie's rope skills, plus the ladies' robustness for exploring, and invited them to join his party. This consisted of Bentley Beetham himself, J.B.Meldrum, S.R.E.Philips, Helen C. Bryan and E. Pirie, who all sailed in a Dutch liner from Southampton to Tangiers in August. Beetham and Meldrum spent some time climbing alone together, but the whole party also explored as a group. They spent four days at a higher camp, at about 10,000 ft, from which a Lammergeier was sighted. From this camp they traversed a rock ridge of Djebel Bou Ouszab with a magnificent view of the south face of Toubkal. At its foot Lac D'Ifni lay like a sapphire. At the col they roped. Bentley led, then Evelyn while Meldrum brought up Helen.

The black-walled mountain rose to Heaven itself.
A snowflake floated down, while there,
ten thousand feet beneath, a jewel lay,
turquoise and aqueous in Sahara's hand.
We roped and climbing, made each tower our own,
until the friendly summit, hardly gained,
fulfilled desire.

Evelyn's account for the Pinnacle Club Journal attempts straightforward description, but humour and suppressed excitement shine through. Helen characteristically bursts into poetry.

The mountain skill at which Bryan 'n Pirie excelled was skiing. A charming entry in the Log

Book is for February 24 -27 1933, when at the first Pinnacle Club meet at the Climbers' Hut deep snow prevented access to hills. 'A toboggan and many pairs of skis were most generously lent by Mrs Bryan and Miss Pirie' wrote Blanche Eden-Smith. The meet was a huge success although the first attempts on skis were not always so, to judge by some cartoon sketches of entangled Pinnacle Club members. Bryan 'n Pirie became founder members of the Lake District Ski Club in 1936. In the winters of 1935, 1936 and 1937 the Log Book records days out on promising Lakeland hills: Sticks Pass, Skiddaw, Blencathra, Stybarrow and Raise Dodds, Helvellyn. Ruth Hargreaves was nearly always with them, usually A.T.Hargreaves too. Other companions included John and Eve Appleyard, Frank Heap, A.B. Hargreaves, E. Hodge, William Clegg, Bentley Beetham and Helen's two daughters.

Evelyn published an article outlining the skiing potential of the area; it suggests she came up from London to ski before the Climbers' Hut days. In the Pinnacle Club Journal Helen gives an account of an exciting 15-day ski mountaineering trip to Switzerland, with A.T. and Ruth Hargreaves, Frank Heap and the guides Herman Bumann and Alexander Taugwalder. A.T.Hargreaves became an outstanding ski mountaineer, but was introduced to skiing by Helen and Evelyn.

In 1938, Sid Cross and A.T.Hargreaves had finished the Dow Crag Guide. Early in 1939, Bryan 'n Pirie sold the Doe Crag Climbing Hut as a going concern. However, as Sid Cross wrote, 'the great Coniston days', like so much else in 1939, were over.

The Second World War and Beyond.

Bryan 'n Pirie were far from 'over' in 1939, but something of a pattern of pulling up roots and moving was a feature of their lives. They nursed during the war at Calderstones Emergency Hospital, Whalley in Lancashire. Evelyn drove an ambulance. Helen's poems of the period, some of her best crafted, give information about her patients: an amputee from Dunkirk, men from Crete and Greece, and a Norwegian lad from the retreat at Narvik:

His eyes spilt laughter, but in the shade
Lay death unspecified and numbly laid
To rest in burnt disaster.

Meanwhile, the Fell Rock opened Raw Head in 1944. In 1945, a new page in the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut Log Book is headed 'Rawfell' in large, inked capitals. Rawfell is the bungalow almost hidden in its own garden next door to Raw Head. Under Raw Head in the FRCC Handbook it stated 'The key is kept by Mrs. Bryan, Rawfell, Great Langdale via Ambleside, to whom it must be returned on leaving'. Bryan 'n Pirie had taken up residence in Langdale where they were also keyholders for the Robertson Lamb Hut, established in 1930. Keys to Fell and Rock huts had to be collected on arrival from a local resident in the days before members had the privilege of a key each. Bryan 'n Pirie also saw to laundry: 'Sleeping bags must be used: cotton ones may be borrowed from Mrs. Bryan at a charge of 6d each (payable to Mrs Bryan). After use the bags must be returned to Rawfell'. Of course, Rawfell could not accommodate guests on the scale that the Climbers' Hut had done, but Helen and Evelyn took a few, and also did teas. Bobby and Muriel Files stayed once or twice, and the log book records meets of the RAF College

Cranwell Mountaineering Club, the Yorkshire Ramblers and the MAM. Close contact was maintained with the climbing world and also the Fell and Rock.

Then, suddenly in 1950, Bryan 'n Pirie moved to Herefordshire: Langdale, they said, was too wet. It may also have been lonely when the huts were empty. However, from Herefordshire, Helen edited the Pinnacle Club Journal.

The Hereford episode was brief: Bryan 'n Pirie missed the Lake District. In 1952 they were back in Coniston, at Gateside, a few hundred yards south of the present MAM hut at Low House. Here they had purchased the properties of a former local butcher. As well as the Victorian house, there was the wooden slaughterhouse across the road, which took the small car and the large collection of old-fashioned skis. The former shop was let as a self-catering holiday cottage. 'Derelict outbuildings' and the orchard were soon sold. Bryan 'n Pirie may have been upper-middle class in origin, but money was always an issue. They had their capital in building and needed an income. They ran Gateside as a guest house, and did teas. Their old friends were back and several meets are recorded in the Log Book: the Pinnacle Club came several times. Indeed, Helen was President for two years in the 1950s, even though she did not qualify for full membership as she did not lead climbs. Keswick Mountaineering Club, Cleveland Mountaineering Club, the Gritstone Club and the Pennine Mountaineering Club all came: presumably if the meets were of any size, members stayed in other local venues. In June 1955 there was a Fell and Rock meet: 'a first class couple of days'

As a guest house, Gateside took families. Jim Cameron, a professional local climbing guide and

Fell and Rock member, often had clients staying at Gateside and he met them there. Jim had moved into Dow Crag House, the former Climbers' Hut, although it was no longer run as a hut. Other old Fell and Rock friends were frequent visitors, notably Ruth Hargreaves, Brian Martin and A.B.Hargreaves as well as Jack and Audrey Kenyon who had a cottage in Coniston. (A.T. Hargreaves had died tragically in 1952 in a skiing accident in Austria). There is no record from Gateside of Helen or Evelyn going on the fells themselves: they were getting older and Helen in particular had a bad heart. They continued endlessly cheerful and generous with hospitality and encouragement, especially to children tackling the mountains.

A young Fell and Rock member stood chatting in the Gateside kitchen one day while Helen mixed dough for scones. A cigarette hung neglected from her lips, the ash growing longer and longer ... until, inevitably, it collapsed into the dough.

'Oh bugger!' exclaimed Helen, and went on mixing.

The incident epitomizes the woman: an instant emotional response – rather earthy in this example - succeeded by entirely practical action.

Finale

Club climbing huts were still a novelty at the time of the Doe Crag Hut. The Climbers' Club had opened Helyg, the first hut in Britain, in 1925. The S.M.C's Charles Inglis Clark Hut followed in 1929 and the Emily Kelly Pinnacle Club Hut in 1932. In the Lake District, only the Robertson Lamb Hut (1930) preceded Brackenclose in 1935. At the time that the Doe Crag Climbers' Hut opened in

1932, the idea of club huts was growing and the numerous Fell and Rock visitors to the Bryan 'n Pirie's must surely have been influenced by the ambience.

A tantalizing question is how Helen and Evelyn selected Parkgate, Coniston as their location. It seems too good for chance. More likely it was through the Murray family connection and the Fell and Rock; perhaps even an influential figure like A.B.Hargreaves pointed Bryan 'n Pirie to the place where there was a real need.

The association of Helen and Evelyn's lives with mountains highlights some interesting points, both about them and about women in the climbing world. Women climbers of the 1920s and 1930s had experienced the first world war. They hadn't suffered the casualties of the men of course, but there were formative and life changing influences. In this context, many middle and upper middle class women, like Helen, were introduced to hard, exhausting, unglamorous work. Certainly Bryan 'n Pirie lived in the expectation of rolling their sleeves up and getting on with it. It is noteworthy too that, at a time when many of even the greatest women climbers were the wives of climbing husbands, Bryan 'n Pirie, as the nickname suggests, were a pair of thoroughly independent women, united until Helen's death in 1963.

Bryan 'n Pirie gave much to the Fell and Rock, and to other guests. Infinitely kind and generous, they exuded good humour, and forthright conversation as they chain-smoked their way through the day. An ebullient, cheerful social atmosphere swirled around them so that their huts, like the best Club premises, became far more than cheap, convenient accommodation.

Acknowledgements. Thanks are due to: Guy and Margaret Plint, Audrey Plint, Angela Soper, Richard and Jane Hargreaves, Chris and Ellie Sherwin, Alistair Cameron, George Harris, John McM. Moore.

Footnotes:

1) Doe or Dow? The first FRCC guide (1922) uses Doe, the second (1938), uses Dow which has become the modern spelling. However, the Log Book of the Bryan 'n Pirie climbing hut has 'Doe Crag Climbers' Book' embossed in gold letters on the spine. I have therefore retained 'Doe' in the name of the Climbing Hut, but used Dow elsewhere in the text. Some confusion when quoting other sources has been inevitable.

2) Many of the names of climbers quoted in this article will be found under lists of former Club officers in the Fell and Rock Handbook. The guidebooks of the period are also informative.

Face Climb

I have come to see how it is done
this ascent into treasure houses.
I want purity of space
its silence
among the solemn rock towers

I follow you easy dynamism
as we climb an idea.
my body rises without force
hands caress crystals
feet pause on small holds

Below, the glacier like silk
recedes and I am Icarus
confidence high
closing the sun
through a line of bolts.

You reel me in jangling
heaps of gear,
wide-faced with the space below.

This is how obsession begins,
with the heady smell of melting wax.

Joyce Hodgson



From the new Borrowdale guide - Hind Crag, Robinson
- Severe - Climber : Trevor Langhorne
Photo - Richard Tolley

New Climbs

Trevor Langhorne



From a Distance - E7 6c Stennis
Ford, Pembrokeshire , climber Sam
Hamer. *Photo - Hamer Brothers*

New route activity has been slow over the past two years, no doubt due in part to the poor weather we have suffered. There have been almost no additions to the high crags. Unseasonably mild winters have slowed the pace of winter/mixed climbing development although a few substantial routes have been recorded. Full details of all recorded new routes can be seen in the climbing section of our website <http://www.frcc.co.uk>; these are often supported by action photographs and topos. The bulk of the new rock routes are short with a good proportion in the accessible grades as well as the usual desperate offerings. Wear, tear and Mother Nature leave their mark on the crags affecting pre-existing climbs; some of these changes have been recorded on our website and are included here.

LANGDALE

The most significant developments have been the exploration of a number of small crags such as Thrang Crag West, Upper Scout Crag, new areas on Side Pike and Birk Knott Crag above Blea Tarn; all offer short pleasant routes on good rock and at modest grades. Without the efforts of the 'Scrowston and Bennett team' this would be a very short report. Full details of Thrang Crag West and Upper Scout Crag are included here to give a flavour of the nature of these outcrop routes. A smattering of other routes has been recorded, with only three being more than a single pitch. One short but tough addition is Central Crack (E4 6a) on Grave Gill Crag

Thrang Crag (page 17)

Alt: 210m GR: NY 318 058 Direction: South
Three small and sunny buttress above and left of

Thrang Crag. All the routes are worthwhile, some are very good. Approach as for Thrang Crag, just keep going upwards and left. Descent, closely follow the top of the crag leftwards passing behind a large oak tree to access a short decent gully. Alternatively carefully down climb *Dust Bunny* (D). Routes are described from left to right. Photodigrams on the website

Left Buttress

Dust Bunny 15m D
Three metres left of the left edge of the buttress is an obvious short rough pillar. Climb it.
First ascent: (12/09/2014) Carole Scrowston, Martin Scrowston

Clone 16m S
Start below a right slanting groove at the left end of the buttress. Climb the groove to a small bulge, step up and left to follow the rough slab above.
First ascent: (24/08/2014) Martin Scrowston

Mitosis 17m VS 4b
A good route with a choice of exits; start 2m right of *Clone* at the second groove. Follow the groove to a short steep slab, bold moves via finger pockets leads to better holds and the cracked slab above. An alternative finish is possible by traversing right from above the short slab up an obvious diagonal line.
First ascent: (09/08/2014) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

Random Drift 22m HVS 5a
Excellent climbing with sustained interest. Start at the third groove in the centre of the buttress. Ascend the groove for 5m to a steepening. Make a committing

rising traverse right and follow the fine rough slabs above.
First ascent: (09/09/2014) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

Coke Can Katy 21m HVS 5a
An intimidating start leads to more relaxed climbing above. Start at a recess 5m right of *Random Drift* below a short steep groove. Ascend the groove and pull up left to surmount a bulge, move up rightwards passing some dubious blocks. Follow a direct line passing an overhang at its left edge.
First ascent: (18/06/2015) Paul C Bennett, Martin Scrowston

Central Buttress

Old Genes 14m S
The short hanging slab on the left of the overhanging buttress. Scramble up left to gain the slab, bold climbing up the short slab leads to a steep wall with good holds.
First ascent: (06/10/2014) Martin Scrowston, Colyn Earnshaw

Norman's Route 17m S
An exciting trip with wild exposure for a route at this grade. Start at the centre of the overhung buttress at a left slanting ramp. Follow the shattered ramp on large protruding holds to gain the left arête, pull up to access a slab and follow its right edge to finish. First ascent: (05/09/2009) Martin Scrowston solo

Not the Norm 18m VS 4c
Steep and exciting. Start as for *Norman's Route* at the left slanting ramp. Ascend the ramp for 3m then commit to the steep wall above and follow a direct line of large hand holds to exit at the left end of the capping overhang.
First ascent: (16/03/2015) Martin Scrowston, Dave Till.

Selfish Gene 17m E1 5b
Start at a rightwards slanting ramp in the centre of the buttress. Climb the short ramp, ascend the steep wall direct on large holds to a good ledge. Pull up steeply to surmount the bulge right of the large overhang, step left to finish.
First ascent: (25/09/2014) Paul C Bennett, Martin Scrowston

Mutation 15m VS 4c
Steep and bold. Start at the right end of the buttress. Climb the steep wall on good holds right of a mossy streak to a large ledge; more steep climbing and big holds to finish right of the Yew tree.
First ascent: (25/09/2014) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

Evolution 16m HVS 4c
Start three metres right of *Natural Selection* at a thin right slanting crack. Climb the steep wall on big holds to a large ledge. Direct up another steep wall to a shattered overhang, move left to finish up yet another steep wall.
First ascent: (16/09/2014) Martin Scrowston, Paul Kear

A Dream of White Houses 25m HVS
A fine exciting adventure that takes the obvious dark left slanting ramp under the large overhang. Start as for *Evolution*; follow the diagonal juggy ramp leftwards passing a small wobbly block directly below the capping roof. An exposed traverse left leads to a junction with *Not the Norm* at the left end of the overhang.
First ascent: (04/06/2015) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

Natural Selection 23m HVS 5a
Follows the striking rightwards slanting fault line that dissects the length of the crag. Start 2m right of *Selfish*. Steep climbing gives access to a sloping ledge;

continue steeply up the ramp passing a junction with *Evolution* to finish by wrestling with the Yew tree.
First ascent: (02/10/2014) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

Right Buttress

A scruffy rambling buttress that contains two surprisingly interesting, traditional style routes.

Full Circle 24m S

Start at the toe of the buttress. Follow the crest of the bulging buttress, snake upwards utilising the best of the clean rock and passing some circular rock art to some large ledges. Step left onto a large flake to exit via the steep head wall.

First ascent: (12/09/2014) Martin Scrowston, Carole Scrowston

Elemental 23m S

Start just left of a Hawthorn tree. Gain the right slanting groove and follow it steeply passing some small ledges, easier climbing above leads to a large grassy terrace, step down to a spike by a small rowan. (Possible belay) Ascend the bulging wall above the spike belay, move left over broken ledges to finish up the short wall.

First ascent: (01/10/2014) Martin Scrowston, Colyn Earnshaw

Scorchio 20m S

A gentle slab leading to a steep finish.

Start right of a small hawthorn 15m right of *Elemental* at the extreme right end of the buttress. Step up and left behind the hawthorn to gain the slab, follow its clean right edge to a steepening. Move left and finish up the steep broken wall above.

First ascent: (29/05/2016) Freya Scrowston, Carole Scrowston

Upper Scout Crag, Salmon Leap Area (page 41) Photoddiagram on the website

Sid the Sardine 32m HVS 5a **

A good route that takes the large slab on the left side of the buttress. Start at a short groove 2m left of *Salmon Leap*. Follow slabs and ledges to a small overhang, climb this on its right to gain the large slab. Ascend the slab to a second overhang, turn this on its left and follow a thin crack up steep rock to finish left of the tree.

First ascent: (01/07/2014) Paul C Bennett, Paul Kear, Martin Scrowston

Thing Fish 34m HVS 5a **

A good companion route to *Salmon Leap* providing interesting and exciting climbing. Start below a left slanting groove at the right hand end of the large horizontal ledge at the base of the buttress and 3m right of *Salmon Leap*. Climb the groove and slab to a diagonal ledge. Move up to gain a large perched block (big sling useful). Surmount the block then make an exposed and committing move left to gain the hanging slab above the overhang. Follow the slab to its apex; ascend the steep wall above on surprisingly good holds.

First ascent: (21/06/2014) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

Girl Scout 20m VD

A pleasant route that provides a fine extension to the full Scout Crag experience. Adventurers can warm up on Lower Scout, progress to a route on Upper Scout then conclude by topping out on this short pinnacle with the benefit of the extended view. From the top of Scout Crag skip up and right through the bracken for 20m to the base of the obvious pinnacle. Climb the pinnacle by its left arête to a large belvedere. Follow a cracked groove up the short wall on the right to finish. There are three very good VS routes further right, best climbed during a dry period.

First ascent: (20/09/2014) Freya Scrowston, Carole Scrowston

Lutefisk 36m VS 4c

A route for adventurers revealed during a sheep rescue. It links the best features available on this section of the crag and is a good option if its fishy neighbours are damp. Start just right of *Girl Scout*, climb up and right on big holds to gain a large ledge in a corner. Hand traverse right to gain another ledge below some large flakes, move up utilising the large flake to yet another ledge left of a right slanting ramp. (Possible belay) Climb the ramp (crux) and finish up the wall above.

First ascent: (10/07/2015) Martin Scrowston, Colyn Earnshaw

Small Fry 16m MVS *

A good companion route to *Girl Scout* on steep rough rock. Start 5m left of *Girl Scout* at a short steep buttress. Climb the centre of the buttress to a break, step right to ascend the steep wall on large holds.

First ascent: (30/05/2016) Martin Scrowston, Freya Scrowston

Salmon Leap, it has been reported that the corner of this route is about 5b but well protected, it is easier to climb its left wall using the corner crack for protection and a few holds on *Sid the Sardine*

Harrison Stickle (page 128)

Wage Slaves 42m VS 5a

10m right of the start of *Credit Crunch* there is a wall with a left slanting crack up its centre.

1 12m 5a Climb the slanting crack in its entirety, alternatively after 2m continue straight up. Belay at the ledge.

2 30m 4c Climb the steep crack 1.5m right of the blocky crack of *Credit Crunch*. Continue easily to join *Credit Crunch*.

The base of the crag can be reached by a 25m abseil from a convenient spike to the left of a ledge halfway up the second pitch.

First ascent: (05/07/2014) Tom Walkington, Leo Walmsley

Raven Crag Buttress (page 148)

In contrast to the many very short routes that have been recorded there are a couple of more substantial offerings on Raven Crag Buttress.

Exoplanet 65m E2 5b

Takes a line left of Bilberry Buttress.

1 20m 5b Pitch one of *Bilberry Buttress Eliminate*.

2 20m 5b The arête between *Savernake* and *Bilberry Buttress*. Climb 6m up the corner of *Savernake* to a good nut. Step down slightly and use a neat sequence of small finger-holds to reach the arête and useful wires in a horizontal flake crack at waist height on the front face. Up the arête to the thread belay of *Bilberry Buttress*.

3 25m 5a/5b Climb the wall right of *Pluto P3* starting up a short wide crack. Nicely spaced positive holds.

First ascent: (05/06/2014) Peter Graham (P2) Rick Graham (P3)

End Elevation 43m VS

Another surprising find close to the classic HS *Revelation* giving good climbing up the pleasantly exposed arête on the left edge of the buttress. Start as for *Elevation* and after 5m move left to the edge of the buttress and follow it to a broken ledge. Move up to gain a short hand traverse leading left once again to access the extreme edge of the buttress, follow the arête to finish by an oak tree with a perfectly positioned rock seat to belay from.

First ascent: (25/07/2015) Martin Scrowston, Jana Edwards-Lihocka.

Route comment: *Carrion Climbing* on Mendes Wall is reported as being loose and "adventurous"

Gimmer Crag

With a bit of imagination there are still worthwhile discoveries

Tieraway 100m E1 5b *

Pleasant climbing up the very right-hand side of the Tiers area. Start under the huge roof in between the starts of *Availed of Tiers* and *Three Tiers Climb*.

1 20m 5b Well protected. Climb into a grassy groove on the left side of the roof and go up it to a huge detached block. Step right and make a strenuous pull over the second roof via an excellent jagged crack which is followed to a terrace. Belay in the corner at the back of this (as for *Three Tiers Climb*).

2 35m 4c Start up the rib of rock above the belay (as for *Availed of Tiers*) but take a diagonal line easily up rightwards to a bulge. Move up right and back left to overcome this and finish just right of a mossy crack. Scramble up to belay near the foot of the right-facing corner of *Availed of Tiers* in the wall above.

3 25m 4c Climb a wide crack in the right side of the wall right of the corner until a rising traverse can be made up a scoop on the left. Go straight up a short corner and grassy cracks on the right of the wall above.

4 20m. Easy climbing up the broken rib on the right.
First ascent: (09/06/2016) J Hughes, SJH Reid (alt)

Birk Knott Crag

Alt: 900m GR: NY 298 042 Faces: South West
This small sunny crag situated close to the Blea Tarn car park and provides a handful of short easy routes set in an idyllic situation and is well worth a visit for the views alone. You can climb almost anywhere at around severe with the odd 4c move if you try hard enough. 'This crag is indeed a delightful spot for an afternoon/evening and very easily accessible' – Max Biden.

Dow Crag (page 30)

Only one new route has been reported on Dow, but at 315m this 2 star New Girdle Traverse gives a "full on" day out, an overall description is given to ensure maximum adventure.

New Girdle Traverse (yet to be named)
315m E2 **

A Lord of the Rings for Dow? Although not quite the same quality it contains some brilliant climbing and amazing exposure on A buttress.

Starting as for *Necklace Route*, a big rising traverse above the big cave followed by harrowing down climbing to belay on *Sidewalk*. Abseil. Cross low on Upper B Buttress to join the first pitch of *Nimrod*, descend *Easy Terrace*. If you leave your bags here you can stop for a pie and a brew, which you can't do on *Lord of the Rings*!

Traverse low across Lower B Buttress to groove on *Murray's Super Direct*, belay on *Murray's Route*. Cross above Abraham's cave and up cross and reverse the crux of *Abraham's Route B* to *Giant Grim*.

Here we admit it would be better to follow *The Original Girdle* to Easter Gully, but we abseiled *Hesperus* to try to find some independence - all a bit artificial. The last pitch climbs the South America crack then follows *Easter Rising* (the wall right of *Hopkinson's Crack*) to finish. Long and tiring, especially for the over fifties.
First ascent: (09/06/2016) Al Phizacklea, Keith Phizacklea, alt leads

SLATE

Nothing new has been reported, however rock instabilities continue to affect Hodge Close fracturing has affected at least *Idaho Connection Wave*, *Carpe Diem*

DUDDON

Given the amount of rock visible in the Duddon it

comes as no surprise that many short routes have been added to crags such as Stonestar South and Upper Buck Crag. There have been a few more substantial additions, notably *Mr Cuddles* and *Foss Night Nerves* and *What's all the Foss about?*

Access Issue: The owners of Common Wood Quarry have banned climbing at this small sport venue.

Route Comment: *Leprechaun* on Low Crag is reported to be very hard for MVS, possibly VS 5a and worth a couple of stars

Brow Side

Alt: 175m GR: SD 238 987 Faces: South West
Park at the cattle grid south of Troutal. Approach as for *Burnt Crag* along the track; go through the gates and up the hillside following the wall. At the top of the wall there is a stile on the right - go over this and traverse the hillside for 150m towards the cascades.

Mr Cuddles 12m E8 ***
Embrace the arête and don't let go. Emotional!
First ascent: (10/04/2016) Craig Matheson

Foss How Crag (page 247)

Foss Night Nerves 13m E6 6b **
The direct start to *Rough Diamond*. Start at the left hand edge of the crag by a large foot hold. Boulder up to a resting position on the leftwards facing ramp and some gear. Turn the overlap on the right and finish up the *Rough Diamond* headwall.

First ascent: (02/10/2014) Nathan Pike, Sarah Pike

What's all the Foss about? 13m E6 6c **



New Dow Crag Girdle Traverse.
Keith Phizacklea poised above the huge overhang begins the descent to The Sidewalk belay.
Photo: - Al Phizacklea

Described by some as the *Strawberries* of Duddon. A searing and uncompromising line left of *Rough Diamond*, finishing up the left of the tough head wall. Start as for Foss Night Nerves and follow it in to *Rough Diamond*. Continue up using the left hand crack and the wall above to finish at the top of the arête. Wrestle the bush back to the belay.

First ascent: (02/10/2014) Andy Mitchell

ESKDALE

A number of short routes have been added to places like Bull How and Demming Crag. Al Phizacklea and John Holden have added three good routes to Green Crag on Ulpha Fell, one of which, *Green Goddess* 17m E1 5b, is described as by far the best route in the area – high praise indeed.

SCAFELL AND WASDALE

A number of outstanding routes were climbed in the run up to the publication of the CB Centenary Guidebook, subsequently the pace of development has been very slow but there has been one major route on The East Buttress, *Barad-dûr* (E6) and some other additions on Scafell Crag and an amazing find on Shamrock, *Barrow Brothers Climb* (VS)

Scafell Crag (page 25)

Hanging Chimney, Al Phizacklea reports that is more like E2 5c than HVS 5a and looks like it hasn't been climbed for decades

Collier's Climb Left Hand - superior finish
12m VS *

Start up the top pitch of CCLH to a horizontal break at 4m, then step right onto the slab and climb a flake to where the slab becomes less steep - moss above -



Craig Matheson getting intimate with Mr Cuddles
Photo - Ian Cooksey

avoid this by a traverse right to a runner and easier ground above.

First ascent: (10/09/2015) Al Phizacklea, Keith Phizacklea

Scafell Pinnacle (page 59)

Route Comment: *Lower Man by Jubilee Line* may be closer to E1 5b than the HVS 5a given in the guide.

Red Gill Buttress (page 85)

Red Gill Rib 47m HVS 4c

Start as for *Red Gill Wall*

1 11m Climb the wide crack

2 10m Climb the broken crack in the left of the wall and the wider crack above to a big grassy ledge

3 26m 4c Step left onto a rib, and move left again to the main arête. Climb this to a ledge, and continue directly over the bulge to the top. Sparsely protected and a bit intimidating.

First ascent: (10/09/2015) Al Phizacklea, Keith Phizacklea

Scafell Shamrock (page 86)

Barrow Brothers Climb 31m VS 4c ***

A three star adventure, excellent climbing in a remote part of the crag; the overhanging buttress to the right of Shamrock's main Buttress.

Access - Follow Lords Rake past the 2 cols. until at the lowest point just below Red Gill Buttress. Traverse the hillside right (looking out) level with the lowest point of Lords Rake to a cairn on the edge of the buttress - abseil down just left of the cairn to a grassy ledge.

Retreat from here will be difficult, you are committed to the route and it has more buzz than any of its grade in the Lakes!

Start at the right end of the grass ledge. Pull up a short rib to enter a recess below a big overhanging corner. Move out left to a good Friend 3 slot, then step down and left across a wall (single RP 4 or 5 runner) to reach the base of the main crack. Climb this, (excellent jams and runners) to the top.

First ascent: (10/09/2015) Al Phizacklea, Keith Phizacklea

East Buttress (page 93)

It is appropriate that what is possibly the most significant new route in this summary is found on the best crag in Lakeland/England.

Barad-dûr 55m E6 ***

A superb climb which weaves an eye catching line up the impressive overhanging pillar between Ichabod and Phoenix. Best to belay on the ground for a full view of the action.

Climb directly to the niche stance on *Ichabod/Phoenix*, utilising a series of steep cracks. Follow the *Phoenix* crack to the resting ledge. The line up and rightwards to the fin and hanging groove, is obvious enough, but the method of achieving this is not – bold, strenuous and potentially perplexing. The reward of success is a rest further up on the right edge. Move directly to the roof and traverse leftwards with interest, to a thin crack which splits the headwall above the left hand end of the roof. Layback spectacularly over the bulge and climb directly on some good holds to a small jammed block. Stretch right from here to a good jug and pull across rightwards to sloping ledges on the front of the pillar. Follow the scoop and easier angled wall to the top.

First ascent: (03/05/2014) Rob Matheson and Craig Matheson

Pikes Crag (page 155)

Route Comment: *Wriggling Route / The Chancel* Eagle eyed enthusiasts have noticed that the line named *The Chancel* (FA 1983 & 2012) in the new Scafell guide and Lake District Rock is almost identical to the line of *Wriggling Route* (FA Peascod and Kellett 1943 – the original description is in the 1944 FRCC Journal page 49). This has yet to be resolved.

GREAT GABLE

There has been very little activity with one route added to The Napes (*Longbow* E1 5b **, included in Lake District Rock) and a couple of easy ones on Green Gable; there have been no additions to Gable Crag.

Route comments: *Leap Year* on Kern Knotts may be harder and a lot more serious than the current guidebook grade of MVS 4c. Similarly *Kern Knotts West Buttress* is tough for MVS 4c

PILLAR ROCK & ENNERDALE

While no routes have been added to The Rock other crags in the valley have provided some good new routes. Stephen Reid has continued his profitable association with the wilds of Ennerdale and has come up with some more gems.

Raven Crag (Ennerdale) (page 203)

The sunny Southeast Face is home to some more good routes.

Road Works 35m E2 5c *

Takes the left-hand of the twin grooves. Start down and slightly right of the groove. Climb the leftward-slanting groove/ramp to gain the main groove. Sustained difficult moves up this (micro-cams) gain easier ground. Follow the crack above to the top

First ascent: (03/07/2015) JF Hughes, R Jervis

Summer Breeze 40m E1 5b *

Takes the right-hand of the two grooves and is low in the grade. Start under the white streak in the centre of the wall. Step off an embedded flake at foot level and climb up a huge flake on the wall moving left to a slim corner. Climb the corner (large cams) to a ledge. Traverse left and make thin moves up the right-slanting ramp/groove above until it eases. Continue round

to the right in the line of the groove until moves up left lead to a belay.

First ascent: (03/07/2015) R Jervis, SJH Reid, JF Hughes

Great North-Western 50m HVS 5a **

An interesting climb on excellent rock. Start just right of the lowest point of the wall. 1 20m 5a Scramble up grass and climb a steep open groove to gain a large ledge on the left. Traverse left, overcome a short corner and sidle leftwards again to a wide slanting crack which is followed to a huge ledge. 2 30m 4c Just right of a large boulder is an undercut V-groove splitting the short overhanging wall. Climb this and directly up slabs to an overlap. Go straight over this and finish up a right trending groove/scoop in the steep wall (belay in a recessed groove to the right).

First ascent: (30/09/2015) JF Hughes, SJH Reid (alt)

Black Crag Upper Buttress (page 308)

Tower Buttress Direct Start 45m VS 4b **

1 18m The pleasant slab to a large grass terrace, belay up on the left.

2 27m 4b Climb directly up to the right arête of the corner under the huge roof and follow it to join the wide crack and small overlap on *Tower Buttress*.

First ascent: (03/09/2014) T Daley, R Jervis

Cove Crag (page 314)

No September Blewes 40m E1 5b **

Just left of the main part of the crag are two sharply defined ribs: this route climbs the right-hand one. Climb the rib with interest to a brief interlude below the final crack which requires a determined approach.

First ascent: (03/09/2014) R Jervis, SJH Reid, T Daley

Pushmepullewe 40m HVS 5a **

An excellent and quick drying eliminate up the centre of the left side of the buttress. Start at a block just left of the left-hand left-leaning ramp.

1 25m 5a Step off the block and pull rightwards to the top of the ramp. Move back left and climb a short corner with difficulty (as for *Deja Ewe*) then traverse the rising line leftwards to its high point. Go straight up the short wall (as for *Ewes Ahead*) to a large ledge (good cam in top left corner). From the very right edge of the ledge, climb straight up a short wall to an even bigger ledge.

2 15m 5a Climb diagonally up leftwards to a rib on the left and move up until just under a horizontal crack. Step right onto a small foothold on a rib on the right and climb straight up the right side of a large flake to belay a little higher. Scramble off left or climb pitch 3 of *Prophylactics*.

First ascent: (03/09/2014) SJH Reid, T Daley, R Jervis

BUTTERMERE

There have been no significant additions to these crags.

High Crag (page 116)

Route Comment: High Crag Girdle Traverse has been described as "very pokey" for both leader and second, probably worth E1 and almost three stars.

EASTERN CRAGS

A limited number of short routes have been climbed on crags such as Upper Nab Crag (Thirlmere), Kirkstone Buttress and Buckbarrow (Longsleddale). The main news items come from St John's in the Vale, namely the continuing development of Bram Crag Quarry and the ever expanding crack on the north side of Castle Rock.

Bram Crag Quarry (page 49)

Lake District Rock contains what was, at the time of publication, the up to date guide for this crag. Exploration has continued and there are now many

more routes at this popular sport climbing venue. Full details can be purchased through the smart-phone app at: <http://www.climbers-club.co.uk/shop/mobile-guidebook-app/>

Castle Rock (page 69)

The top left side of the North Crag is continuing to split from the rest of the crag. The crack has been monitored since it was first noticed in August 2011, at first movement was slight but its rate is increasing. The slippage has been measured since early 2012, and a pattern has emerged, movement is continual with there being a slight closing of the crack each spring – possibly due to shrinkage of earth in the crack as it dries out after the winter – it is also apparent that the amount of slipping back is declining each spring.

The British Geological Survey are planning to do a highly accurate LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey of the crag and (hopefully) put in further measures to monitor the movement.

What does all this mean for climbers?

The photograph overleaf is taken from the most recent Eastern Crags Guide with the likely extent of the crack shown by the red line, everything inside the red line is likely to collapse – sometime, it may have happened before you read this report, or it may not happen for a thousand years. Given the rate of movement it could well be earlier rather than later. The advice is not to climb on or below the area of instability.

This means that walking below the left side on North Crag and the climbing any of the following routes should be thought of as very risky (off limits for the sane). *The Watchtower; The Barbican; Prenotion; Matheson Avenue; North Crag Eliminate; Side of the Hill; First Republic; The Last Laugh; Crusader and Overhanging Bastion*. Additionally any routes that

A Bit on the Side 22m E4 5c **
Climbs the impressive headwall, directly up from the undercling flake on *Erection Arête*. Protection is available low down but a little run out on the crux before good protection and holds are reached just before the top.

First ascent: (20/09/2015) Pete Gunn & Davina Mouat

SOUTH LAKES LIMESTONE

Scout Scar (page 267)

Two routes have been added.

Douglas 22m F6b
Climbs the gully wall between Undercut Buttress and Central Area. Start as for *Cliff's Route* but climb the short wall to the left of the crack and pull over leftwards into a hanging scoop. Move up and left then climb the headwall in a fine position using a thin crack.

First ascent: (01/07/2014) Clive Allen, Robbie Allen

Scout Post 15m F6b
Climbs the wall to the right of *Icicle*. A hard start leads to easier climbing in the upper half.

First ascent: (30/11/2014) Clive Allen, Robbie Allen

WINTER CLIMBS

Despite some very fickle conditions over the last two winters some significant new routes have been recorded.

LANGDALE AREA

Bowfell, Traverse Crag (page 52)

Band on the Run - Direct Finish 70m V, 5 *
From the top of the steep chimney, climb the short wall above to arrive on the snowy ramp, belay at its top. Climb the obvious steep, open corner in the wall on the left on amazing torques and hooks to the top of

the crag. The whole route was climbed in 3 pitches - the initial corner pitch, the Steep chimney pitch and the final open groove pitch.

First ascent: (14/02/2016) Mark Thomas and Kate O'Donoghue

Bowfell, North Buttress (page 62)

Into The Groove (or Riboletto Groove Direct) 100m V, 6 *

1 3 Start at the bottom of *Cambridge Crag Climb* and climb it for a few metres before climbing diagonally right and up to the base of an obvious corner with a double corner crack at its top. Belay on the left.

2 5 Climb the corner stepping right at its top and up the snowy bay behind, belay on the right.

3 6 *Riboletto Groove*, to the top of the crag.

First ascent: (01/02/2015) Mark Thomas and Richie Mockler

The Matrix 100m VI, 6 **

1 4 Start 4m right of *Cambridge Crag Climb*, at the base of an obvious tongue of white turf coming down from a groove higher up, to the left of the upper 'Gendarme'. Climb the turf to belay on the left at the base of the groove.

2 30m 6 Step right and up into the hanging groove above, with a white wall on its left flank. A steep pull out of a niche and up the narrow groove above, gear is very difficult to find and place. Climb up to blocks above on the left of the 'Gendarme'.

3 5 Climb the continuation turfy corner above and finish up the final moves of No Way Out

First ascent: (02/02/2015) Mark Thomas and Kate O'Donoghue

Bowfell Buttress (page 67)

Ultraviolet Junglist 110m VII, 8 ***

A good natural winter line, which roughly follows the line of the summer *Silent Witness* (HVS) for its first two

pitches, then climbs an independent groove above. Start about 5m left of Bowfell Buttress below and left of the obvious chimney fault line about 10m up the crag.

1 20m 5 Climb up and slightly right to the base of the chimney which leads to a block belay at its top.

2 25m 8 Move left from the belay and then up and left up a turfy groove to some in-situ tat. Move up and step left into a left facing corner below a small roof. Move right around the arête and out of the corner and pull through the roof with difficulty. Belay below the obvious groove above.

3 20m 7 Enter the groove above with difficulty and climb it to its top.

4 45m 3 A turfy romp remains.

First ascent: (17/01/2015) Peter Graham, Ben Silvestre (AL)

SCAFELL AND GABLE AREAS

Pikes Crag (page 153)

Mare's Nest Ridge 210m III/IV *

Some difficulties are avoidable. Start at the foot of Mare's Nest Gully.

1 60m Climb *Mare's Nest Gully* to an easing on the left with a good spike belay below the corner of the summer route Mare's Nest Buttress.

2 30m Climb the cracked corner right of the summer line, taking care with loose blocks at the top, to gain the ridge on the left.

3 60m Follow the ridge over or around a number of gendarmes. From the final gap climb up and right for 5m to a ledge below a left slanting groove.

4&5 60m Follow the groove to the top of Pulpit Rock over several steep steps.

First ascent: (31/01/2015) Adrian Dye, Matt Griffin but probably done before.

Green Gable Crag (page 199)

Fallen Comrades 35m V *

Excellent mixed climbing with reasonable protection taking the turfy crack to the left of the summer route *Timshell*. Start 3m right of *Epsilon Chimney* at a right facing corner. Climb the corner on good hooks to a grass ledge, gain the prominent rightward slanting turfy crack/groove and follow it to a niche. Step right onto the crux slab and delicately mantelshelf onto a flat hold before using turf blobs to re-join the crack/groove which leads past a small pinnacle to a turf belay ledge above.

First ascent: (17/01/2015) Adrian Dye, Matt Griffin

Great End (page 252)

Ultraviolet Exorcist 110m VI, 7 **

A line of grooves just right of *Left Hand Groove* finishing up a steep thin ice smear. Start a few metres to the right of *Left Hand Groove* below an off-width crack. (Topo on website)

1 30m 7 Climb the off-width, which is steep to start and continue more easily up and left to belay as for *Left Hand Groove*.

2 30m 6 Climb the groove just to the right of *Left Hand Groove* and continue up the thin ice smear above.

3 70m A turfy romp to the top.

Rick Graham climbed the first pitch direct (solo) in 1995 via the hanging chandelier, which was well formed at the time.

First ascent: (18/01/2015) Ben Silvestre, Peter Graham (AL)

HELVELLYN RANGE

Brown Cove Crags (page 283)

Paparazzi 100m VI, 7

Start on the right of the shield of slab to the right of Summer Step

1 4 Climb the ice corner hidden on the right of the shield and cuts back left, then up and over a dagger of rock to the ledge and follow the groove above on the right with a steep pull out right at it's top.

2 3 A long pitch; climbing diagonally right to the obvious short step of ice, climb this, below and left of the last pitch of 'Two Grooves', to arrive at a block belay and comfortable stance to the left of 'Two Grooves'.

3 7 A Short, Sharp, Shock! Step down and right, then climb back up the turfy crack to arrive at the arête on the left of the upper crag. Step left and climb the overhanging crack, using the lower chock stone, then difficult, hooks to the top of the crag

First ascent: (10/02/2015) Mark Thomas and Kate O'Donoghue

High Crag, Nethermost Pike

Colin Wells has recorded two alternative gully finishes, *Gully B Upper Left-hand Finish*, II which takes the right fork of Gully B until it is possible to traverse back left up an exposed turfy ramp which leads onto the upper part of AB Buttress and thence the top and *Gully A Groove Finish*, III which takes a steep turfy corner to the right of the steepening where Gully A is blocked by steep rock (Probably climbed before but not recorded.)

St Sunday Crag (page 324)

Return of the Frosted Beard 150m IV, 5

A good winter line following a series of vegetated grooves up the buttress left of *East Chockstone Gully*. Starts at a vegetated shallow gully about 17 m left of *East Chockstone Gully* and 3m right of *Slab Route* (Summer Guide page 243-4)/*Slab Route Buttress* (Winter Guide p 325)

1 50m 5 Climb easily up the grassy gully to a steep cracked corner on the left side of the slabs then make difficult thin moves up the corner (well protected) to gain the hanging turfy groove above.

2 40m 3 Tricky moves above the belay lead to a short corner; climb this and then easy ground to a block belay at the bottom of a v shaped gully.

3 30m 3 Climb the v shaped gully to a block belay up and left, just below a prominent corner.

4 30m 5 Make difficult thin moves up the corner and continue up the groove.

Easy ground to the top

First ascent: (17/01/2016) Adrian Dye, Huw Davies, Kris Mclean

The Snow Badger Strikes Back 170m IV, 6 *
The route takes the prominent turfy groove system on the left hand side of *Slab Buttress*.

1 50m 6 Climb the left hand groove over a couple of bulges to a ledge and then climb slightly rightwards up to a prominent spike.

2 60m Climb leftwards over turfy ledges to below the left hand groove in the tier above.

3 30m 5 Climb the turfy groove, exiting steeply right at the very top to an excellent belay on a block (common belay with *Slab Route* and *Continuation*).

4 30m 5 Climb the groove directly behind the block to easier ground.

First ascent: (14/02/2016) A Dye, M Griffin

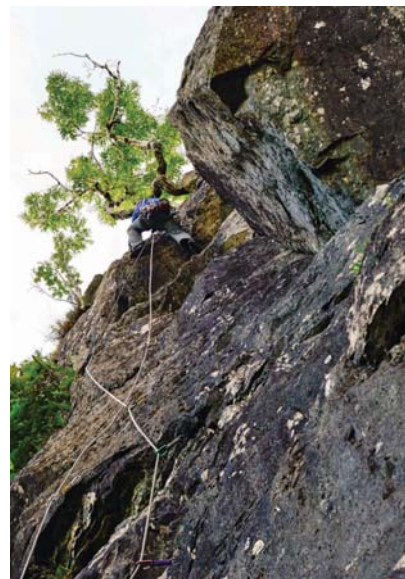
Heirloom Crag (page 349)

The Will 50m VI, 6 **

1 Take the same approach up the centre of the lower tier as *Heirloom/Heiress*.

2 6 The main pitch starts directly below the large overhang to the left of *Heirloom*. Climb directly to this and step right into cracks in the left wall of the main corner (joining the summer line of *Relative Ease*). Follow the crack to a ledge on the left, then up the off-width in the corner on the left to a crevasse. Finish up the left-facing corner of *Heiress*.

First ascent: (17/01/2015) Andy Brown (main pitch), Julian Cox (approach pitch)



Above: Paul C Bennett on Sid the Sardine, Upper Scout Crag.

Above Right: Martin Scrowston on Evolution, Thrang Crag.

Right: Paul C Bennett on Coke Can Katie, Thrang Crag



Hassness How Beck: Photo - Tony Simpkins

Book Reviews

Echoes, by Rick Bullock - Nick Hinchliffe

Adventures in Mind, by Heather Dawe - Wendy Dodds

Iceland Walking Guide, by Paddy Dillon - Chris Wright

Statement, the Ben Moon Story, by Ed Douglas - Terry Fletcher

One Day as a Tiger, by John Porter - Trevor Langhorne

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Fast & Free, Stories of a Rock Climbing Legend - Pete Livesey, by John Sheard and Marc Radtke - Al Phizacklea

Fiva, by Gordon Stainforth - Al Phizacklea

All but One, by Barbara Swindin - John Holden

4000m: Climbing the Highest Mountains of the Alps, by Dave Wynne-Jones

- Martin Cooper

Echoes

Author: Nick Bullock

Publisher: Vertebrate

ISBN 9781906148539

This is a book which promises a lot, having a striking cover image and some extravagant claims on the dust jacket. Bullock is an accomplished mountaineer who climbs at the highest standard both on rock and ice in the UK as well as the Alps, the Andes and the Himalaya. A cover endorsement by Sir Chris Bonington and a foreword by Paul Pritchard make it clear that this is a man at the cutting edge and we are promised 'a powerful and compelling exploration of freedom and what it means to live life on your own terms'.

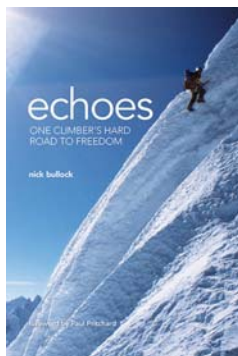
So, does the book deliver all of this? Well, not entirely.

The account of Bullock first climbing on his training course to become a prison PE instructor tells us that he was hooked on it, but we then jump rapidly to him climbing E grades. It would have been interesting to know more about this rapid progression 'from zero to hero'. There are some classic accounts of epics to rival the best of them, a winter attempt on the Colton MacIntyre on the Grand Jorasses and a terrifying account of his leading Birth Trauma at Gogarth's North Stack, stand out as a testament to his determination and drive. These are not climbs that most of us could ever contemplate, never mind under the circumstances of Bullock's ascents.

There is some very good writing in the book, particularly his observations of nature and his no holds barred descriptions of working as a prison officer. The prison service is clearly not an easy

job, or one that can be taken casually. The visceral fear of violent encounters with often disturbed inmates is powerfully described and one has to be grateful that there are people who are prepared to do that job. Bullock also suggests that they are often frustrated and as much let down by the flaws in the system as are some inmates. He is a thoughtful critic of the current system, dealing badly as it does with some of the most damaged members of society, and asks if a life of crime or one spent climbing are not 'just two intoxicating drugs to get some of us through the sterility of modern life', a reasonable point perhaps for some climbers, but sometimes it is just a hobby.

Where the book falls down is when Bullock employs too many similes comparing climbing with prison, as some of these feel forced when they should 'illustrate and ennoble the subject, show it to the understanding in a clearer view' as Samuel Johnson wrote. Joining the prison service 'was as exciting as learning to lead a rock climb with no experience at all' and duty on a troubled New Year's Eve being like soloing a North face feel forced, as if climbing is being shoe horned in where it does not need to be. One cannot help but think that a good editor would have advised some changes here, as well as eliminating several annoying typos such as wretch for retch, and avalanche shoot. This is a hardback



book costing twenty pounds so it seems reasonable to expect the small details to be right.

That such an accomplished mountaineer did not pass his winter Mountain Leadership assessment seems extraordinary, and the account of this and explanation of the decision to defer him (he had not spent any time taking groups of novices out) is a wry observation on the outdoors industry and the contrast between those who choose to instruct and those who simply want to climb as hard as they can. There is bound to be some tension there, and Bullock is commendably honest (as is Andy Kirkpatrick in one of his blogs) about not taking on commercial work or instructing. Would that all those who want to make a living out of climbing were so honest.

I have written elsewhere about a disturbing trend to denigrate the clients and those less gifted by some of the current climbing stars, and Bullock avoids the former by choosing not to guide. He is not quite in contempt of us mere mortals on the evidence of this book, but at times there is sometimes a hint such as 'work, warmth, comfort and mundane regularity simply doesn't give me enough reward'. The punch is pulled, but one feels it hovering. It is after all, those very people for whom it is enough, or who cannot find a way out from it, who rent out his house, buy his book, and patch him up in hospital.

The last third of the book feels tighter, more confident in style and recounts his trips to South America with Al Powell, climbing new routes on Quitaraju and on the astonishingly beautiful Jirishanca. These are bold ascents in the modern super-light and fast style and leave the slenderest margins for error or bad luck. Again his drive and determination shine through, shrugging off frostbite or a twenty pound weight loss as the price of

a trip and getting straight back into training for the next challenge.

Where the book fails to live up to its promises is in the 'powerful and compelling exploration of freedom'. Bullock, in his own words, 'I don't like letting myself down' gives us the key here. Someone of his will power and drive who wants to climb so badly can hardly expect us to be surprised that he saves up enough money to pay off his mortgage, rent out his house and become a full time climber. This has been his plan for some time and he is a man who sets himself goals and then achieves them. Whilst it seems to be the case now that climber's autobiographies have to offer soul searching and deep existential angst the reality is that they rarely deliver. Maybe it is deemed necessary to sell books, but this would be a book well worth reading without these grandiose claims.

Nick Hinchliffe

Adventures in Mind – A Personal Obsession with the Mountains

Author: Heather Dawe

Publisher: Vertebrate

ISBN 978-1-906148-69-0

Heather Dawe is an athlete, artist and writer, describing herself as being inspired in her writing and artwork by adventures in the mountains. She has been a rock climber from her youth, extending her activities to running, cycling and adventure racing.

The first two sections of the book cover Heather's activities in a variety of disciplines, with mountain marathon chapters appearing at intervals as her ability progresses. Her first is used as an example of what drove her to self-improvement.



At the end of 2000 Heather was knocked off her bike by a car going at 50 mph with, amazingly, nothing broken but extensive bruising and cuts. This 'near miss' led to reflection on life and living it to the full. Within nine months she was competing in the Grand Raid mountain bike race in Switzerland, covering 130km with 3500m of ascent, her hardest physical challenge at the time. Cycling then became her main activity, competing throughout the UK and Europe, as running was limited after this accident. However, she did return to running, building up mountain marathon and fell running experience, eventually reaching one of her goals of completing the elite class in a mountain marathon and later completing the Bob Graham Round.

Heather is able to accept defeat and disappointment and to use the experiences positively to improve future performance. The analyses of such circumstances are useful for those facing similar situations, providing a learning experience that can be put to good use in the future. Heather has been first woman in the Fred Whitton Cycle Race, the Three Peaks Cyclocross and the Mountain-X Alpine Adventure Race. She was not

put off cycling when in 2009 she had another crash, again no broken bones but the bicycle frame snapped in two.

The final section covers Heather's detailed preparation for an annual mountain bike race that follows the Great Divide for 2745 miles, from the Canadian Rockies to New Mexico. Perhaps, not surprisingly, there were only 25 starters. Four hundred miles, with little sleep, were covered in the first 3 days, 12% more than planned. Heather realised that she did not have to continue, having reached what was, on the 4th day, her limit.

I think the reader will enjoy learning what can drive an individual to tackle increasingly harder physical challenges and the thought processes behind them. This book will inspire some, while others can enjoy the descriptions of mountainous areas. Heather continues to be active but competition is, at least for the present, on the 'back burner'.

Wendy Dodds

Walking and Trekking – Iceland

Author: Paddy Dillon

Publisher: Cicerone - 2015 (2nd Edition)

ISBN 978-1-85284-805-7

Some 50 years ago, while on a work party for the MBA at Tunskeen in the Galloway Hills I met Icelandic explorer Dick Philips and later went on one of his tours in the Vatnajökull, where he had established a hut. Roll forward 30 years and I was back in Iceland, travelling around the island by bus, staying at youth hostels, and doing some day walks to extinct volcanoes and magnificent waterfalls, which gave me inspiration for an

extended visit. A few years later, having done extensive hutting and camping treks in Norwegian and Swedish Lapland, and having taken early retirement, I returned to Iceland for 10 whole weeks.

I arrived in late June, on the last day of spring snows, and departed at the beginning of September, on the first day of winter snows. At first the fells were inaccessible because of too much powder snow, then the rivers became uncrossable because of snow-melt, then the blackfly become intolerable as summer gets under way. But the scenery is barren, bleak and beautiful, and the flowers and bird life magnificent - I 'ticked-off' all my Icelandic breeding birds.

Inveterate guide-book author and hiker Paddy Dillon describes the wonderful diversity of Iceland's landscapes - it's geothermal areas, coastlines, glaciers, geysers, waterfalls and volcanic lava fields - in a series of 49 day walks and 10 multi-stage treks in and around the island, including the sometimes overlooked peninsulas in the west and north-west. Most of the day walks are from the roadside, accessible by public transport, and these options would be ideal for a first-time visitor, but to get a real feel of the country you need to hike some of the multi-stage treks, for which you need to be self-sufficient:



there are many huts - some are wardened, but none provide meals or sell food, and they can be full in popular areas - so it is best to camp, free of charge in the wild, but restricted in the national park. Wear strong boots - volcanic lava is abrasive - long sleeves, long trousers and a midge net hat. If rivers are too high to cross during the day camp beside them and cross at night when flows are lower: with virtually 24 hours of daylight you can hike at any hour.

Paddy Dillon describes his walks and treks in a series of twelve sections, working his way round the island in a counter-clockwise direction. Each walk or trek, or stage of a trek, has a preamble describing start, finish, distance, ascent/descent and time, whether in hours or days. Terrain, facilities, maps, accommodation and transport are given, and each walk or stage of a trek has its own maps, but I found it annoying in having to refer to the map at the beginning of each section without a page reference to it. Dillon details 100 days of walking and trekking, but omits several that I have done: only one walk from Akureyri, for example, from where I did a different hike each day for a week. There's plenty of hiking potential in Iceland, and Paddy Dillon provides a good selection of what's available.

Chris Wright

STATEMENT: THE BEN MOON STORY

Author: Ed Douglas

Publisher: Vertebrate

ISBN: 978-1-906148-98-0

For those of us on the outside, noses pressed enviously against the glass, the life of a professional rock climber looks nigh perfect as our hero wafts effortlessly from crag to sun-kissed crag on a cloud of sponsorship, plucking routes as he goes. Or so we like to think. Vertebrate has been steadily shattering those myths with a series of books by and about the most recent generations of stars. First came Ron Fawcett's 'Rock Athlete' and then Jerry Moffatt's 'Revelations'. The third instalment is this biography of Ben Moon by journalist Ed Douglas.

Of the three, Moon's story is perhaps the least satisfying. This may be because it is not in his own words or perhaps he was less forthcoming than the previous two. Moon has always been a paradox. Although his trademark dreadlocks made him the most instantly recognisable climber of media-savvy Moffatt.

As a result he always seemed to be the junior partner in the Jerry and Ben double act, despite his routes now being recognised as harder. No less a judge than Adam Ondra pronounced Moon to have been years ahead of his time.

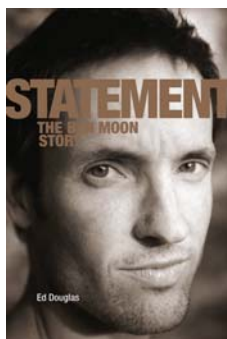
The book gets off to a slow start with a long examination of Moon's artist father, Jeremy, which seems to be there mainly to allow Douglas to make laboured comparisons with his son's artistry on rock intermingled with some clunky political analogies. But once it gets into its stride,

the routes begin to fall and the story starts to flow.

Moon exploded onto the scene, aged 18, with his Statement of Youth, at Pen Trwyn, one of the first completely-bolted sports climbs and given added impact by its provocative name. Moon and Moffatt were the arch exponents of what was then still called 'French-style' climbing and became the main targets for die-hards who predicted the end of the British traditional style.

Moon was the arch-exponent of the redpoint, doggedly working routes with an almost pathological zeal to climb as hard as possible. He was, says Douglas, 'hunting the future' rather than repeating the past. The price was endless training and the process, in Moon's words, was not glamorous. The route was the public tip of the iceberg; no one saw the mass of effort lurking beneath it, nor the mounting pressure to succeed and the soul-destroying effects of failure. But the result was showstoppers like Agincourt (8c) at Buoux and Hubble closer to home on Raven Tor, then graded E9/10 7a but now widely rated a contender for the world's first 9a. In the two decades since he climbed it the route has seen only a handful of repeats.

But testing yourself to the limit inevitably ends in failure and Moon met his match on Kilnsey's North Buttress, where, despite three years of trying he failed on his toughest project. It was left



to rising star Steve McClure to finish Northern Lights at 9a. Moon retired to bouldering, which was less all-consuming and better suited to his new roles of business owner, husband and father. The fire still burned, however, and he still performed at the highest level. His problem Voyager at Burbage, the most accessible crag to Britain's most climber-infested city, Sheffield, waited ten years for a second ascent - and not for lack of suitors.

The book is unlikely to tell you much about your own climbing but as an insight into the infancy of sport climbing in this country and the demands on peak performers, especially in the hit-and-miss early days, it may make you think again about wanting to be a rock star.

Terry Fletcher

One Day as A Tiger - Alex MacIntyre and the birth of 'light and fast' Alpinism

Author : John Porter

Publisher: Vertebrate

ISBN: 978-1-910240-51-9

Alex MacIntyre was born in 1954 and died on the South Face of Annapurna in 1982. In his few short years he packed in a list of mountaineering achievements that ensured his place in the list of the world's greatest alpinists. This well written book explores his life and the evolution of the fast and light approach in the greater ranges. The assertion in the title ignores the style of the alpine climbs of Cassin and Harrer. The great Walter Bonatti pushed the alpine style bound-

aries in the 50's and 60's but chose to retire from serious climbing, recognising that the logical progression for him was to take his approach to the Himalaya and that the risks were more than he was willing to accept. A decade later a new generation, including Alex, transferred this approach to the greater ranges, often with tragic consequences.

I have found this a difficult book to review. At first it didn't engage me as the first five chapters, and some parts of later chapters, re-visited ground that had already been covered in Bernadette McDonald's superb Freedom Climbers. Despite this reservation, there is no doubt that this is a very enjoyable read. If you have already read Freedom Climbers you might wish to skim or even skip some of the first chapters. The chapters are quite short, making it a good book to read just before bed-time and the text is supported by an extensive collection of photographs (those of a nervous disposition may wish to avoid plate 7 which includes Bernard Newman in nothing but his red Y fronts!)

From Chapter Six onwards we start to get to know Alex and from this point I was hooked. The following chapters are more or less chronologically arranged. Alex was fortunate to go to Leeds University at the time when there was a large group of very talented and fun-loving climbers in the University Club. Would his climbing have developed in the same direction if he had gone to Cambridge? Alex wasn't 'a natural' but he was both committed and determined and his climbing, both in the UK and The Alps blossomed during his time at Leeds; the author catches perfectly the essence of these times. I was pleased that Cold Comfort, Alex's fine account of the first ascent of the Colton-MacIntyre route on the Grandes Jorasses (first published in Mountain

magazine), is the meat of Chapter Eleven; with this ascent he (and Nick Colton) had succeeded on a 'last great problem' that had defeated many other teams. They had arrived.

Alex's effective leadership of The BMC in the late 1970's showed another side of his character, as an effective advocate and diplomat helping to steer the organisation through some stormy waters, including the debates about 'certification' and the role of adventure in education.

I was surprised to learn that he also had a talent for designing lightweight equipment for his adventures including clothes, rucksacks and bivi bags/tents and that they were realised by major firms such as Karrimor, Troll and Rohan.

After Chapter Eleven the main focus is on the incredible routes that Alex climbed in the greater ranges. Normally run on shoestring budgets, these expeditions tackled increasingly difficult and committing objectives. Woven into the factual accounts of 'daring do' there are other, and to me, more interesting stories; the evolution of his zen like philosophy of alpinism with its emphasis on the process rather than getting to the top; his changing relationships with his friends, including Porter and, finally, the increasing conflict in his own mind between his

desire/need to climb high and bold and his strengthening bond with his partner Sarah. At times this is hard to read as it is both intense and emotional. He knew he was sticking his neck out on every trip, there was no room for error yet he continued, obsessed. I was left wondering about his state of mind on his last expedition, his relationship with Porter was shattered and he was very troubled. Most of us would have taken heed of our concerns and gone home, but we aren't driven to pioneer mega routes in the high mountains. It was almost inevitable that Alex would die young; he will always be remembered as the intense young man with a shock of dark curly hair.

These few words may be appropriate to the memory of Alex MacIntyre and all the others of the 'fast and light' revolution who died pursuing their dreams.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

(From *The Fallen* by R L Binyon)

Trevor Langhorne

The Tour of the Bernina

Author: Gillian Price

Publisher: Cicerone

ISBN: 9781852847524

Many readers of this Journal will be mountaineers for whom the Alps mean high peaks of rock and ice. However, many of you will know that the Alps are also magnificent walking country, and this guide book is heartily recommended. If you have never been on this sort of expedition it would be an excellent introduction. If you have been, well

these routes look very enjoyable.

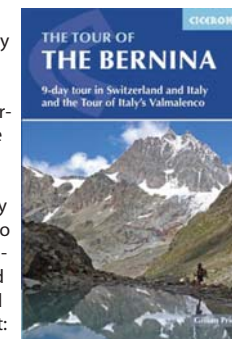
There are two different circuits described in the mountains south of St Moritz. One is a nine-day round of Piz Bernina, that crosses into Italy for its southern section. The other is entirely in Italy. Its northern stages overlap with the southern stages of the Bernina circuits. The great mountain adjacent to the second tour is Monte Disgrazia. Most of the routes are Grade 2 – that is to say straightforward, if a bit strenuous, hill walking. Occasionally there is a Grade 3 section. Whether or not you wish to use them, or to take the alternatives that are almost always available, is up to you and hard to judge. Gillian Price does her best, but interpreting expressions such as 'Watch your step and your balance as you clamber over rough rocks' or 'a precarious scramble' or 'precipitous descent on mobile rocky terrain' is very much a matter of personal choice. The kit-list includes microspikes.

The Piz Bernina tour is a complete round. Pontresina is suggested as the start, though you can of course join anywhere. It is 119km and goes up to 3002m at its highest. A walk of nine days is laid out, though the very fit could choose to do it in six. The second tour, near Monte Disgrazia, goes through the Valmalenco region and is set out as an eight-day trek, though again it is explained how it could be done in six days. This tour is not a complete circuit, so you will have to work out how to join up start and finish. Information about trains and buses is included. Note that of this second tour Gillian Price says it "requires a decent level of fitness along with some experience of alpine environments". Both routes make use of various refuges (huts) along the way. Appendix B lists them all, with web-sites and phone numbers.

The actual guiding seems to be very precise; short of walking out the routes I cannot guarantee that there are no confusing moments, but the instructions are very clear about where to fork left, which turnings not to take and so on. I was pleased to read at one point:

'Don't take the apparent short cut... It is nothing of the sort.' I have been caught out like that in the Alps. The distances are greater, the slopes steeper and the ground rougher than one may be used to in Britain. Where a variation is added, either to avoid a Grade 3 section or to add some recommended extra, it is clearly set out. Where the same ground is covered twice in the book (the overlapping section of the two tours, for example) the text is repeated in full. This will undoubtedly be much better than 'turn back to page 51' or whatever.

The Cicerone guides have a high reputation, and Gillian Price is an experienced writer for them. This is her tenth. It seems to me to be just what you need, and all with waterproof covers, small enough for a pocket. It is full of attractive photos too, and snippets of historical and local detail. The first section of the book is a substantial introduction to Alpine walking, which is thoroughly practical and worth reading with care. As well as interesting sections about geology and natural history there is a good kit list, a section on 'Procedure for Refuges' and a well-thought out list of Dos and Don'ts.



Three points caught my eye and awakened my memories. One is that it is best to book the Refuges, and be sure to ring up if you cannot fulfil a booking – otherwise a search may be set in motion. Joining the British section of the Austrian Alpine Club is suggested as a way to get discounts. The second is that afternoons in the Alps often see thunder storms and torrential rain. This rarely figures in tourist photographs, but start early and finish dry. The third is to take a good map and compass. You have a guide book and the paths are mostly well way-marked. But I have twice encountered summer snow that made the marks and paths invisible. On those occasions we were very glad of our Lake District expectation of map-work; indeed we once led some others whom we encountered off the hill. These two routes are both covered by the Kompass 1:50,000 Sheet 93. The relevant 1:25,000 sheets are listed in the book.

This book is first class of its sort. It should inspire folk to go. And then, when they do, it should see that they have a safe and enjoyable time. If you are visiting the area it can, of course, be used for all sorts of shorter trips than the full routes.

THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

Author: James Rebanks

Publisher: Allen Lane

ISBN: 9780141979366

I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to know what is really happening in the fields and fells of The Lake District. At the same time as describing this James Rebanks chronicles his progress from 'some kind of dysfunctional

genius that deserves a second chance' (his words) to an Oxford graduate, sheep Inspector and adviser to UNESCO on tourism's benefits to host communities.

Rebanks was classified as a non-achiever at secondary where country lads were advised not to take up farming as a profession. But all he wanted to do was to work on his father's farm in Mitterdale, often alongside his beloved grandfather. However disagreements with his father drove him to a second life upstairs with his books, and winning prizes at quizzes told him he had a brain; make use of it. From no O-levels he acquired A-levels, a place in Oxford, and so on.

Rebanks admits that now, when income hasn't increased for twenty years, no decent living can be made from solely fell sheep farming, but is made possible when members of the family find other ways of making money, which can include tourism or working on other farms. In some ways tourism is a necessary evil and only after a spell in a London office did Rebanks start to understand why people escaped to the Lakes. Although he felt that fell farmers were 'tuned to a different channel' to tourists, he acknowledged that Wordsworth understood this and that visitors to the Lakes had a responsibility to understand this too. Beatrix Potter, as farmer Mrs Heelas, was also greatly respected, and became an acknowledged expert on Herdwick sheep.

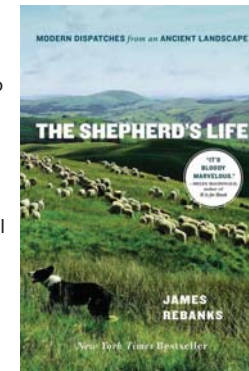
A lot of the book refers to the necessity, for successful fell farming, to maintain a steady build-up of the flock over the years. Like Mrs Heelas, he kept mainly Herdwick sheep plus some Swaledale crosses. These tough sheep are perfect for Lakeland conditions and do extra well if sold on to lowland farms. One of the most important jobs is deciding which tup, or ram, should serve which ewe, depending on whether any lambs should be

sold on or retained in the flock. Ewes are a farmer's core asset while tups do the improving. Rebanks's best tup sold for 5,500 guineas. He describes the importance of local marts, hill farming being a communal affair, and any dishonesty would be remembered.

There is a hilarious description of a half-day barter with a neighbour for her flock; and she would only sell to Rebanks because he was a good stockman and he knew her stock was first class.

Most of the book is divided into four overlapping seasons. Summer is for hay-making on lower land for extra feeding in bad winters. Autumn is sales time, most of the income coming in between September and November. Winter can last for eight months with little spring or autumn, the most testing time being from New Year to March. This is when summer hay is used. Spring is lambing time, and Rebanks describes himself as having 'a series of egg-timers in my brain for a number of ewes about the farm at different stages of giving birth'. Lower fields are used for ewes and lambs, especially if they have had twins or triplets. Shows take place in May, and no sheep is likely to be shown when not in star condition; shepherds have a lot of pride.

As well as seasonal work, other un-newsworthy jobs include wall mending, hedge layering, hanging gates, clearing gutters, chopping logs,



treating lame stock, worming, trimming feet and foot baths, blow-fly prevention, moving stock between fields and dog care. There are descriptions of dog training and the importance of their work. One farmer sent his dog out to 'gather the fells' while sitting at his kitchen table, but that was exceptional.

There is almost a shepherd's language: raddles, mew of hay, yows, sieves, outgangs, dags, lockings; the difference between draft and stock ewes and between intakes and allotments; shedding gate, cleggs, smit marks, peat hags, mule hogs and stints. Words you almost know the meaning of but not quite.

Outside events effect fell farming: foot and mouth wiped out 60 years of careful breeding in a few hours. There was Chernobyl; times of war when food production was increased. He and G.Henderson, in 'The Farming Ladder', tell of the particular traditionalism of sheep farming. After the clearance of trees and boulders, drainage and boundary marking in the 12th and 13th centuries, sheep farming barely changed since Viking times, and some families farmed the same land for generations, never mind centuries. There is little class distinction in the fell farming world. Mrs Heelas had an annual argument over wages with her shepherd, and he always won.

Love of his work shines through Rebanks's book. He could sit with his back to a tree trunk and loved the view. His favourite job was walking flocks up to the fells after a spell in the lower fields and the feeling of freedom it gave him. Some of his language borders on the poetical: 'a little orchestra of whistle and chatter from the starlings'.

If there were any faults my own preference would be for an Index, perhaps a glossary, a season chapter heading for each page, and more

on his work for UNESCO, but perhaps a second book is on the cards.

We owe farmers like Rebanks a debt of gratitude for keeping fell farming going and not allowing the landscape to be shaped by industrial scale and cheap food production, but sticking to traditional family fell farming. I look forward to my next visit to the Lakes when I should know a little more of what is going on in the fields and fells.

Anne Hartley

FAST AND FREE PETER LIVESEY

Stories of a rock climbing legend
Compiled by John Sheard and Mark Radtke
Publisher: 2QT Limited
ISBN: 9781910077016

At last the long awaited biography of one of Britain's best and most controversial climbers hits the street, to say I wanted a copy was an understatement. Except this solid book, all 330 pages of it, isn't a biography. It's a rich compilation of various stories written by Livesey himself mixed with memories from a multitude of contributors all singing the praises of Livesey. Many of these stories I remember from my youth; 'Travels with a Donkey' and 'I Feel Rock' are light-hearted classics in their own right, and few under the age of 45 will have read these before. It's a great way of capturing the magic, the emotions, the changes and the challenges of the 'seventies because that was a great time to be a climber. This book shows the good side of Livesey in a high quality manner, there were aspects of his life that I wasn't aware of such as his caving, kayak-

ing, orienteering and fell running, all sports in which he excelled. This bit all comes together in a rollicking good read.

I was particularly interested in finding out the truth about Livesey's shadier activities; to read about the bad boy of British climbing. I had heard so many tales of Livesey over the years – I wanted to read about the chipped holds on Athanor and Nagasaki Grooves, the mystery of the unchalked crux of Blitzkreig, the false claims of free ascents of Lost Horizons and The Cumbrian, and what exactly did 'self belay' on Nagasaki Grooves and Dry Grasp entail; away from the eyes of witnesses? The answer is a big fat zero. They aren't even hinted at, it's all completely ignored. In this respect, this book is a huge disappointment, a whitewashed version of history in which the bad boy has emerged a shining knight on a Pale Horse.

There is a chapter of Livesey's climbs in Cumbrian by Ian Cooksey, but there's no hint of controversy, no indications of malpractice and little acknowledge of the antagonism between him and the FRCC which livened up those years. Rob Matheson told Mark Radtke that Livesey was a 'consummate liar', but Radtke altered this to say a 'consummate professional', which shows how the truth seems to have been cleansed in a style



preferred by the North Koreans. I finished this book with a heavy heart, deeply dissatisfied and with no desire to read it again. It seems a perfect example of how to miss your target.

Al Phizacklea

FIVA

Author : Gordon Stainforth
Publisher: Golden Arrow Books
ISBN 978-0957054301

I first saw this thin, flimsy book at a friend's house. I'd never heard of it before, I didn't even know how to pronounce the title. (It rhymes with fever). 'Borrow it' said Andrew, 'Apart from Touching the Void it's one of the best books about an epic you'll ever read.' I was immediately intrigued.

The story is about the Stainforth twins, Gordon and John, who at 19 had decided to climb the Fiva Route which flanks the mighty Troll Wall in Norway as a prelude to greater ambitions. To say that this turned into an epic is an understatement.

Gordon Stainforth is better known for his coffee-table masterpiece 'Eyes to the Hills'. His ability to recall this story in a minute by minute account over 40 years later and to set this down on paper in such a way as to draw the reader into



his thoughts, fears and anxieties is sublime. When I was reading the early part of the book I had to force myself to put the book down because it was 12.30 am and I knew once I got to the incident I wouldn't be able to stop reading. Even so I couldn't sleep – I was hooked. I finished it in a single six hour stint the following day, it's a brilliant read, and one of those rare books that grabs the reader by the heart and soul and barrels you along this amazing adventure. If you ever see a copy, get it and I promise you'll be as gripped as I was.

Al Phizacklea

All But One

One woman's quest to climb the 52 highest mountains in the Alps
Author: Barbara Swindin
Publisher: Vertebrate
ISBN: 0884233616920

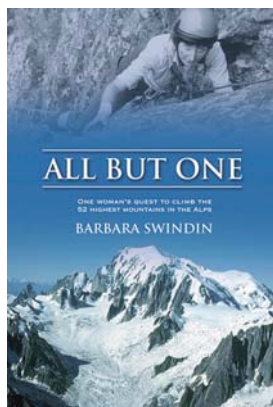
This book details Barbara's magnificent achievement of climbing all but one of the Alpine four thousanders. Not only does it deal in detail about the long days out, but it also deals with her development as a climber and mountaineer. A significant feature of the book is her honesty. Barbara tells it as it is and for anyone who climbs there will be many points in the book where he or she says 'I've been there'.

When I reached the section about the second attempt on the Aiguille Blanche I was struck by the number of incidents that can happen on a climb that will be remembered by those involved forever. At the Eccles Bivouac Hut, when Barbara needed the loo, she set up a belay because the

hut position was so precarious. News was also obtained that eight climbers had just been killed a few miles away on the Grandes Jorasses in a serac fall. The other etched memory would be fighting a way off the mountain with the ever present danger of avalanche.

That passage really sums up the problems with Alpinism; it's hard, unforgiving and more often than not, uncomfortable. But here is Barbara on a second attempt on peak 52 of 52 still trying and for the second time getting close to the line between life and death. Brave? Most certainly. Pointless? Absolutely. Life affirming? This is the point that all members of the FRCC will understand and have a decided view. Barbara is an extraordinary person. I can say that without worrying about misrepresentation or over-emphasis. How many people in Britain have done 51.5 of the Alpine four thousanders? If further proof is needed, just think on this: she kept up with Peter Fleming. How extraordinary is that?

John Holden



4000 m: Climbing the Highest Mountains of the Alps,

Author: Dave Wynne-Jones,

Publisher: Whittles , 2016

ISBN: 9781849951722

Dave Wynne-Jones is to be congratulated on bringing out such a stunning book as 4,000 m: Climbing the Highest Mountains of the Alps. More than that, of course, he must be congratulated on his achievement of climbing all of the fifty two 4,000 metre peaks of the Alps. Dave has become only the eighteenth British climber to complete this feat.

Predictably perhaps, Dave's first 4,000m peak was Mont Blanc, climbed in the summer of 1981.

'Alarm bells rang hollowly in the base of my skull, where nerves were strung, wire-drawn taut. Snow crunched reassuringly under my crampons in strengthening dawn light, but I was unconsciously hanging back, and the rope tugged insistently at the waistband of my harness.'

Having successfully summited, Dave and his two companions began their descent over Mont Maudit, realising almost too late that they had chosen a crevasse filled slope. Instinct or premonition saved them. Thus do we learn from the outset that the ascent of these mountains is perilous in the extreme. The ascent of the Barre des Ecrins in 1983 via Pic Coolidge with Dave Hicks entailed a danger-fraught twenty four hour day, both climbers learning the hard way how ,

'Difficulties become compounded, building one upon the other towards an epic. I believe it's now termed 'incident creep'.

A lack of snow made the identification of the right couloir difficult, there was deep soft snow

where they had expected neve, precariously balanced rocks where there should have been an easy ridge, loose rocks just where they didn't want them. The descent was easier but long and both water and torch batteries had run out by the time they reached the Glacier de Bonne Pierre.

'As night fell we tottered on for hours by the light of the stars, our headtorches long expired, tortured by the sound of running water in the jumble of moraine debris beneath the ridge.'

The overall impression which Dave's book creates is of an amazing series of magnificent days on the Alps' highest mountains, illustrated by some quite stunning photographs, showing snow-clad peaks, soaring rocky ridges, set against incredible blue skies. The occasional shot shows climbers ascending through thick cloud, but one has to come to the conclusion that this was an unusual experience. The publication of '4,000m ...!' may indeed help to reverse the trend, noted by the author, of a decline in the number of bed-nights in Alpine huts. Why would you not want to climb here, once you have flicked through this book? Dave's experience descending the Matterhorn, an accident waiting to happen, because of the horrendous congestion and poorly equipped parties, only matches what one already knew. Apart from the objective danger of the mountain, only the over congestion at a few of the huts might deter the ambitious climber in following Dave's footsteps.

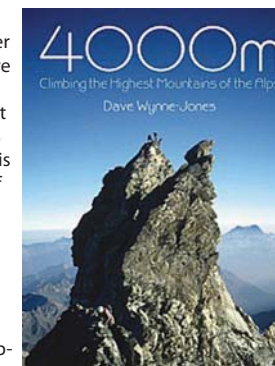
The narrative continues apace, chronological, focused almost exclusively on the ascent of the 4,000 metre peaks. Brief references to serious problems in Dave's domestic life and at work suggest a larger story looming in the background, but this is not an autobiography. Instead it is a celebration of a mountaineering challenge which clearly dominated the author's life for

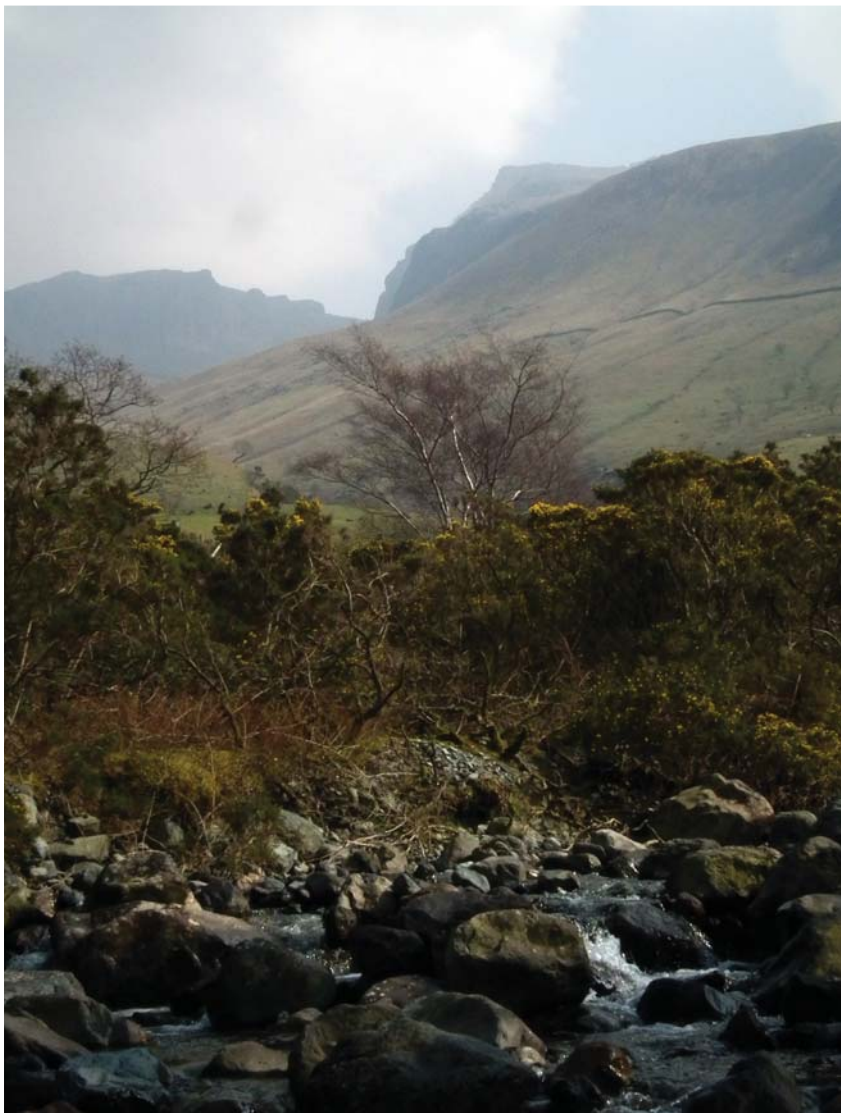
nearly twenty five years. Over that time, Dave climbed with many different partners; he is generous in his recognition of the part they played in his achievement.

The book also contains chapters on training, equipment, maps and navigation, guidebooks, guides, huts, Alpine weather and health issues around climbing at altitude. Also included is a chapter written for Dave by John Allen on the inevitable debate concerning lists of 4,000 metre peaks and the criteria used for defining them. Dave's list of fifty two peaks is based on Robin Collomb's, Mountains of the Alps, published in 1971.

Amongst the Appendices is a list of recommended reading. Included here is a book by another Fell and Rock member, also reviewed in this edition of the Journal, Barbara Swindin's, All But One. Fifty two mountains versus fifty one. How significant is that? Not very significant, would be my answer. And yet, I count mountains too, although none yet over 4,000 metres. I would highly recommend Dave's book. Now I want to read Barbara Swindin's.

Martin Cooper





Lingmell Beck.
Photo -John
Holden

In Memoriam

Doug Brill

Bill Bristow

Dorothy Buffey

Basil Butcher

Harold Drasdo

Eric Finch

Eric Furness

Tony Griffiths

Gillian Hall

Craig Harwood

Ken Heaton

Don Lee

Jim Loxham

Alan Maskery

Margaret Mitchell

Paul Roberts

Alan Scott

Alan Slater

John Shepherdson

Les Swindin

Ron Townsend

Roy Townsend

Doug Brill (1942 – 2015)

Doug was brought up near Halifax from where his love for the outdoors was born. Boundaries widened as did his love of pursuits; camping at Ogden, Halifax. Potholing in the Dales with the scouts and later the Bradford Potholing Club.

These early fascinations with the countryside were soon to be shared when he met Sylvia whilst Youth Hostelling. In the early 1960s they enjoyed their first holidays walking in the Dolomites and Czechoslovakia and next to Norway where they honeymooned. A passion for Scotland also started.

The death and subsequent search for a reservoir keeper in the winter of 1965/66 on Heptonstall Moor in Calderdale led to Doug playing a leading part in the foundation of the Calder Valley Moorland Rescue, along with Sylvia, a team that is still helping others today. (Doug extended his support to both Mountain Rescue and the Search and Rescue Dog Association). He attended searches for missing people on mountains and in urban situations including the Lockerbie air disaster of Christmas 1988.

When sons Simon and Guy arrived on the scene, Doug's enthusiasm for life and adventure was instilled into them from an early age. The family all became members of the FRCC.

Doug became an assistant warden at Salving House in 1997-2008. The warden Roy Buffey noted that 'I could not have had a better assistant than Doug who could turn his hand to anything and if not he knew someone who could! He was invaluable when we had both the hut 50th anniversary and the club centenary taking on the role of master of ceremonies.'

Doug acted as the FRCC representative on the BMC's Yorkshire and Humberside committee

(1992-95). In this role, he acted as a conduit between the BMC and FRCC concerning all matters affecting members in the region, also passing on to the BMC any relevant requests from the committee and brought back any information that would be of interest to the club. This was a



little-known activity and was mirrored by other members in most of the BMC areas.

The various FRCC 'ski gangs' were a source of much activity and Doug joined Richard Tolley and others to this end. In fact skiing was a constant source of pleasure up until 2014.

Doug's sense of public duty also took him into the Magistrates' Courts as a Justice of the Peace for 27 years of service. He was well known in the Calder Valley town halls for taking care of the mayoral regalia.

In his so-called retirement, he never relaxed his drive for travel and adventure with Sylvia. They were always on the go planning their next trip before they got home from the one they were on.

Together, they were a couple with a zest for adventure and not shy of hard work to get there.

So, there we have him. Doug – husband, father, grandfather, uncle, family man, magistrate, goldsmith, skier, climber, potholer, cyclist, adventurer, perfectionist, inspiration to many and friend to many more.

Brill Family

William Donald Bristow

Bill, as he was always known, was born on 20 December 1944 in Bridgend, South Wales with the family moving to Nottingham in 1955. He went to Forest Fields Grammar School where he excelled in a variety of sports, most notably cross country, athletics and rugby with involvement at both county and regional level. He decided to follow his father into the teaching profession, but not as a physics teacher but physical education. He trained at the renowned sporting Loughborough College before starting on his teaching career.

The University awarded him an honorary degree in 2009 for his services to youth development through sport in an administrative capacity for County athletics and rugby.

He joined the University of London Graduate Mountaineering Club, through the eligibility of his wife Carol, which is where Colin Grime, who proposed him for FRCC membership, and I met them. He was a regular attendee at meets and otherwise active in that club serving as Meets Secretary and assistant Hut Warden at Fallcliffe Cottage.

Within the UK he regularly visited Snowdonia, Scotland, the Peak District and of course the Lake District. For many years he led a school camp in

Tilberthwaite an experience for for kids from a mining area!

Bill joined the FRCC in 1990 and in the early days attended maintenance and other meets, in the company of Carol, being by then an active fell walker rather than a rock climber. More recently he and Carol regularly stayed in one or other of the FRCC huts in the Lakes often at Birkness for Easter and Beetham Cottage for New Year.

There were two conditions which blighted Bill in mid-life: Arthritis of his hips cruelly took away his physical prowess, not good for a PE teacher! But he often said with hip replacements the



arthritis was nothing compared to the Bi-Polar condition he was diagnosed with in the early 90's. The combined effects of both these conditions ensured Bill took early retirement in 1997 on medical grounds.

Notwithstanding his health issues he and Carol had four trekking trips in the Everest and Annapurna areas along with a round the world walking trip with the Ramblers Association.

Bill was a keen Mason and an active member of the Radcliffe-on-Trent Male Voice Choir.

In 2013 Bill was diagnosed with bowel cancer, which had spread to other parts of his body and in the subsequent 2 years underwent 2 major operations, plus 3 courses of chemo. In true Bill style he was tenacious in living life to the full in those last few years, often completing chemo in the morning and dashing to choir practice in the evening.

Bill died on 2nd December 2015 having made detailed plans for his funeral which was held at Southwell Minster with over 500 present. The order of service was headed 'Bill's Final Bash' with his choir playing a prominent part in the service and culminated later in the day with fireworks.

Michael Parkinson

Dorothy Buffey

(1936 -2014)

It was 1965. I had booked B&B in Aviemore for skiing when a friend at the Borough Engineer's office introduced me to his colleague, Dorothy, 'recruiting' me to give her a lift along with Dennis the chaperone. Conditions were excellent and we skied daily. Three years later we were married. Our courtship was centred around a continuum of skiing, hillwalking, camping, cycling and bird watching.

Dorothy loved everything outdoors. Trips to all parts of the United Kingdom were interspersed with others to Europe. Marriage meant a house and whilst I spent many evenings renovating, Dorothy studied for a City and Guilds Certificate in Cooking. That led to her working part-time at Keighley College as an outreach teacher. Dorothy then went to Huddersfield College obtaining a Teaching Certificate returning to Keighley College

on a full contract. It was natural for her to concentrate on her passion, Outdoor Pursuits and she delighted in the inter-action with students and being part of their development.

Our scope for adventure widened immensely when I joined the FRCC in 1991, Dorothy in 1992. Her infectious personality attracted many good friends within the club; something we truly treasured. More skiing followed with weekends on Great Dun Fell and whole weeks in Scotland along with winter walking. Dorothy climbed numerous Munros revelling in our back-packing trips through Scotland, wild camping, with a grand bivi on Beinn Tarsuinn. Equally notable were our hut-to-hut-tours in the Lake District. Quite memorable were our trips to France, Italy and Austria for more skiing and winter mountaineering. Dorothy particularly loved the independence of expeditions: the GR5 from Lake



Geneva to Ceillac and the hut-to-hut tours including Mont Blanc, l'Oisans, Queyras, Vanoise.

The seemingly perpetual bliss took a break when an ankle injury on Skye kept me out of action for three years. Undeterred by that Dorothy was happy and capable to undertake solo trips that led to becoming a Walk Leader in Austria and the Pyrenees. Her excellent French always got results; she also succeeded when others spoke neither French nor English.

In among the trips and working we managed to fit in ten years as Wardens [note the plural] of The Salving House from 1997. Only with Dorothy's contribution did we succeed in managing a cosy comfortable hut. I had the practical skills; Dorothy provided the essential organization, keeping everything running smoothly. Highlights were the celebration of the hut's 50th year in 2003 when Rosthwaite village hall was fully booked for the meal, followed in 2007 by the Club's Centenary, when we hosted a full hut for an outstanding weekend ably assisted by the Duxburys and the Brills.

Many of Dorothy's friends were unaware that she had inherited polycystic kidney disease that deteriorated over twenty years. Bravely she underwent dialysis until a kidney transplant became available. Although a good match giving us hope, it was short-lived with a steady decline towards kidney failure. She was then diagnosed with endometrial cancer that soon spread to lung, liver and bones.

With typical determination Dorothy attended the Club's Dinner weekend (her 25th) at Shap Wells in November 2014 and was touched by the number of friends that went to her room for a chat. Even though she was very feeble Dorothy, as always, dominated the conversations.

Six weeks later, at home, I watched her slip away peacefully. Dorothy's photograph in the hall reminds me daily of fifty wonderful years shared with a very special lady.

Roy Buffey

Basil Aubrey Butcher

CLIMBER, ARCHAEOLOGIST, ENGINEER
(1920 – 2016)

Basil Butcher died on the 3rd of February 2016. He was 95. His funeral was attended by friends and colleagues including the President and several FRCC members. The eulogies reflected a life well lived and loved, and his coffin was appropriately painted with snowy alpine meadows leading to mountain peaks and blue skies.

Born in Yorkshire, Basil moved as a boy to Newcastle when his father was appointed Station Master, and he was educated at the RGS. Basil trained as an engineer and by the outbreak of World War Two was at the Vickers Armstrong works on the Tyne. Exempt from military service, he had the opportunity to engage himself in climbing and mountaineering.

Basil helped form the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club in 1942. The Club's existence was short lived, as many members were called up for military service, however it reformed in 1945. Basil was amongst the Club's 29 founder members, and became Joint Secretary. He had access to a cottage close to Crag Lough; with this as a base and climbing with another FRCC member, Keith Gregory, many classic lines were pioneered there.

Working together, Basil and Keith also explored the Cheviots and stumbled upon the Henhole,



Basil Butcher - Simonside 1960

that great gash on the western flank of The Cheviot which harboured several great mountaineering lines. With transport lacking, weekend trips would be made by getting the bus to Wooler on Friday evening, hiking across the moors by torchlight and bivouacking in a barn in the College Valley. All the classic lines such as Cannon Hole Direct date from this period and were climbed in the style of the time, on sight and with little or no protection. In 1956 he was elected President of the NMC and throughout this period he contributed extensively to the production of the County's climbing guides.

In the post war years Basil travelled and climbed in the Alps, Tatras, Dolomites and Julian

Alps. He also climbed in the Lakes extensively during the golden period of the 1950s and 1960s when 'if you approached Gimmer and someone was on it then you were bound to know who it was ...'

Basil joined FRCC in 1956 and soon proved himself to be an active and involved member. He became warden of Beetham Cottage in 1975, a post he held successfully for 10 years and he was elected as Vice-President in 1985. In recent years his health deteriorated although he kept in touch with Club affairs and he did manage to attend the Club AGM and Dinner in 2014. He was delighted to receive an invitation to the Beetham 50th anniversary celebrations but unfortunately poor health prevented him from attending.

In the mid-80s he developed an interest in archaeology, became a member of the Northumberland Archaeology Group, conducted much survey work for Newcastle University, and was a regular contributor to the documentation of Northumberland's pre-history.

Basil had a lifelong interest in cars and liked to drive quite fast. It has been observed that Basil was 'probably quite unique in having owned an Aston Martin, a Daimler and several mobility scooters which were occasionally flipped....'

Basil was a proud grandfather of six including one current FRCC member.

Steve Blake

Reproduced by kind permission of Northumbrian Mountaineering Club, for which it was produced, with a small addition relating to FRCC by Maureen Linton.

Harold Drasdo

I was a first or second year schoolboy at my local school, waiting at the bus stop to go home. We all used the local trackless (trolley) bus, but these two used the red West Yorkshire bus; one with a rope slung round his neck, the other with a rucksack. Enquiries revealed that these two strange individuals were going climbing on Ogden Moors, a pastime wholly outside our experience back in 1945/46. Thus I first made the acquaintance of the Drasdo brothers.

Five or six years later, I was a hardened walker. Every weekend was devoted to ticking off the two thousanders in the Pennines. If I missed the last bus home to Thornton, I would often find myself sprinting across Bradford to catch the last bus to Allerton with this scruffy individual dressed in rags, with an old rucksack on his back. On the long walk home, along unlit country lanes, talking about the day's adventures to one another, I found out that he hitched up to the Lakes every weekend, to climb. He had only missed one weekend in fifty-two, and he worked on Saturday mornings!

Then fate intervened, in the shape of H.M Government, and I went off to Hong Kong, whilst he went to Alsager to become a teacher. It is strange looking back over this period to think he had just hitched back after making the first ascent of North Crag Eliminate, one of the great landmark climbs of the Lake District.

On leaving the army, I took up climbing instead of walking, and one day when soloing at Ilkley, we met up again. It was the summer of 1955, when the sun seemed to shine forever. We stayed late, chatting on top of the rocky valley crags, and I offered him a lift home in my van. It was the magic word, transport, and before I knew it, we

were off to Derbyshire, to the world of Joe Brown. It was a successful foray, and Harold, bursting with enthusiasm, insisted that the Lakes was the place to be. I was entirely at Harold's mercy. I had no guidebooks to the Lakes, and he had had to sell all his gear, including his guidebooks, to finish his course. We had to rely on Harold's memory! In a conversation with Dolphin two or three years ago, Arthur had mentioned that he would value a second opinion on his Bowfell routes. So, the day was settled, Bowfell it was. The gear was being sorted at the bottom, and a pathetic little pile it was. But the rope! It was a three strand rope, with one strand completely cut through. I didn't fancy seconding on it, let alone leading. 'It held Joe Brown when he fell on it, and it'll hold you'. Harold was airily dismissive, and so it proved. The rope was not tested, and at the end of the day we had collected our two routes, Rubicon Groove, and Siamese Chimney.

It was the last time I roped up with Harold, although we corresponded with one another, chiefly when he wanted one of his routes checked out. Harold went down to work at White Hall near Buxton, and I stayed in Thornton. I often thought of him, particularly when I was introducing that innocent-looking problem of his in White Ghyll: Rope Not.

I shall miss him, just knowing he is no longer there.

Allan Austin

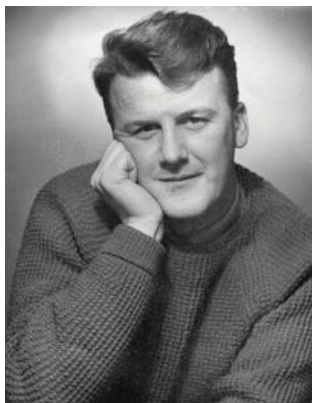
Eric Finch

(1932-2016)

My Father, Eric Finch, was born in Ulverston in 1932. After attending Ulverston Grammar School, he joined the FRCC in 1954, whilst he was working as an engineer / draughtsman at Vickers Armstrong. He climbed regularly with a group of friends known collectively and affectionately as 'The Barrow Boys'. They would load up their motor bikes, vans and cars after work on a Friday and drive up to one of the Fell and Rock's huts for the week-end. They also travelled to Scotland in the winter with tents and equipment for skiing week-ends. Eric and his friends were eventually separated by the requirement for national service, and Eric joined the merchant navy for three years, sailing to the Far East and North America.

Eric first met my mother, Barbara, on Bergen railway station in 1956. They had each travelled to Norway with their respective friends for a skiing holiday. After the holiday, they returned home and were married in 1957. My mother was a member of the Carlisle Climbing Club and they both shared a love of the fells.

My father acted as Assistant Warden at the Salving House from 1959 to 1961. In that final year I was born, followed a couple of years later by my sister Tessa and then my brother Giles. My father's work as an engineer and company director took the family to Scotland, Surrey, Oxfordshire, Lancashire, Cambridgeshire and Rutland. However, as soon as we children could walk, we all spent regular, very happy holidays staying in the cottages at Birkness and Langdale, and walked and climbed all the surrounding peaks many times. Many years later, my parents introduced their grandchildren, Sam and Amelie,



to the Bunk House at Birkness, and the joys of Buttermere.

During one of these holidays, we met Ruth Gelber and Herby Sixsmith (both FRCC members who visited the Lakes frequently); they became very dear family friends. When my father was working in London, he and I would often go to the Fell and Rock London Section lectures held at Eaton Square. He and my mother were regular attendees at the Club's Annual General Meetings at Shap Wells.

In 2010, after Eric's retirement, he and Barbara moved back to the Lakes to live just a few minutes' walk from their son Giles' home in Shap. Eric had been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease when he was 60, and by this time he was extremely frail and struggled to walk any distance. Nevertheless, he enjoyed a short family holiday in Borrowdale in 2012, and took great delight in being able to see the beautiful views of the fells regularly again.

Eric died in December 2013 and he is missed greatly by all his family. He instilled in us all a real love of the fells, and we are fortunate to have so many very happy memories of our family holidays in the Fell and Rock's cottages and huts.

Sara Hunton with thanks also to Audrey Chesover

Eric Furness

(1913 – 2015)

Eric died aged 102 at his home in Kingussie in October 2015. Eric became an enthusiastic rock-climber before the war, climbing often with Lyna Pickering (nee Kellett, (FRCC Secretary 1948-58, Vice President 1959-61). Through Lyna he had a day out with H M Kelly. Eric was astonished to find himself leading Moss Ghyll Grooves and, 2 weeks later, proposed for FRCC membership.

This achievement came from an unlikely background: a London childhood and working six days a week as a bank clerk. He found outdoor life and skills through Scouts, stamina through cycling, the hills on CHA holidays and rock climbing at Harrisons Rocks.

On the day war was declared he enjoyed the Girdle Traverse on Sron na Ciche with Tom Stephenson (of Pennine Way fame).. During Army training he made a first ascent of Steric Slab on Cadair Idris. He spent two years as Adjutant for the 1st Battalion the Nigerian regiment, fighting in Burma. His navigation skills were invaluable in coordinating air drop supplies.

Postwar life meant marriage, completing two years of an Economics degree at LSE in four and a half months and a new career teaching at Glasgow College of Commerce. In time the college

became Strathclyde University and he became professor, and head of the Economics Department. The university released him to work in Ethiopia (more climbing and mistakenly camping on a hippopotamus trail), and, later, in Botswana and Jordan, advising on government finance. I recall idling with him above Loch Erich and he said, "Economics is not lots of mathematical formulae, it's really about how people behave".

The Scottish highlands was now his outdoors base, JMCS member, founder and driver for the college mountaineering club. He was an early self-taught Cairngorm skier - camp at Loch Morlich, walk up to Coire Cas, walk up, ski down, again, and again and return to Glasgow. He 'completed' the Munros in 1983 (Munroist 340), many climbed many times, enjoyed the Cuillin Ridge and its namesake in Rum, had met Rev. A. E. Robertson, the first Munroist, on the bench outside the Kinlochewe Inn.

Retiring to Kingussie led to another outdoors stage. Winter was mainly skiing, he gave up aged 90. Summer was walking with the Strathspey Mountain Club, their first honorary member. With their support he commemorated his 80th birthday by climbing eight munros in one day.

Eric and Enid's Kingussie home was a centre for their family and friends, and friendship was a vital part of Eric's life. Samuel Johnson, after his Scottish trek, wrote, 'The highest throne of human felicity is a tavern chair, his greatest delight the keeping and laughter of friends, his other art that of forming and nurturing friendships'. Eric was a first class disciple.

Such a long and active life provided the base for recollections: tents and bothies across the Highlands, nights in Tyndrum station, mountain rescues before helicopters, the safe descent at

night into Glencoe from the Aonach Eagach with frightened Indian undergraduates and a dog.

As a schoolboy I started climbing with Eric in 1947 from Bowderdale Farm under Yewbarrow. Many memories of hill and dale, crag and cornice, manilla to nylon rope, great improvements to ski bindings and crampons, gym shoes to Goretex, and safer climbing and a life-long friendship. As far as I was concerned his greatest feat was getting us down safely from Beinn Dearg near Ul-lapool in deep snow and whiteout conditions; I've been there in good weather and been dazzled by Eric's navigational skills; a great all round mountaineer.

Lyn Wilson

Tony Griffiths

Tony was one of a contingent of teachers at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle who joined the FRCC in the mid seventies. While initially members of the locally based Northumbrian Mountaineering Club they graduated naturally into participating in the Lakes. As such the club has benefited from their membership over a considerable number of years.

It was not long before he attained the ability to climb at VS grade, progressing beyond that eventually. Winter climbing ranks as possibly his high point of achievement, with climbs on Nevis, (Point Five) and Lochnagar (Eagle Ridge) detailed in his copious diaries.

In the Alps Tony spent several seasons in the Dauphine when the trend was to look for better weather for a short Alpine season. He climbed routes such as Pic N.de Cavales in one season and the following year the S. Face on the Aiguille de Midi by the fissure Madier.

I enjoyed many memorable days in the mountains with Tony, singling out a cloudless day soloing the Snowden Horseshoe under snow and ice. The following day Tony was gratified when I fell off an icefall on Clogyn y Grochan. He never allowed emotion to enter into days out on the hills but in later years an insight to his private diaries revealed the pleasure and satisfaction he got from climbing.

Always competitive, when the weather put a stop to climbing, he would enjoy a game of chess in the tent. These were accompanied by a bottle of his idiosyncratic tippie, Teachers, where on one infamous occasion we both simultaneously became aware that I had been in check for the last few moves!

Tony served for a number of years as Northumbrian Mountaineering Club President for which the club owes him a debt of gratitude. His stewardship during this time contributed to the robustness which the club enjoys currently. Tony was always an establishment person, reflected in his membership of climbing clubs. Beside his membership of the NMC, and FRCC he was persuaded by the late Derek Walker to join the CC. He served as a FRCC committee member and assisted the team who wrote the FRCC Eastern Crags guide. Many considered that he did all the hard work in checking the easier sections while the glory went to others.

On probably his most auspicious occasion Tony was in conversation with the Queen at Buckingham Palace during investiture with the M.B.E. H.M. remarked on his single handed salvation of the Royal Grammar School Combined Cadet Force from the axe of the establishment. Tony was Officer Commanding with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He never pulled rank on us other ranks.

One of the pleasures of visiting Tony during his long illness was leafing through his meticulously kept diaries and unearthing long forgotten climbing events recorded in detail.

Dave Roberts

Gillian M Laud, nee Hall

(1957-2015)

Like many FRCC members Gill's introduction to the Lake District and to the club began at a very early age, 3 years old in her case with a stay at Birkness cottage in 1960. The hidden valley of Buttermere, the lake and surrounding fells becoming a home away from home and a place of happy memories and comfort over the years. With parents Andrew and Dorothy and brother Trevor, visits to the other Club cottages and huts, Gill's experience of mountaineering grew as did her enjoyment and participation at meets in all the many and varied conditions that the Lake District has to offer. Gill was particularly proud of the Birkness windows that she specialised in cleaning regularly at maintenance meets. Gill became an associate member in 1976 and in spite of being more of a walker than a rock climber included an ascent of Pillar Rock in her list of tops ascended for her membership application.

Gill went to Manchester University and graduated in Pharmacology and Physiology, going on to receive her Masters in Physiology including working with the RAF to carry out research into pilot exhaustion. Following University Gill found her job taking her around England from Cheshire to Hampshire and even a spell in Philadelphia, USA. Her career was mainly in the pharmaceutical industry but she also worked for many years with the Human Tissue Authority and the Care Quality Commission.

The mountains always played a part in her life be it an ice/snow ascent of Scafell via Lords Rake



at an Easter meet from Brackenclose, the Pinnacle Ridge route on Sgurr nan Gillean and always a walk around Buttermere. While Mountain walking was always looked forward to, cattle grids were to be avoided if at all possible and as for rickety old suspension bridges, wading would be a preferred alternative.

In more recent years she committed her considerable skills and dedication to helping her late husband through his battle with cancer, bringing him to the Lakes for a last walk up her favourite fell – Catbells, in 2013. She also visited Buttermere in 2015 for what turned out to be her final visit before unexpectedly and suddenly passing away in June 2015.

Trevor Hall

Craig Harwood

(1961-2014)

On September 4th 2014 we lost an accomplished runner, climber and adventurer. Someone who had nurtured and inspired many and who was a classic example of giving back to the sports you love. Whilst climbing a route called Caravanserai at Compass Point in North Devon, Craig Harwood suffered a fatal leader fall. He was 53.

Where to begin to recall the life of a man who did so much with and for so many people? Craig loved the fells, crags and mountains with a passion that never wavered. He was a talented climber, mountaineer and fell runner and



achieved great things in all these pursuits. He had such enthusiasm and liked nothing better than a challenge – especially if it involved maps, route planning, kit and schedules, which it invariably did.

One of his greatest attributes was that he took as much joy, if not more, from helping others achieve their goals than in achieving his own. I was often the recipient of his encouragement and

support – he was my biggest fan. Following my running-ending injury Craig threw himself into our newly discovered cycling exploits. For us to do something together was so important to him. We were well matched except, as he often pointed out, his gravity (weight) assisted advantage going downhill!

There are numerous others in the climbing and running world who have been the recipient of Craig's wisdom, advice and persuasion and have been part of many adventures with him. I have been honoured to have shared these memories with some of his friends.... of routes taken and crags climbed both in the UK and abroad. Craig needed his regular fix of 'outside', feeling strongly about his work: life balance. He would say he was 'going out to play' and return some time later with his customary big grin to contemplate his next adventure. He became a family man when we got together and he embraced this with his customary enthusiasm. He introduced me and my girls to the 'climbing life' and we spent some beautifully eclectic times on the CC Family Meet down at the Count House in Cornwall.

Craig also gave back to the sports he loved. He was involved with both climbing and running clubs in various official capacities. He felt it was his duty to do his share to promote these organisations and improve facilities for their members.

In June 2015 a group of Craig's friends helped him to posthumously complete the Paddy Buckley Round in Snowdonia. He had completed the Bob Graham and Ramsay Rounds but the PB had eluded him. It was a fitting and moving way to celebrate his life – it definitely involved maps, route planning, kit and schedules. His ashes were carried in a relay, in some typical biblical welsh weather, with one of his friends, Tom Brunt, completing the whole round within 24 hours.

Craig would have approved. Craig had a life well lived and well loved. But it was over too soon; he hadn't finished yet and we had such plans and so many things still to do.

He was a good man and all those who knew or had met him will remember him with a smile.

Janet Hatton

(Prepared for the Climber's Club Journal and used with permission of the author and the CC, with first paragraph by Mark Hartell)

Ken Heaton

(1926-2014)

Ken died on June 17th, 2014, aged eighty eight. I first met Ken at Widdop Rocks in 1943. He showed great promise as a rock climber leading, without runners, the first ascent of Overhanging Crack on Hawkstones above Todmorden. Later when Alan Austin climbed it he considered Ken's first ascent was probably the hardest route on gritstone. Jim Birkett remarked when Ken embarked on Gimmer Crack "he was built for cracks"

Ken and I climbed together in the Lakes, Skye and the Alps. Ken joined the Fell and Rock in 1947. In the late 1940's Ken climbed with Arthur Dolphin checking routes for the 1950 Langdale Guide. It was this period which fired Ken's interest in the Neckband Crack which had not been developed since the first ascent of the Neckband, V.D. in 1924. In 1949 Ken led three new routes, the Gizzard, V.S., Nectar, M.V.S. and Route One V.S., paving the way for hard routes climbed later. That year he did the first ascent of Original Start to Do Not in White Ghyll, the first 5b pitch climbed in the Lakes since Linnell's 1932 ascent

of Bayonet Shaped Crack on Central Buttress Scafell.



After marrying Molly in the 1950's, Ken gave up rock climbing, favouring fell running at which he excelled. On June 24th 1961, Ken completed the record ascent of 51 Lakeland tops, eighty two miles and ascending thirty one thousand feet in twenty two and a half hours. Later with brother Alan he was trying to improve this when stopping for a drink his glasses were trodden on. Being short sighted Ken was unable to continue. Ken was a keen competitor at Ben Nevis, one year winning the veterans title, another being a member of the winning Clayton-le-Moors Harriers team. He organized the annual Thievelly Pike race.

Ken led a charmed life, having more close encounters with lethal situations than anyone else I know. The first was in 1947 during his only climbing holiday in the Alps. After an epic on the West Ridge on the Dent Blanche, involving a bivouac, Ken, Harry Ironfield and I embarked on the traverse of Monte Rosa, to the Breithorn. After a night at the Caban Regina Margherita on the Signalkuppe, we were traversing the Lyskamm. On the descent to the Felikjoch to avoid a steep ice slope we took an easy rock ridge on the left overlooking the Aosta valley, moving together. Luckily Harry and I were on a ledge when Ken coming down last came away with a large piece of rock falling into Italy. Neither Harry nor I were belayed and we were lucky to hold Ken. I tied off the ropes and descended to Ken who had fallen seventy feet, hanging unconscious upside down swinging in space below an overhang. His rucksack, ice axe and spectacles continued into Italy. We got Ken back onto the ridge bruised and shaken with a rope burn on his neck. The traverse was abandoned and we got off the mountain as quickly as possible, cutting steps down the ice slope to the Felikjoch, then down the Zwillingsgletscher, eventually to the Betemps Hut. The following day we descended to Zermatt, the end of Ken's holiday as he had lost his climbing gear, spectacles and money.

Other narrow escapes occurred throughout his life. Foraging for fire wood near his home he was trapped by a rolling log to be extricated by the fire brigade. Crossing the road in Burnley, he was hit by a car, and went over its roof landing on his feet unhurt. As an engineer at Lucas Aerospace he went to Copenhagen, where a plane fired up its engines blowing in the windows of the departure lounge, carrying Ken the length of the lounge. He was unhurt. Later in life on his scooter,

stopped at a traffic light, a car ran into him from behind, writing off his scooter and putting Ken in hospital with a broken leg. Ken had an eventful life, a remarkable climber, fell runner and father of two lovely daughters, Jane and Diane to whom we send our condolences.

John Wilkinson.

Donald Lee (1933-2014)

Don joined the club in 1968 and was an active, participating member until his final illness. Born in Manchester, he grew up in Wallasey where he attended Wallasey Grammar School and



subsequently became a bank employee where he worked in branches in the Liverpool area, in Cumbria and eventually in the Manchester area until his retirement.

But he was happiest when involved in something active or practical. He played rugby for New Brighton, was a very strong swimmer and during his national service in Germany learned

how to hurl a javelin. But his main love was the mountains and he used to drive off to North Wales on Friday night on his Vincent motor bike, returning early on Monday morning in time for work.

He was a competent and very safe climber and became a Mountaineering Instructor for the Mountaineering Association, the forerunner of the BMC. He was chosen to join an expedition to the Himalayas but was not allowed the time off work and was told to choose between being a banker or a mountaineer, a response which rankled with him for many years.

He loved to tinker with his beloved Vincent and later his cars and his meticulous practical skills revealed themselves when he converted two tiny terraced houses at Tintwistle, near Glossop, into a lovely country cottage.

We met on Boxing Day 1966 at the ODG where I was introduced to Don and his red Triumph Spitfire sports car. We made no arrangements to keep in touch but a few weeks later he contacted me by writing to my Education Offices with a forwarding letter in which he invited me to go to Skye at Easter. The lure of both the Cuillins and the Triumph Spitfire was too good to miss and I accepted. So began fifty years of friendship, companionship and support, leading to our eventual marriage.

Don was a kind, quiet, modest person who kept much to himself. He loved music and was a competent pianist, although he seldom played and he loved our many visits to Vienna where he enjoyed the culture and the peace of our friend's home in the Vienna Woods.

But his great love was for the outdoors, for warm sunshine, for the mountains and particularly for Corsica. His happiest memories were of following the GR20 before there was a series of

huts or any provision points en route, just carrying a small tent and frugal food for the whole trip. We both lost much weight. Later with a motor home he loved driving to the sunshine of southern France or the Pyrenees or across to Chamonix or Zermatt, taking it up some hair-raising roads.

Throughout his membership he devoted himself fully to the Club. He never sought the limelight but his quiet strength, support and loyalty were invaluable. On maintenance meets he would take a long time on a given job but the final result was always impeccable and he was always ready to give a friendly welcome to new members. In recent years he certainly slowed down and his ability to fall asleep at any moment was memorable. But he always maintained that he was only resting his eyes and could prove this by commenting on the conversations being carried on around him.

He was a man of integrity, kindness and high principles and, as many members have written, a true gentleman. The many messages of condolence and the splendid attendance at his funeral proved that he was held in high regard and he will be sadly missed.

Maureen Linton-Lee

Jim Loxham

Recollections of early climbing days with Jim Loxham

Jim Loxham didn't suffer fools, being one grade behind him, I frequently received his wisdom and advice, demonstrated when climbing Sidewalk, Dow Crag. Jim was becoming tetchy as I made my umpteenth attempt at the crux – a

stepping right onto a miniscule foothold then a precarious pull up to the stance. The cold and



frustration got to him and he gave the following encouragement- 'Just f***** stan' up on it.

But it was never a problem and something must have worked, as we climbed together for five years. I found a way of coping with Jim's unswerving self-belief, by vowing to myself that I would always follow him up any route. He was only stuck for words when I managed to lead a hard pitch, or once when I beat him in a fell race. He never forgave me for advising purchase of a Morris Marina Van – the worst vehicle ever said Jim. Working for British Leyland, it was my fault! Jim was never backward in giving praise. Once climbing a steep Derbyshire limestone route, he

commented I must be 'b***** strong, having hung on for so long trying to make a move.

I cannot remember the circumstances of teaming up together; it was probably 1968, connected with South Ribble Mountain Rescue Team. We lived in Leyland and I joined to meet outdoor types. The Team was viewed with scorn not having any mountains for rescues, but it was the spawning ground for climbing, caving, fell running and orienteering careers.

Jim liked to explore new areas. He would research routes in detail, but not accommodation. In Cheddar Gorge, failing to find a campsite, we camped in desperation half way up the gorge. No one bothered us and the following day we did a 400ft VS. We met some local climbers using a hut in Priddy where Jim persuaded them to allow us to stay.

We mainly climbed in the Lakes and Dales, winter in Anglesey. We always camped on the cliff tops at South Stack and on one trip, as I put up the tent, I heard an outburst of invective from nearby, with Jim hurling stones at a cat devouring the mince for our curry. Fortunately there was enough left.

One issue on Anglesey was that was it was 'dry' on Sunday. Once we infiltrated as residents at Trearddur Bay Hotel, but were asked to leave – neither looking nor smelling like residents. The solution was to drive to Betws y Coed, a long way, worth it at the time.

Our first outing at Gogarth was a memorable failure. We traversed the bottom of the cliff with the tide out, looking for the start of Pentathol. After a number of upward forays Jim declared the guide book was wrong and we should retreat. Unfortunately, the tide had turned with sea at the high water mark. Jim noted every sixth wave was a big one, setting off after such a wave would be

OK. This theory worked for him failing for me. I was lifted by a huge wave, soaked from chest downwards but managed to reach the path. I said 'at least I have some dry gear in the car'.

This was the wrong comment his response being, 'Back to the car? There's time for another route'. So we did Times Square, much harder with water squelching out of my EBs.

By the seventies Jim was fell running, and on one visit to Esk Buttress, with Roy Morris, Jim announced he was going to run over the Crinkles back to the Old DG. Jim had bought a pair of (ladies) hockey boots hoping the tread would provide good traction. We carried Jim's climbing gear, to Cockley Beck, then drove to Langdale. Waiting, we saw him hobbling up the road, his feet a mass of blisters learning that hockey boots weren't for the fells. The parentage of the designer of said boots was in doubt as we drove home.

The theme of rescuing days from total failure was often repeated, usually turning into an epic day. Usually we climbed on a Sunday, so Monday mornings at work weren't very productive. Then, as long as you made an appearance inability to function seemed to go unnoticed. One winter's day we set off from Glenridding for a snow and ice route. Bright and sunny, by Ruthwaite Cove there was no frost with snow like porridge. Plan B involved driving to Grasmere swapping winter kit for rock gear and walked to Deer Biold climbing Dunmail Cracks. One wet day in Coniston, Jim intent on doing a route suggested Intermediate Gully on Dow Crag. I had no idea of its reputation and suspect that Jim didn't either, but I went along. Jim was in his element thrutching up the slime ridden route, but for me it was one of the most physically exacting and precarious days of my life!

No day in the hills with Jim was ordinary, and there are more tales I could recount. Jim was a colourful character who impacted on many lives, not least mine. He pushed me into doing things which I thought I was incapable of and set me up for years of enjoyment and success in the mountains. Many enrich the world during their lifetime; this is certainly true of Jim. He will be sorely missed.

Tony Peacock

'Jim was the Guidebook writer for Gable and Pillar, 1991 and Eskdale and Duddon 2015. He died while he was completing a day of photography for this 2015 Guidebook,'

Alan Maskery

(1932-2014)

Alan lived his life without compromise. He was a very hard man in every aspect of his life, both in work and in play, tolerated by more people than understood him. The ones that did understand him, knowing that in truth his outward appearance did not engender affection, gained much by association. He and I climbed together from about 15 years old through all the great years, in Britain and the Alps.

To illustrate how good he was, Don Whillans asked him to do some climbing with him, after watching him do the left and right 'Unconquerable' on Stanage, consecutively. In those days these routes were of a very high standard. He winter climbed extensively in Scotland, rock climbed all over the country, especially in North Wales and on limestone and gritstone in Derbyshire. In 1960 he did early ascents of the North face of the Piz Badile and the North face of

the Kingspitze in the Alps, the latter with Pat Fearnough, also a Fell and Rock member.

A couple of anecdotal tales will suffice to illustrate his character. In my self-employed building periods, between jobs, Alan, who had his own building company, decided he would be my clerk of works. He appeared on site almost every day, to check me out.

I was building a brick garage at the time and Alan knew that I had completed the concrete wall footings the previous day. On arrival he went straight to the trench, unzipped and urinated onto the concrete. He declared that the footings were not level, indisputably so, for the noxious fluid was slowly heading towards the greenhouse. The second story relates to when he and I were to meet in Val Veney in Italy to climb on Mont Blanc. We had an arrangement of using post restante communications. A week later, no Alan, no letter, I moved on. He had thought that the good weather in Cornwall could not be missed and holidayed there. He was an enigma of epic proportions and took some understanding. I for one am glad that I did for I gained much.

In the early days he single handed built a mini market during the winter, complete with a flat above for his mother in law, with his then wife Freda, carrying bricks up onto the scaffolding, while he pursued daytime work. He was a driven and strong man.

Sometime after he and Freda divorced, he rang me and said that he had found the love of his life, Martha! She remained with him to the end.

He died aged 82 in St Luke's Hospice on the 28th of November 2014. He had survived a torn aorta and a serious infection, but succumbed to widespread cancer straight afterwards.

He leaves his partner Martha and his previous wife Freda, with whom he had a son and daughter, Kevin and Leah and his sisters and brothers. This is the way I saw Alan.

Ted Howard, a friend

Margaret Emilie (Peggy) Mitchell (nee Fogg)

Peggy was born in Southport on 23/3/1915 celebrating her 100th birthday during her final year, dying on 16th May 2015

She was close to her mother and her father, who had been a merchant selling cloth, and has a commemorative plaque at the Royal Exchange in Manchester

Her grandfather was a famous conductor and arranger in a brass band winning a rose bowl for conducting and arranging music at Bellevue. He composed some of the music for 'All Creatures Great and Small' and 'Brassed Off'. Once Peggy had a menu that the King had written on, stating what he would like to be played after dinner-music that her grandfather had arranged.

Peggy married as a young woman, later undertaking office work in Stockport, living in the Didsbury area and was an ambulance driver during World War 2.

Peggy was a free spirit who liked to do her own thing, climbing and skiing when this was rare.

She separated from her husband and attended Didsbury Teacher Training College, becoming head of the Art department, then deputy head in a school for pupils with special needs. Years later Peggy was approached by a man who it turned out was one of her former pupils. He praised her for the impact that she had had on his life and

how her teaching had shaped him, setting him on the right path with her patience and kindness. Surely a teacher could ask for no greater an accolade.

Peggy enjoyed time in the Hebrides, on one occasion travelling to Canna, she found a dog waiting to be picked up from the mainland, but no one had arrived. Taking a shine to this dog, the breeder agreed that she could take her home, naming her 'Canna'. Thus began her love for 'a man's best friend'. After Canna there was Suzie and border terrier, Dizzy, now being looked after by June, enjoying a different life with her 'gang' of big dogs. Peggy enjoyed visiting St Kilda, travelling there by helicopter and as well as learning about the earlier inhabitants, spent time putting puffins back into the sea, climbing treacherous rocks to do so. She also had a trip to Reykjavik.

Peggy was very talented at making beautiful contemporary jewellery, which led to her friendship with another Margaret and her husband James. The pair went on to attend Hollings College of Food and Fashion and went all over Manchester before taking their City and Guilds qualifications.

She was a member of the FRCC, RSPB, Royal Northern College of Music and contributed generously to the Dogs Trust and the Cinnamon Trust (The National Charity for the elderly, the terminally ill and their pets)

She felt very strongly about a number of issues and was actively involved with the Kinder Mass Trespass and supported the cause of Greenham Common. Preservation of the environment was very important to her. One of the issues about which she felt most strongly was cruelty to circus animals, attending a protest rally and writing to her local MP.

Peggy was vegetarian, but liked the best of everything, including fine whisky. As a lady of many talents she made her own wine, bread and was a skilled gardener.

Her flat was full of antiques, being an avid collector of almost anything. She made her own clothes, wearing a lot of tweed, buying the patterns from Fair Isle. Her stunning ground floor flat had a beautiful garden, which in recent years had been tended by Brian who also did odd jobs for her. James and Margaret did her shopping and visited her in hospital as did other friends and neighbours. She will be missed for her intelligence and phenomenal general knowledge, from opera to Greek mythology, always able to help complete crosswords. Very well read, Kipling and Shakespeare were among her favourites.

Margaret described Peggy as being a wonderful friend, excellent listener, always ready to engage in friendly debates about anything, especially books

She packed into her long life, enough to occupy three people. She will be deeply missed, fondly remembered and never forgotten

James Connolly

Paul Roberts (1923-2014)

Paul Roberts, died in May 2014. A Yorkshireman, he was born in Leeds in 1923, attended primary school in Headingley then Leeds Grammar School. Wartime evacuation disrupted his secondary education. After three institutions, he went to Leeds University Medical School. He joined the University mountaineering club and was rock climbing, locally and in the Lake District

with Arthur Dolphin, amongst others, although his FRCC application mentioned only 'V.Diff'.

National service followed in the navy at Devonport, which he enjoyed, taking up small boat sailing in the absence of local mountains. This was his pipe-smoking period!

Eager to expand his mountaineering expertise he attended a climbing school in the Dauphine, there meeting Phyllida Thornton. It was, in his own expression a 'coup de feu'. They married in 1952 and managed to combine adventurous mountaineering and skiing holidays, and medical careers, with three children.

Both Paul and Phyllida became consultant haematologists, in London hospitals. Paul at the West Middlesex, a fascinating institution for haematology as the high immigrant population round Heathrow introduced several novel haemoglobin mutations that drew Paul into scientific research collaborations.

During his busy medical years, Paul and Phyllida went to the Alps most summers, and skied in the spring and winter. A honeymoon highlight was a traverse of the Zinal Rothorn. The Valais was a favourite area for the couple, with ascents of the Weisshorn, Mount Blanc, the Matterhorn, Monte Rosa and others. In the Dolomites, they would take a 'family rope' with the three children along the via ferrata. Paul's greatest strength was ski-mountaineering, with ascents of Swiss 4,000m peaks (the Alphubel, Allalinhorn, Breithorn and others) and touring. In the 1970s and 1980s the Roberts moved further afield, trekking in Nepal, the Andes, Kilimanjaro and the Lenana peak of Mt. Kenya. Following tips from Margaret Darvall's Pinnacle Club expeditions they explored lesser-known areas of the Kulu and Lahoul, taking in minor summits.

Paul was a joiner of clubs. He was never very active in the Yorkshire Ramblers' or Climbers' Clubs, but participated in the London activities of the Alpine Club. The Eagle Ski Club complemented his main interest and he served as President. When I met him around 1981, he and Phyllida were active Friends of the FRCC London Section, leading Chilterns walks and attending evening lectures. In 1986, when Paul had retired and sought to renew his acquaintance with the Lake District, it seemed natural for him to join the Fell and Rock main club, his sister Margaret, already a member. He actively participated in the Scottish Hotel and Coniston meets being a regular at the Dinner weekend. His greatest contributions to Club life were his organization of trekking expeditions, with ascents of Mera Peak, Stok Kangri and an exciting trip to Bhutan. These introduced the superb services of Motup and Yangdu of Rimo Expeditions to the Club. Paul continued his association with the London Section and served a stint as chairman from 2000, with a reputation for 'pithy speeches at short notice'.

Paul's interests were not all mountaineering. He was a great lover of music, appreciated art exhibitions and joined a book group in retirement. He and Phyllida moved out of London to Buckinghamshire, finally settling in Jordans village. They were by then members of the Society of Friends and prominent in the Quaker community of Jordans. In his later years many FRCC friends strayed south to sample his generous hospitality, note the fussiness about the quality of the coffee, admire the paintings complementing his mountaineering interests and savour the humorous wide ranging conversations. It was good to know him.

Hatty Harris

I wish to thank Margaret Roberts, Paul's sister, and Anne Hartley of the London Section for their help with this obituary.

Alan Moffitt Scott

(1931-2016)

Born in 1931 the son of a farmer/butcher from High Bow Farm near Carlisle, Alan trained as a dentist in Newcastle. He did his National Service and after initial training was deployed to Egypt and the Sudan becoming Captain Scott, then eventually to Cyprus. Upon return he started working for the County NHS dental service in Workington and later in Penrith, which initially enabled him to walk and climb in the Lakes during the school holidays, though this privilege eventually came to an end for the dental staff. The great outdoors were always a passion.



In 1956 he met Jean whilst working in the same Health Department building in Carlisle, marrying at the end of 1957. Daughter Wendy arrived in 1959, to be followed by Sue in 1961.

Turning his attention to the Scottish Mountains he succeeded in scaling all of the Munros and all

but five a second time around, most done during the winter as the garden took priority in the summer.

Family holidays were often in the dormobile, from Scotland to Cornwall. The delights of foreign holidays on a budget, France, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, and Monaco to name a few, either in the dormobile or camping, with the tent already up on-site. He also managed trips abroad with friends and son-in-law Andy to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and canoeing down part of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon with his brother-in-law and walking solo through the Sierra Nevada.

I first met Alan in 1959 as a 14 year old attending my first Carlisle Mountaineering Club meet in Langdale, needing adult supervision for my first real day in the hills. A breath-taking hot summer's day involving Great Gully on Pavey Ark, the Pikes and a climb on Middlefell Buttress ensued. My dual interest of cycle racing then intervened, but we met again in 1974 (in his local pub), after which I embarked with him on the Munros, which he had already half completed. Naturally, this meant that my first few were the in the more remote areas, which resulted in my becoming completely hooked. We had many epics over the next 10 years, but in difficult conditions Alan was as solid as a rock, with an inner calm that I've never seen before or since.

As he got older he enjoyed walking holidays in Europe with Jean in places like Spain, France, Italy and Madeira and then took to cycling. On one occasion after cycling to Stranraer he found himself cold and wet, the ferry looked warm and inviting so he hopped on, phoning Wendy later to say he was now in Belfast.

When he couldn't manage the tops any longer he took great delight in hearing about the

exploits of son-in-law Andy and later grandson Jamie. He also gave Jamie his one-man-tent and watched him struggle to put it up telling him to always RTBI. Jamie only discovered later that meant 'Read the Bloody Instructions'. Alan's granddaughter Rachel says he taught her to travel without reservation, stop for the views and enjoy the nature around you, act like you know what you are doing, live a life worth living and you can never go wrong with a hat for the occasion.

Alan died on 18th March 2015, aged 83 after a short illness.

Mike Westmorland

Alan James Slater

(1939-2015)

Alan was born in Oldham, moving to Whitehaven in the 1930s with his parents and sister Doreen. The family loved going into the countryside, walking the lanes, picking the berries in the hedgerows and bleaberries on the fell side. Alan and Doreen looked up and decided that they wanted to get up onto the mountain tops.

Alan was educated at Whitehaven Grammar School leaving school to pursue a career in Industrial Chemistry with the Atomic Energy Authority at Windscale, where he met his future wife Zena, marrying in 1960. Later he worked at Albright and Wilson's Marchon Plant in Whitehaven, staying 35 years until retirement.

Initially Wainwrights were the target along with climbing some classic routes and camping with friends, Cinderdale Common a regular favourite. He later climbed in the Alps, having a narrow escape in a crevasse after travelling there in an Austin A35 with three friends.

He played the trombone in a jazz band called The Gloryland Jazz Band, making an appearance on local TV's 'Beat in the Borders'.

Family soon appeared with Simone, Natalie and John remembering a busy childhood with camping holidays, watching Whitehaven Rugby League, fell-walking and orienteering.

As family responsibilities relaxed he challenged himself to complete all the Wainwrights in a year, 1984, successfully finishing on a snowy Stone Arthur with a bottle of champagne, where the sliding downhill wasn't just down to the conditions underfoot!



He twice completed the Ramblers Association 'Four Three Thousanders' of Skiddaw, Scafell, Scafell Pike and Helvellyn, somewhat slower than Billy Bland!

For many years he and colleagues would aim for an early finish every Tuesday heading for the fells with the aim of maximising daylight with a walk and a pint. It was surprising what could be fitted in, the Fairfield Horseshoe about as far as you could drive from Whitehaven and finish before last orders.

He moved on to climb the Munro's, complaining that the Lakes had become too busy. He started with Ben Nevis on a family holiday in 1981

and although he did not complete, he did more than 200 despite two replacement hips. He accompanied John and John's wife Kate on their respective last Munro trips bringing him much satisfaction having been the instigator for John.

He joined the Fell and Rock Climbing Club in 1992 and enjoyed meeting a new group of like-minded individuals. This coincided with the club's acquisition of Waters Cottage, which soon became a regular weekend destination.

After retiring he discovered new and rediscovered old interests, enjoying family responsibilities of walking John's dog and helping Zena to look after their grandsons, Oliver and Tom. His love of playing the trombone was rekindled, joining Whitehaven Brass Band and later Cleator Moor Brass with guest appearances with other West Cumbrian bands.

He took an allotment with sister, Doreen, and son-in-law, James, continuing a family tradition of growing their own fruit and veg. He joined Whitehaven Probus. He trained and qualified as a National Park Voluntary Warden enjoying working parties in all weathers, conserving walls and footpaths for fellow outdoor enthusiasts. He was part of the Osprey Project taking long shifts protecting nesting sites, proudly following the youngster's progress.

When daughter Simone moved abroad he started travelling further afield. Alan and Zena had many wonderful holidays together visiting Simone in different locations including frequent visits to Australia and all over the world on land, sea and air including America, China and New Zealand. They cycled the C2C and throughout the Western Isles; they cruised the Med, the Baltic and across the Arctic Circle. The natural wonders were always Alan's favourites, in particular the Grand

Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands.

Alan died in West Cumberland Hospital in May 2015 after a four month battle with stomach cancer, maintaining his sense of humour to the end. The family spent many evenings during those four months remembering days in the hills and holidays together. He is sadly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Simone Slater, Natalie Burns and John Slater

Professor John Shepherdson

(1926-2015)

John Shep, as I knew him, was responsible for introducing me to the FRCC, but by that time he was retired and I knew little about his professional career, other than he had been Professor of Mathematics at Bristol. It was only at his memorial gathering that I learnt from his colleagues that this modest, unassuming, man had been a leading light in 20th century mathematical logic in the UK.

Graduating from Cambridge at 20, he narrowly lost out on a Fellowship at Trinity College, so instead became an Assistant Lecturer at Bristol in 1946. He stayed there until he retired in 1991, thus becoming the longest-ever serving member of the University's academic community and his service to the University was great.

He was much travelled as an academic and built up many contacts abroad. It is through his efforts that Bristol became an early centre for mathematical logic. His first work was in set theory and the results of Kurt Goedel, the century's pre-eminent logician in this field. Having explicated Goedel's methods in a series of

papers, he moved into another area of Goedel's fame, the incompleteness phenomena. During this study, he invented an alternative conception to Alan Turing's machine, now called the Shepherdson-Stugis Register machine, which was simpler to reason and to program. In general, his research was marked by deep thought over lengthy periods of time and writing papers that were later to be standard references. He would then move on to pastures new. He proposed and became a co-founder of the British Logic Colloquium and was also recognised for his work through a Fellowship of the British Academy.



John was a man of great kindness and modesty, the last person to push his opinions in seminars. His attitude was the opposite of dogmatic but his conversation was bright and entertaining, with a still-waters-running-deep reservoir of dry wit, which was of great amusement when it bubbled up.

His interests in life were his family, mathematics and outdoor pursuits. His family said he would

rather spend money on skiing than replacing a threadbare carpet!

He was a keen and competent mountaineer and was a member of Cambridge University Mountaineering Club. He went to the Alps with them, including a trip to Arolla, where his ascents included Petit Dent de Veisivi. He joined FRCC in 1946 but, because of his modesty, did not talk about his exploits. When he married Margaret (who pre-deceased him by 5 months), she had her arm in plaster as a result of a climbing mishap in Cheddar Gorge. Although he had been present when it happened, he claimed he was not responsible!

He was a member of our Bristol-based informal band which we call the "Moss Ghyll Society", whose members have all been initiated by climbing the said route. With them, he partook in expeditions to various parts of the British Isles and climbed in the Avon Gorge. However, mountaineering was not his only outdoor activity and he also enjoyed sailing, snorkelling, and skiing. In fact, he was still skiing well into his 80's.

He was very good at putting himself out to do things for other people and it is typical of him that he left his body for medical research. As he said, he did not like to waste anything!

Richard Ivens

Les Swindin

(1938 - 2015)

Les Swindin was born in the London area, moving to West Yorkshire at the outbreak of the Second World War. His formative years were influenced by his father, a professional goalkeeper for Arsenal in the 1930s, continuing after the war years in the Army. Around 1954 the family

moved to Peterborough, Les starting work in a chemical laboratory studying part-time at technical college, graduating in 1963 with an external degree from London University.

He played football and cricket and took an avid interest in jazz and folk music. Sport remained important to Les although after he discovered mountaineering, around 1963, he became mainly a spectator. In 1966 after studying for a PGCE in technical education, he became a chemistry lecturer at Gloucester Technical College for 30 years until retirement.

We met during his first year there, separately joining Gloucestershire Mountaineering Club within a month of each other. Our friendship and love of the mountains led us to marry in 1969 and over the next three decades we mountain climbed together most weekends and most of our holidays. Les had an athletic physique, ideal for fast walking and fell-running. In his 40s, he took up orienteering, winning national championships. With mountaineering friends he ran in many fell races and mountain marathons, the Lowe Alpine Mountain Marathon being his favourite. At 60 Les completed the Joss Naylor Challenge in 14 hours 30 minutes.

Les was introduced to climbing on the Isle of Skye in 1963, repeatedly returning there, traversing the Cuillin Ridge several times, including the Greater Traverse and the 'Greater Greater Traverse', encompassing Clach Glas, Blaven and the Dubhs Ridge returning to Glen Brittle in one continuous outing. Les climbed all the Munros, saving the last few to do with me in 2000, thus ensuring that we 'completed' together. Despite him being able to



Barbara, Les and Pete on summit of Monte Viso 1994

walk twice as fast as me, he patiently waited so that I could be with him on the summits.

Les was a traditionalist rock climber, enjoying mountain crags, especially in Snowdonia and the Lake District. It was always satisfying to climb with Les, as he instinctively climbed swiftly and competently up the routes he chose. We never queued and I rarely spent long at a belay point. He encouraged me (and others) to climb up to (though within) our limits, he himself climbing more serious and more technical routes with other friends of similar ability to his own. The social life of the mountaineering world was a joy to Les; he had a good sense of humour. He loved to talk of climbing, share his knowledge and encourage others.

His first Alpine climbing was at Zermatt in 1965. As a complete novice, he climbed the Rimpfischhorn, Zinalrothorn and Matterhorn. In 1970, he introduced me to the Alps, climbing together in France, Italy and Switzerland for 25 years until I stopped because of ill health. Climb-

ing all the 4000m peaks was one achievement, but he rarely climbed to a summit to tick a list. He chose routes for their merits, sometimes climbing a peak by two or more different ridges or faces. He was a natural leader, always climbing guideless. From 1980 he and I teamed up frequently with the late Pete Fleming. Pete and Les climbed the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey when, despite a sunny forecast, their outing turned into a three-day epic with 15cm of snowfall and prolonged thunder and lightning as they sat in an emergency bivouac on the south-east summit. It is testament to their skills that they escaped unharmed.

The number of Alpine routes that Les enjoyed is too large to count, but they feature in the Alpine Club guidebooks that he edited. During his later visits to the Alps, active climbing was gradually replaced by long walks and scrambles taking photographs to illustrate these guides. Les was determined to give other alpinists the best chance of finding the routes described.

Les also led approximately 20 ski tours in the Alps and I accompanied him on half of these. All benefitted from his understanding of snow conditions and ability to find a safe way through complicated terrain, whatever the weather. Probably the greatest ski tour for us was our 1981 traverse through the Bernese Oberland from the Grimsel Pass to Stechelberg near Lauterbrunnen, with 3 friends, in perfect weather, staying high for 10 days.

Sadly, Les's last decade was marred by Parkinson's disease; his activities prematurely curtailed despite his efforts to keep as fit as possible. Even at the end he could still walk faster than me, albeit only for a short distance. Les will be greatly missed by all his many friends, and especially by me. He was my loyal and loving husband as well

as my climbing partner and 'unofficial mountain guide'.

Barbara Swindin

Ron Townsend

The man behind the routes

Ron Townsend, founder member of the Peak Climbing Club and one of the foremost gritstone climbers in the post war era, has died. We thought he would live for ever, a view probably shared by Ron! He was a man full of joy and full of life.



When we look back at life we can only do so from our own view point and experience and I make no excuses for that. Others will have their own memories but they will no doubt be variations on a theme. I first met and climbed with Ron when Margaret and I were raw teenage members of the Peak. The first thing that was

obvious was that he was a brilliant natural climber. A club meet at the Roaches saw Ron float up unprotected routes while we struggled behind him. He would have been about fifty then and the senior person in the club but he was patient, encouraging and we thoroughly enjoyed his company.

Ron was great at encouraging people to climb. The list of Peak members and former members who Ron 'got started' is too long to list here but they all know who they are and will be for ever grateful for it. One of the great things about Ron was that he was always more interested in what you had been doing rather than what he had been doing, even though he would have been up to all sorts.

He was a botanist of immense knowledge. He knew the flowers of Derbyshire and the Alps like few others, a keen amateur geologist, a skilled photographer, an expert wood carver, the list seems to go on and on. But his skills and knowledge were not something to keep to himself. They were for sharing and any walk or climb with him would be punctuated by his observations; pointing out the delights of the world which the rest of us somehow walk and climb past.

Ron was a friend to many people because he loved people. He was never afraid of a physical approach, a hug, an arm round a shoulder were natural to him. He was a master at the lost climbing art of heckling. Being slow or trying to put runners in when there weren't any would always bring forth a 'witty' comment but delivered with a great sense of fun.

So we will miss him; not only the Peak but the Fell and Rock and all those who knew him, but we will not forget him. When we walk down Ravensdale or do Via Media or climb on Gable or sit in

Langdale he will be in our thoughts and there will be smiles on our faces.

John Skelton, May 2015

Roy Townsend

I first met Roy in 1968 when he was camping and climbing in Langdale, Freddie was also there



playing the banjo. At that time my base was in the Salutation in Ambleside. A couple of weeks later Roy arrived in the 'Sally' where he became part of the team.

In 1969 he went to Chamonix, following his love of the mountains, and completed the North Face of the Dru. In the 70s we started to climb together regularly in the Lakes and Wales. This included our attempt at Gormenghast, where I fell 40 feet from the second pitch; Roy held my fall

and suffered severe burns to his hands but saved my life. Our subsequent climbing trip to the Calanques two weeks later was inevitably limited.

We also tried the route The Niche but unfortunately Roy fell before the first protection, hit the ground and was rescued to Keswick Hospital, and then transferred to Carlisle for his back injury.

Keen on rugby, Roy played rugby league every winter in Wakefield until moving to Blackburn, where he changed to rugby union, becoming club captain.

In 1977 we spent two weeks in Scotland with a 'Hard Rock' tick list. Luckily we also had two weeks of sun. We also climbed lots of routes in the Lake District before becoming members of FRCC in 1978. That same year a large team of us went to the Verdon Gorge. On their first day Roy and Bobby attacked 'La Demande' and finished their epic ascent to be greeted by friends with water and illuminated by glow-worms in the gathering gloom.

In 1980 Roy had his first trip to the USA climbing in Yosemite. Later he spent many holidays in Colorado with his friend Freddie Snalam, rock and ice climbing.

A holiday sailing in Greece in 1986 was to be a new chapter in his life and he achieved a Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate of Competence in 1992 and amongst his numerous trips he sailed across the Atlantic.

After he stopped playing rugby he spent more time in the Lakes, snow and ice climbing and started skiing. In summer he continued playing cricket and became an accomplished mountain biker and keen cyclist.

Following his early retirement he began spending the winter months on the Costa Blanca, ideally suited for road biking.

In March 2002 a life changing event occurred. Whilst ice climbing at La Grave with his friend Freddie, they were swept away by an avalanche, the rope was severed and Freddie was killed. Roy survived but was rescued by helicopter and taken to Grenoble Hospital with chest and facial injuries. He didn't climb again. Playing less cricket, he took on the job of groundsman for the club and could give a very interesting talk on the 'Life of Moles'!

Roy was a perfectionist and wanted to do everything to the best of his ability.

In 2009 he was diagnosed with inoperable prostate cancer and was given 18 months – he lived for 6 years, continuing cycling and walking. In the Hospice, I said 'I'll see you on Tuesday'. His reply was 'I don't think you will, Mate'. We shook hands. He was right as always. Roy died March 3rd 2015.

Ian Dobson & Marje Smith

Officers of the Club 2015

President	Ron Kenyon		
Vice-Presidents	Paul Exley, Hatty Harris, Norman Haighton		
Secretary	Martyn Carr		
Treasurer	Bernie Bradbury		
Membership Secretary	Peter Simcock		
Joint Journal Editors	Martin Cooper and Andrew Paul		
Chronicler	Helen Elliot		
Guide Books Secretary	Richard Tolley		
Guide Books Editor*	Steve Scott		
Librarian	Peter Lucas		
Archivists	Ellie Dale-Sherwin and Chris Sherwin		
Oral Archivist*	Mark Scott		
Dinner Secretary	Margaret Skelton		
Meets Secretary	Brenda Fullard		
Website Editor	Philip Powell		
Compliance Officer	Graham Gill		
Huts Secretary	Keith Wright		
Hut Wardens:			
Beetham Cottage	Barbara Duxbury		
Birkness	Peter Haigh		
Brackenclose	Mike Carter		
Karn House	Graeme Ralph		
Raw Head	Alan Strachan		
Salving House	Phil Elliot		
Waters Cottage	Mark Gear		
Elective Members of Committee:			
Dale Bloomer	Sue Preston-Jones	Bill Hargreaves	Gail Craven
Joyce Evans	Humphrey Johnson	Nick Millward	Steve Lunt
James Hoyle	Chris Vernon	Jane Wainwright	John Pulford

*Not a member of the main committee.

Advisory Trustees John Barrett, David Miller and Stephen Porteus

Meets List 2015

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Meet Location</i>	<i>Meet Co-ordinator</i>
E	30/31 Dec	New Year's Eve - Rawhead	Brenda Fullard
	16/17 Jan	Waters	Chris Ottley
E	22/23 Jan	Joint FRCC/YMC Burns Night - Rawhead	Martin Tetley
	30/31 Jan	Beetham	Jim Gregson
CM	06/07 Feb	Committee meeting - Raw Head	Nick Millward
	12/13 Feb	Karn House	Eva Diran
W	15/19 Feb	Ben Nevis - CIC	John France
	20/22 Feb	Brackenclose	Stuart Thompson
T	27/28 Feb	Navigation Meet - Rawhead	Chris Vernon
W	28 Feb/3 Mar	Ben Nevis - CIC: 8 places	Jeff Breen
	06/07 Mar	Birkness	David Wilkinson
E	20/21 Mar	Music Meet - Rawhead	Ron & Ruth Chambers
	27/28 Mar	Salving House	Chris & Sue Wales
BH	03/05 April	Easter Meet - Brackenclose	Les Meer
W	04/18 April	French Easter Meet - Le Bregoux, Aubignan	
			David Miller
W	12/16 April	High Moss, Duddon - 20 places	Jane Wainwright
MM	17/18 April	Maintenance Meet - Beetham	Barbara Duxbury
	24/25 April	Young Persons'/ Members meet	
		Salving House	Dave Evans/ James Hoyle
FM	01/03 May	Family Meet- Rawhead	Gary Hill
T	01/02 May	Lake District 3000ft Tops - Salving House	Phil Elliot
CM	06/07 May	Committee meeting - Birkness	John Pulford
MM	15/16 May	Maintenance Meet - Birkness	Peter Haigh
T	15/16 May	Duddon and Eskdale guidebook meet	
		Brackenclose	John Holden
W	14/21 May	Scottish Hotel Meet - Highland Hotel	
		Strathpeffer	Hatty Harris & Fiona De Courcy
FM	22/24 May	Family Meet - Birkness	Caroline Hill
	29/30 May	MAM hut - Glan Dena (Snowdonia)	Andy Stratford
T	05/06 June	Borrowdale Guidebook Meeting	
		Salving House	Trevor Langhorne
W	06/12 June	Skye - Glen Brittle Hut	Phil Elliot
	12/13 June	Joint Pinnacle Club/ FRCC - Birkness	Trevor Langhorne

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Meet Location</i>	<i>Meet Co-ordinator</i>
M	12/13 June	Maintenance Meet - Karn House	Graeme Ralph
W	14/18 June	Glan Dena	Norman Clacher
	19/20 June	Introductory Meet - Rawhead	Peter Simcock
T	19/20 June	Gelogy Meet - Brackenclose	John Moore
	26/27 June	Coniston Meet and Dinner	The VPs
	03/04 July	Beetham	David Dixon
	03/11 July	BMC Youth Meet - Rawhead	James McHaffie/Ron Kenyon
	03/04 July	Joint FRCC/ KMC Meet - Birkness	Andy Stratford
MM	10/11 July	Maintenance Meet - Salving House	Phil Elliot
	18 July/8 Aug	Alpine Meet: Argentiere -Joint FRCC, Alpine Club, ABMSAC, CC, SMC, LSCC, Wayfarers & Yeovil MC	Keith Lambley
FM	31July/06 Aug	Family Meet - Brackenclose	Janet Ashworth
	01/08 Aug	Lundy	Steve Lunt
	14/15 Aug	Salving House	Peter McNulty
	28/29 August	Beetham Cottage 50th Anniversary	Barbara Duxbury
CM	04/05 Sept	Committee meeting - Birkness	Humphrey Johnson
MM	02/03 Sept	Maintenance Meet - Waters	Mark Gear
MM	09/10 Sept	Maintenance Meet - Rawhead	Alan Strachan
MM	23/24 Sept	Maintenance Meet - Brackenclose	Mike Carter
W	04-09 Oct	Joint FRCC/ YMC Coppermines Hut	
	09/10 Oct	Coniston	Jenny & Neville Hawkin
		Salving House	Mark Baron
M	16/17 Oct	Family Meet - Birkness	Gary Hill
	16/17 Oct	Rawhead	David Wilkinson
D	30/31 Oct	AGM, Shap Wells Hotel	The President
	11/12 Nov	Bonfire Meet - Brackenclose	Mark Scott
T	8 Nov	Remembrance Ceremony - Great Gable summit	
		Salving House	The President
	13/14 Nov	Committee meeting - Raw Head	Deirdre Collier
CM	25/26 Nov	Temperance Meet - Birkness	Dale Bloomer
	04/05 Dec	Beetham	Mark Wilkinson
	11/12 Dec	New Year's Eve - Rawhead	John Oaks
E	30/31 Dec		Christina Paul



Above: The President and Guests, Club Dinner 2015.

Right: The Walker family and Ben Hogan on Napes Needle, Brackenclose Family Meet, July/August 2015.
Photo - Janet Ashworth (Hogan)

Below: Steve Lunt climbing a snow gully on Crinkle Craggs at the Committee Weekend, February 2015.





Left: A happy band of Fell&Rockers enjoying Lakeland weather.
Photo - John Holden

Below Left: Gary Milner climbing Silver Lining HVS (5a) on Dihedral Slabs, Lundy, May 2015. Photo - John Spencer

Below: Tim Pollard on pitch 3 of The Curtain, CIC Meet, February 2015.
Photo - John France



Officers of the Club 2016

President	Ron Kenyon		
Vice-Presidents	Dale Bloomer, Norman Haighton , Richard Tolley		
Secretary	Martyn Carr		
Treasurer	John Pulford		
Membership Secretary	Peter Simcock		
Joint Journal Editors	Martin Cooper and Andrew Paul		
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Brackenclose	Mike Carter		
Karn House	Graeme Ralph		
Raw Head	Alan Strachan		
Salving House	Phil Elliot		
Waters Cottage	Mark Gear		
Elective Members of Committee:			
Joyce Evans	Ian Grace	Bill Hargreaves	James Hoyle
Steve Lunt	Angela Mellor	Sue Preston-Jones	Wendy Stirrup
Stuart Thompson	Chris Vernon	Jane Wainwright	Dave Wright

*Not a member of the main committee.

Advisory Trustees John Barrett, David Miller and Stephen Porteus

Meets List 2016

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Meet Location</i>	<i>Meet Co-ordinator</i>
	15/16 Jan	Waters	Chris Ottley
E	22/23 Jan	Joint FRCC/YMC Burns Night - Rawhead	Martin Tetley
	29/30 Jan	Beetham	Nick Harris
	05/06 Feb	Joint FRCC/ KMC - Waters	Andy Stratford
CM	05/06 Feb	Committee meeting - Raw Head	Sue Preston-Jones
	12/13 Feb	Beetham	Simon Jefferies
	19/20 Feb	Brackenclose	James Hoyle
T	26/27 Feb	Navigation Meet - Rawhead	Chris Vernon
W	28 Feb/3 Mar	Ben Nevis - CIC	Jeff Breen
	02/19 Mar	Morocco - Kasbah Tizourgane, Anti-Atlas	Mark Gear
	04/05 Mar	Karn House	Jim Lothian
E	11/12 Mar	Music Meet - Rawhead	Ron & Ruth Chambers
	18/19 Mar	Birkness	Sue Fox & Trevor Brewster
	25/27 Mar	Easter meet - Brackenclose	Les Meer
W	2/16 April	French Easter Meet - Camping Gervanne at Mirabel-et-Blacons, Drome	Rob & Christine Smitton
W	10/14 April	High Moss, Duddon	Jane Wainwright
MM	15/16 April	Maintenance Meet - Beetham	Humphrey Johnson
	22/23 April	Salving House	Sue & Chris Wales
FM	29/30 April	Family Meet- Rawhead	Denise Andrews
T	29/30 April	Old County Tops - Salving House	Ian Charters
CM	06/07 May	Committee meeting - Birkness	Brenda Fullard
MM	13/14 May	Maintenance Meet - Birkness	Peter Haigh
W	14/21 May	Scottish Hotel Meet - Kinloch Hotel, Blackwater Foot, Arran	Andrew Hall & Anne Hartley
W	14/20 May	Skye - Glen Brittle Hut	Phil Elliot
W	21/28 May	Mingulay	Ron Kenyon
FM	27/30 May	Family Meet - Birkness	Carrie Hill
MM	10/11 June	Maintenance Meet - Karn House	Graeme Ralph
T	10/11 June	Joint FRCC/Climbers' Club - Rawhead	Alan Strachan
W	13/16 June	Glan Dena (MAM) hut	Norman Clacher
	17/18 June	Introductory Meet - Rawhead	Peter Simcock
D	24/25 June	Coniston Meet and Dinner	The VPs
T	01/02 July	BMC Youth Meet - Rawhead	Ron Kenyon

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Meet Location</i>	<i>Meet Co-ordinator</i>
MM	01/02 July	Maintenance Meet - Salving House	Phil Elliot
	08/09 July	Joint FRCC/KMC Welsh 3's 2 day circuit - Glan Dena (MAM) hut	Andy Stratford
T	08/09 July	Geology Meet: Langdon Beck, Teesdale -	John Moore/Dale Bloomer
	15/16 July	Young Person/Young Members Meet - Salving House	Dave Evans & James Hoyle
	16 July/6 Aug	Alpine Meet: Camping d'Ailfroide, Ecrin, France	
		Joint FRCC, Alpine Club, ABMSAC, Climbers' Club, SMC, LSCC, Wayfarers & Yeovil MC	Keith Lambley
	22/23 July	Brackenclose	Cath Sanders
FM	29 July/04 Aug	Family Meet - Brackenclose	Gary Hill
	12/13 Aug	Salving House	Peter McNulty
	19/20 Aug	Joint FRCC/Pinnacle Club Meet - Rawhead	Hazel Jones
CM	02/03 Sept	Committee meeting - Birkness	John Pulford
MM	02/03 Sept	Maintenance Meet - Waters	Mark Gear
T	03/11 Sept	Via Ferrata Meet - Cortina d'Ampezzo, Dolomites	Ed Luke
MM	09/10 Sept	Maintenance Meet - Rawhead	Alan Strachan
	16/17 Sept	Introductory Meet - Rawhead	Peter Simcock
W	19/25 Sept	Joint FRCC/CC - May Cottage, Bosherton, Pembrokeshire	Ron Kenyon
MM	23/24 Sept	Maintenance Meet - Brackenclose	Mike Carter
	30 Sept/01 Oct	Salving House	Jo Campbell
	07/08 Oct	Brackenclose	Jenny Hawkin
FM	14/15 Oct	Family Meet - Birkness	Gary Hill
	21/22 Oct	Waters	Mark Baron
	21/22 Oct	Rawhead	Allison Read
D	04/05 Nov	AGM, Shap Wells hotel	The President
	11/12 Nov	Bonfire Meet - Brackenclose	Iain Whitmey
T	13 Nov	Remembrance Ceremony - Great Gable summit	The President
CM	25/26 Nov	Committee meeting - Raw Head	Joyce Evans
	02/03 Dec	Temperance Meet - Birkness	Charles Skeavington
	09/10 Dec	Beetham	Andrew & Barbara Duxbury
E	30/31 Dec	New Year's Eve - Rawhead	Christina Paul



From top left, clockwise:

Birkness Maintenance Meet, May 2016.

Phil Elliot and Julian Sorrel, Sty Head, Old County Tops Meet, April 2016.

Photo - Ian Charters

Al Davis on Karaoke Crack, Guiram Walls, Mingulay, May 2016. *Photo - Ron Kenyon*

The Anti-Atlas in Morocco, Anne-Marie Henderson on Noah's Ark (HS), Ksar Rock, March 2016

Photo - Ron Kenyon

Chris Smitton, 6a, Ombleze main cliff, French Easter Meet, 2016.

Photo - Rob Smitton



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