

Fylde Mountaineering Club Adventures...and more

Autumn 2025

Rescue helicopter

Tunnels and Trenches

Hairy hairpin drives

Nothing left in the tank

100 houses destroyed





So far this summer (weather wise) has been a huge improvement on last year. In fact, some days have been so hot it has been difficult to enjoy our active outdoor pursuits.

The splash pools in the ghylls have been looking more and more inviting.

I'm hoping you've all had the opportunity to get out and enjoy the summer so far, judging WhatsApp and Facebook there appears to be plenty going on. Thank you for those who turned up for my bike rides, it's been nice to reintroduce cycling meets back into the syllabus.

If any of you would like to suggest an outdoor activity or venue for future meets, please don't hesitate to contact us on the committee.

Tony

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Hi all,

Well, what a lovely summer we have had as Tony says. So much sunshine it's been great. I hope you have managed to get out and about in it more this year.

I thought I would take advantage of it by going on one of my camping trips. As some of you know I have been looking for a new tent for ages but still haven't found what I want. I did manage to go though in my old tent but the bending does nothing for my back! I only had a few days there as when I returned from the pub one night I found that after torrential rain the tent had been leaking and I had to sleep between the wet bits-good job I am only small! All good fun though and it hasn't put me off-it's all an adventure...definitely need to get that new tent though.

This year Tony has revived the bike ride meets and Steve Wriggely led a meet at the FRCC hut in Wasdale, both of which were a success-good to know and hope we have many more.

This mag there have been trips abroad and climbing on new crags as well as coast to coast rides. I hope you enjoy the read.

As always, my thanks go out to all who contributed their articles.

Christine

THE MERCANTOUR FRANCE

With Andy Dunhill

St MV at the confluence of
the Boreon and Vesubie rivers

Enjoying the area-Christine Barbier
and Andy Dunhill

The Mercantour National Park is in Department 06: Alps - Maritime in south east France. The department includes the Cote d'Azur and Nice, but not far north is an area of spectacular mountains spreading across into Italy. We had never been there before so decided to rent an apartment for 9 nights to explore part of this region. We had no real idea where to stay so had a look at the French regional yellow

map 341. We decided on a village called Saint Martin Vesubie (St MV) which turned out to be a good choice. We found a compact but very smart studio apartment in the centre of the village through Airbnb cost approx. 30 Euros a night each.

Houses destroyed

St MV was at the epicentre of storm Alex in 2020 when water levels rose by 7 or 8 metres. The devastation

even 5 years later was obvious. Several bridges were taken out; 100 houses destroyed plus a variety of public buildings. Reconstruction work will cost more than 1 billion Euros.

I bought the local IGN map 3741 OT and the climbing guide *La Verticalité en Vésubie – Valdeblore* from the village library. The village has several food shops, boulangeries and bars. There is a programme of concerts throughout the summer months, some free. It is at the junction of the Vésubie and Boréon rivers surrounded by mountains in the 2,000 – 2,500 metre range. There are no glaciers in the park just a lot of wild mountains, hiking trails and some climbing areas.

Broken shock absorber

Unfortunately, Christine hurt her ankle and our car developed a broken shock absorber so we weren't able to climb as we'd hoped. The local guidebook is good, however the number of crags with reasonable grade routes is a bit limited. There's enough for a week. If you climb in the 7 and 8 grades there's plenty to go at (Le Trou du

Diable close to St MV and limestone). Some of the climbing, especially in the Gordolasque valley is on bolted granite boulders. We had a walk there one day and the climbing on the boulders though short looks good. There are also Via Ferrata and canyoning options.

Zip wire

The car problem meant we had to check out the public transport options which proved to be very good. There is a regular service from



Nice to various parts of the park with connecting Navettes (local mini bus) allowing access to plenty of

places. These are great for walking days but not as good for climbing. It would be relatively easy to go from the UK on public transport by flying, or train to Nice then bus to various villages. The buses are heavily subsidised by the Department.

We took the local Navette one day to the nearby ski resort of La Colmaine from where we had an

easy walk up the Pic de la Colmaine ,
round to le Conquet and back down

to the village.
There is a good-
looking crag
above the
nearby village
of St Dalmas
called Guy
Dufour. Above
Colmiane is a
substantial area
of Via Ferrata
called Baus de
la Frenna. This ski station also has
the longest zip wire in France with
2663 metres of wire on
which you travel down at
up to 120km hr!

One day I walked from our
studio up the Cima de la
Palu-2152 metres, a height
gain of approx 1,150
metres. There are a few
other mountains
accessible from the village
offering the option to
continue along the
extensive ridges. There
seems to be a network of refuges in
the park allowing multi day hiking
trips.

Another day we decided to visit Nice
so we had a one and a half hour ride
on bus 90 to the outskirts of Nice,

then a half hour tram trip to the Old
Harbour in the centre of the city.

The
whole
journey
cost 1.70
Euro each
way. We
visited
the old
part of
the city
and had a
swim in
the Med.



Nice looking over the Old City



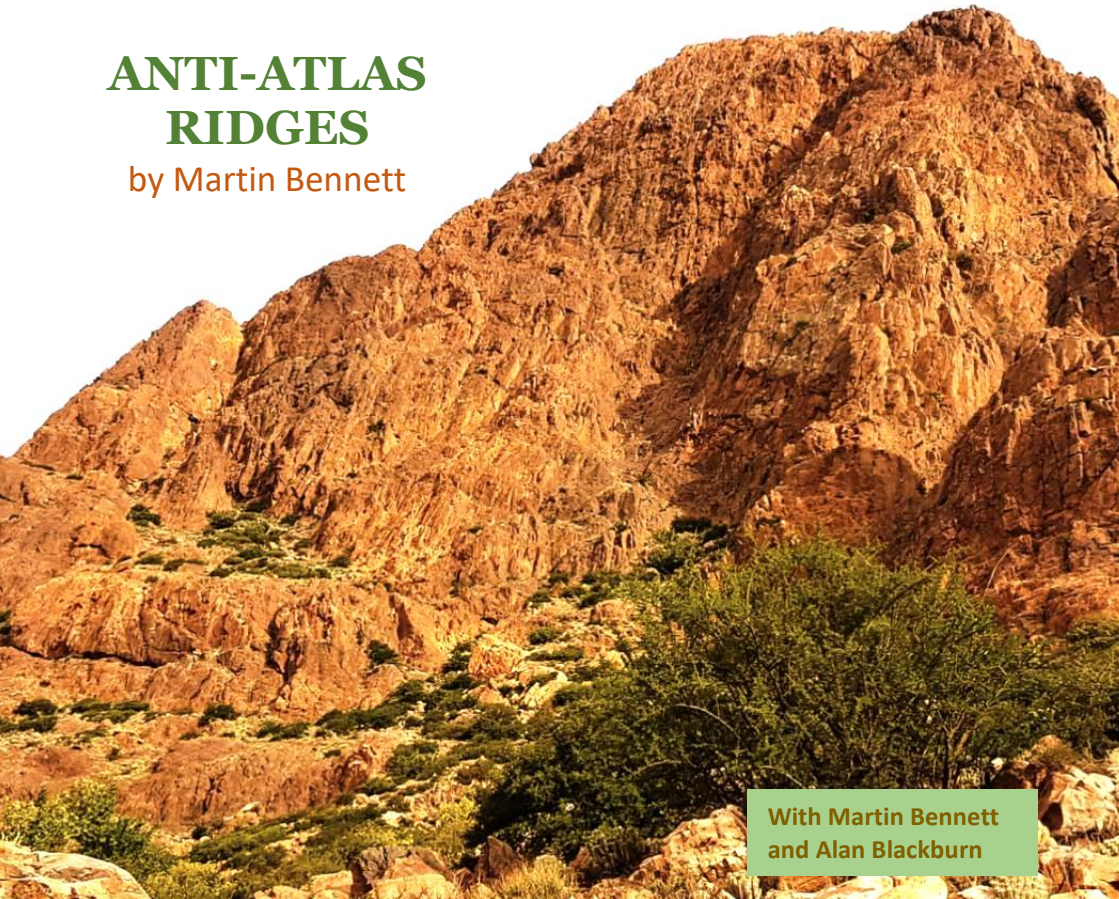
Looking East from the top of
the Cima de la Palu

***Overall, this is a spectacular area
well worth a visit.***

ANDY

ANTI-ATLAS RIDGES

by Martin Bennett



With Martin Bennett
and Alan Blackburn

PROPHET PEAK, PINNACLE RIDGE

As well as its wonderful British style quartzite rock climbing and its (in my view) not quite so wonderful sport climbing on sometimes gritty crumbly granite, the Anti-Atlas Mountains are seamed with mountain ridges of all kinds - there are easy scrambles, long and tiring difficult scrambles, and ridges that are steeper, becoming aretes that offer rock climbs of all grades from Diff to Hard VS.

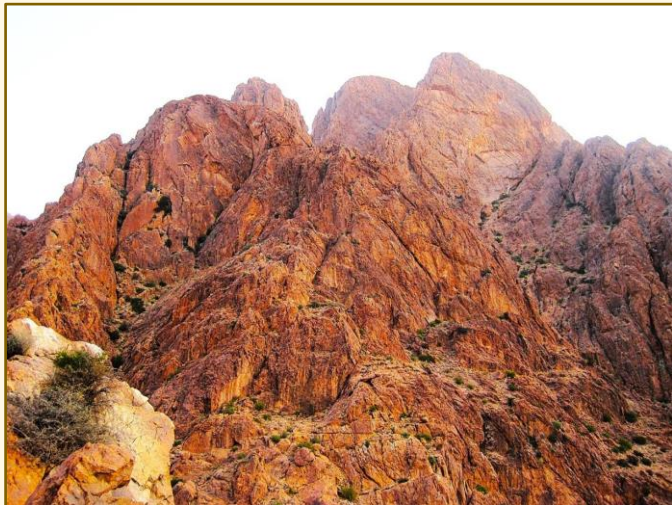
For the first scrambly kind, a fine example of which, Tizgut Ridge, can be found within a few miles of Tafraoute, I would refer you to the excellent and detailed Cicerone publication "Walks and Scrambles in the Anti-Atlas" by our own David "Woody" Wood.

Among others, I can recommend the following three of the steeper ridges I've done.

At 'only' 600 metres long, Pinnacle Ridge (Severe) on Prophet Peak, overlooking the Ameln Valley, is the shortest of my choices. This brevity (!) is made up for by the fact that the day is filled by the long approach and the absorbing gully of the descent. Most of the climb comprises easy going in approach shoes and is on excellent clean rock. It's interspersed with interesting sections in corners and chimneys with some down-climbing off the numerous pinnacles encountered and the inevitable Anti-Atlas step-across crux coming satisfactorily near the end. Did I say end? Well, it's the top but by no means the end of the interest since the gully descent is full of it and, the way we found it at least, involves an abseil. By the time the parking place is reached you know you've had a day of it.

Going through my choices according to length, next is The Great Ridge (VS 5a) with 800 metres of height gain and 1km in length. This time the approach is short, being only a 15 minute stroll out of the village of Assgour, the one beneath The Lion's Face. It's as well it consumes little time for this is a dawn till dusk enterprise, and that's if all goes well. I understand that for many it's turned into a dawn-till-

sometime-tomorrow epic! The ridge is complex and good mountain sense and intuition together with a slice of luck here and there are required to despatch it and leave sufficient daylight for the long descent, which is a good walk in itself. Much of the ridge is scrambling, but with distinctly harder passages, an abseil and much down-climbing of the huge towers encountered. Leaving the best till last, its crowning glory is the VS climbing in the 2 or 3 pitches to the very top, climbed with the setting sun on one's back and with that widening grin and the growing certainty that "we've cracked it"! And with enough daylight for the descent. Phew!



THE GREAT RIDGE - The three great towers with the Lion's Face summit to the right.

Left till last in my brief selection is the longest and most enjoyable of all. The well named Infinity Ridge (Diff) is 950m of perfect rock and is climbed in rather more than 20 pitches if you remain roped for all of it, though many will solo all or much of it. The day begins with one of those well known Anti-Atlas hairy hairpin drives to the hanging valley village of Tagdicht, the main jumping off point for the tourist path to Jebel el Kest. Parking here, you sidle around the side of a house and set off across what appears to be someone's back garden till you reach an obvious path which

contours the hillside for half an hour until a flog up steep ground lands you at the base of the ridge.

Take a deep breath and . . . go! The next few hours are sheer delight as one lovely slab leads you to another and in

between you find yourself on knife edges with vast exposure on each side. It really is more like an Alpine ridge than a desert climb. Very near the top we did the abseil described

in the book, but while I was rigging it Al had a scout round and found that it can be climbed around, so if you're full of confidence in your ability and your luck with the weather and objective dangers maybe the rope might be left behind? As is usual in these parts the descent is a bit of a mystery and longer than you imagine and for us, having left the car at 10.00 AM, we just made it back to the village in the gloaming. A most satisfactory day out. The first two beers in the St Anthoine cellar bar didn't touch the sides!



INFINITY RIDGE from the approach
(photo by A Blackburn)

Martin



LAKE GARDA

CAR-LESS

Lake Garda

By Joanna Goorney
holidaying with partner
Dave Milton

It appears that roofers are a scarce resource. It appears scaffolders are even more scarce. With a hole in the roof from slipped ridge tiles and various other tiles strewn over our garden, getting a new roof was more of a priority than our annual 2 week road trip in September. Eventually at the start of October, we found our house encased in a neat metal framework and a week later, we were once again watertight. There are even some very nice drone shots of our new roof on Facebook for anyone interested!

But the nights were now drawing in and the days getting colder. Where could we go for some warmth now? The Canary Islands seemed to tick a lot of boxes but we just weren't enthusiastic. Then the suggestion of the northern end of Lake Garda came up with a good forecast for the following week predicted.

Lake Garda

Lake Garda is the largest Lake in Italy and is situated at the southern end of the Dolomites,

with rolling hills at the southern end and more mountainous terrain in the north. At the northern tip lies Riva del Garda with its quieter neighbour Torbole (the 2 towns split by Monte Brione) and just north of both lies Arco (famous for its climbing but we would be there to walk and do via ferrata).

Public transport

Although having been together for nearly ten years, me and Dave had never flown together, always opting to take one of our cars. Could we manage a holiday totally on public transport, especially when I am not renowned for packing lightly?

We booked last minute flights flying out to Verona and coming back via Venice with Jet2 who seemed to offer a good luggage allowance. We also booked an apartment in Riva del Garda. It appeared quite straight forward using buses and the train to get from the airport to Riva. (In high season, a bus is available direct

from the airport right though to Riva).

We had been recommended to stay in Torbola but were glad in the end that we had opted for Riva. It turned out to be very convenient for all the facilities that we required including the bus station a 10 minute walk away and supermarket around the corner. I guess it was quiet because we were out of season.



We arrived with just a limited walking map of the area and no guide book. There turned

out to be no need to buy anything else since the tourist board provided free booklets on every activity that you wanted to do, as well as free walking maps. These were available in the tourist office and in our apartment block.

Free bus and train travel

Our apartment also came with a guest card that gave us free bus and train travel around Trentino (which included the northern end

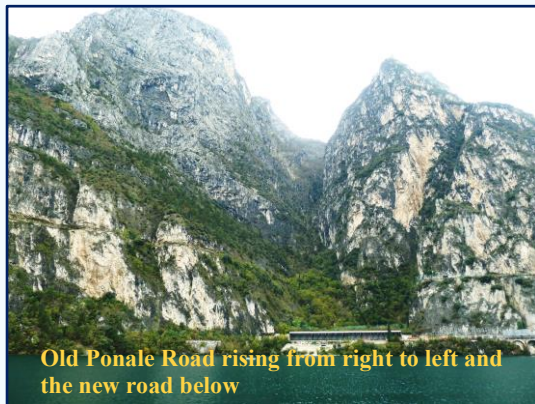
of Lake Garda). Familiarising ourselves with the local bus timetables turned into a bit of a faff initially, making sure we were actually using the current timetable (both online and paper versions). We soon realised

that buses were more limited for getting around out of season and for example: an early start was needed to catch the school bus up to Valle di Ledro (a beautiful hanging valley a short distance from Riva). But there was also plenty to do just walking from Riva.

For going south down the lake, buses were even more limited out of season, but it was easy to take the frequent ferries (although not included in the guest card). Limone was an enjoyable place to visit (yes, famous for growing lemons) with an excellent walk up to Monte Bestone (927 m).

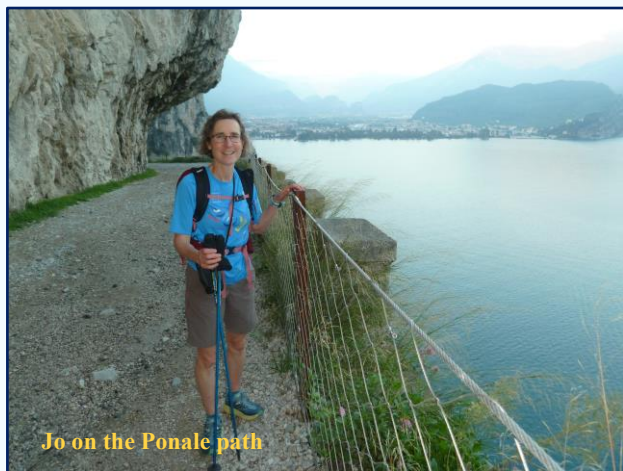
Carved into a rock

One of the most interesting and useful attractions turned out to be the old Ponale Road which runs



between Riva and the Valle di Ledro. It is now used as a pedestrian and cycle path and stretches for 10 km. The trail was

carved into a rock in the second half of the 19th century. It gives spectacular views across the Lake as well as the many tunnels



and military installations along the way. We found ourselves on this path many times.

Our first via ferrata was Via Ferrata Fausto Susatti which was accessible from Riva part way along the Ponale path. After



Dave on Via Ferrata Fausta Susatti

Barbara (a church sitting high above Riva) adding an extra hour onto our already long day out.

Tunnels and trenches

Our second Via Ferrata was Via Ferrata delle Laste e Gallerie di Cima Rocca which started from Biaseco in Valle di Ledro. It explored a system of tunnels and trenches which

leaving the path and a steeper path climbing up to the start of the via ferrata there was a rocky section



Jo on Via Ferratta Fausta Susatti

were part of the Austrian defence lines during WW1 and summited on Cima Rocca (1090 m).

We also had a very interesting walk up Cima d'Oro (1802 m) from Molina di Ledro walking

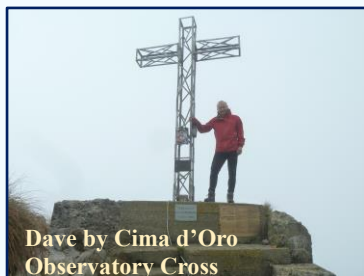
leading up to Cima Capi (909 m). It then skirted along the north side on a very exposed narrow balcony path protected by fixed rope. A path then dropped back down to the Ponale path from where we came up. Unfortunately, the path dropping down was closed (we had missed the closed notice on the way up or perhaps "Chiuso" meant nothing to us!) and we had to continue to Chapel Santa

up through WW1 Austrian



Jo on Via Ferratta delle Laste e Gallerie di Cima Rocca

trenches. The Cima d'Oro Observatory Cross is located at 1703 m where we should have had panoramic views of Lake Ledro. Unfortunately, the mist came down. The true summit further on was marked by just a very simple cross, and although still no views, felt very satisfying.



We went with the expectation that Riva would be really expensive for eating out, but were pleasantly surprised with the cost of pizzas and ice cream and were spoilt for choice with the different flavours.

Many of the apartments and hotels had free “city” bicycles to borrow. Although rickety, it was a fun way to get around. There were quite a lot of traffic free cycle paths around Lake Garda and up the Sarca Valley. If we had wanted to do anything a little more off road, then there were numerous bike hire shops around.

We finished the holiday with a quick visit to Verona and a day in Venice (we’ve been and seen it!).

Would we go car-less again? For the short time we were there, the answer is absolutely yes. Maybe we would have been better at the

start or end of the high season for a lot more bus services, but we were forced by circumstance into the end of October. But we loved Riva and all that the area had to offer.



For info:
 We stayed at Residence Alle Palme (this turned out to be much cheaper booking direct instead of through booking.com)
 Travel to Riva:
 Manchester to Verona: Plane
 Verona airport to Verona Train station: bus
 Verona train station to Revereto: train
 Revereto to Riva: bus

JOANNA

LOVELY LLANBERIS

With Chris Fry

Chester Hut
meet 2-3
March 2025

Those enjoying the weekend-Peter Wilson, Jill Hodge, Howard Shaw, Dave Wood, Hal Rzadkiewicz, Nick Hepburn, Luke Brisco, Christine Fry, Simon Fenna and Carol Williamson

I think the area around Llanberis is so beautiful and has lovely mountain walks, so I was looking forward to the Chester hut meet. As I was meet leader I had asked for names of who wanted to come, and there would be about 6 of us, so not many but that was ok. The weather had been nice and I don't think there was to be any rain so that was a good sign.



I arrived Friday tea time after a lovely drive through the Welsh countryside, and Jill and Howard

were already there, along with Peter, Hal and Woody. Peter had walked up the valley to Bwlch Maeggwmm and climbed up to Foel Goch and Foel Gron and then descended by Cwm Dwythwch back to the hut. Woody and Hal had arrived a few days earlier and had climbed at Bochlwyd Wednesday, Crib Goch Thursday and had been to visit



Like the pose Jill!

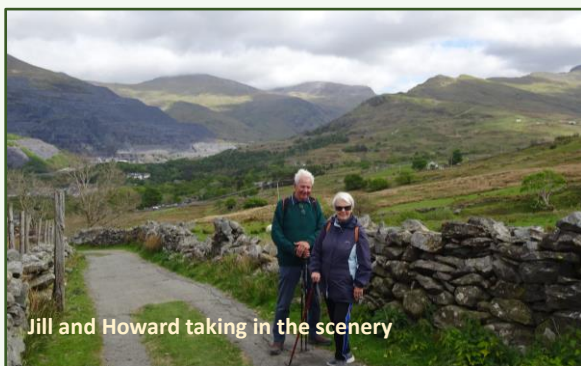
friends on Anglesey that day. We settled in, sitting outside for a while then had our tea inside. We were chatting away when Nick and Luke turned up and Simon and Carol so that was great-the more the merrier! There were some Chester hut members there too and they were very friendly. We had an enjoyable night chatting and having some drinks. The Chester hut members were quite happy to sit outside and lit a firepit later on.

On Saturday the weather had turned a bit colder which was a bit of a disappointment, but didn't put anyone off from enjoying the great outdoors!



Peter, Jill, Howard and Nick enjoying some refreshments

Peter went up the Llanberis Snowdon path and took the



Jill and Howard taking in the scenery

route to the cliff, Clogwyn Du'r Arddu also known as 'Cloggy' above the Llyn Du'r Arddu. He then scrambled up to the Snowdon Ranger path and followed it to the summit. Howard, Jill and I ventured down the valley, passing people who were in a race. We were quite a way on our walk when we heard a



Nick and Luke getting ready for some good climbing

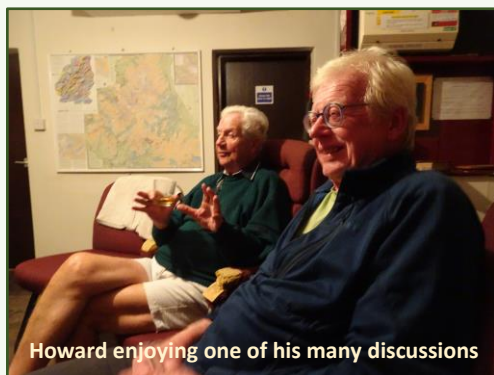
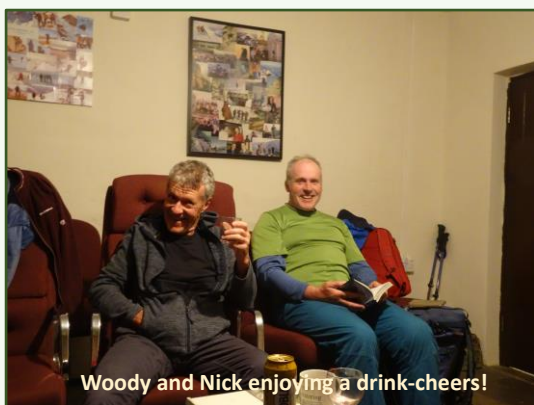
helicopter and it was the mountain rescue. We watched for a while as it was going to and fro and didn't seem to know where the casualty was, till finally it



settled on Snowdon-hopefully the casualty has recovered. Simon and Carol went walking up one of the mountains and Nick and Luke went climbing at Carreg Wastad. Woody and Hal went to Wenalt.

We were having real trouble with the lock on the front door, and although Woody did a good job of showing us how it worked, it was temperamental and we weren't sure whether we would be able to gain entry or not sometimes! We had fun trying though! I am pleased to say though that it finally gave up the ghost in May apparently and they now have a new one with a latch! 😊

Once we all returned from our adventures we chilled out with food, drinks and some good craic. They now have a nice log burner there too, so Howard put himself in charge of it and kept us lovely and warm, regularly



feeding it with the logs provided.

A good night was had by all-nice to catch up on stuff. Again, the Chester hut members were happy to sit outside by the firepit enjoying themselves with food and drinks.

On Sunday Nick and Luke were staying on for another day as it was Bank Holiday and climbed at Clogwyn y Wenallt, then on



Chester Hut members enjoying the firepit

Monday at Wen slab Gogarth, climbing the classic original route up the slab Wen, (Luke's introduction to sea cliff climbing). The rest of

us were heading off home. The weather was nice so I walked by the Lake (Llyn Padarn) and went to the National Slate Museum for some lunch before I ventured off. I find it's a pleasure driving in Wales as there is so much lovely countryside and you don't see a lot of new housing estates! I Just love Wales.....



Lovely Waterfall just down the bottom of the road from the hut

Christine

Pete Latimer

When Paul Clarke and I first joined the club in the late 1960s Pete was one of the active climbing members who helped us develop as young climbers. He took us on our first foray into Yorkshire where we sampled the delight of Crookrise Crag. Stair hut was opened in 1969 and we had many enjoyable weekends there. I recall one day out on Miners' Crag in the Newlands Valley where we did Miners' Grooves VS and Double Slab VD, both 2-star routes. It was even sunny and the climbs were clean. It was an early introduction to multi-pitch climbing and the lessons learned stood us in good stead.



As with many of us Pete's career took him away from the Fylde, and in 1977 he moved to Leeds where he remained until he retired. Although he kept his membership of the FMC, he also joined the Leeds MC and the Fell & Rock (FRCC). On retiring he moved to Kendal with his partner Andrea. In Leeds he began climbing with Richard Tolley (no relation to our Tolleys) and that partnership continued for over 40 years. Richard has said that "Despite the relatively modest ambitions we could be described as 'very steady' climbers. Peter was very safe, always calm and capable of staying within his comfort zone. This made him an excellent climbing partner." Pete was very much a mountain man.

In 2006 Stephen Reid (Needlesport), the then FRCC guide book editor, asked Pete and Richard to take on the work for the next edition of the Borrowdale guide. Pete came to an FMC dinner shortly after to see if anyone was interested in joining the team for which I volunteered. They did the lower grade routes up to HVS, me the middle grade ones up to E3 and we asked around for views on the harder climbs. Paul Clarke helped with this in the last 2 or 3 years before publication. Richard was the team photographer. We had many enjoyable days checking grades and the climbability of the routes in the existing guide. One of the first things he said was that there were many crags that had gone back to nature so we should remove them. He wasn't wrong!

Pete put a massive amount of time and effort into the guide and his valuable contribution is acknowledged in the introduction to the current guide. Unfortunately, he developed Parkinson's disease and in 2013 had to pull out of the guidebook team. He remained in Kendal until his death and was looked after by his partner Andrea. Following his passing a memorial event was held in Kendal and the attendance testified to the great respect the climbing community had for him.

Andy Dunhill and Paul Clarke

The Memorial Service, held at Kendal was an extremely impressive occasion attended by Friends from work, and a host of the many people who had come into contact with Peter through his activities in the mountains: Fell and Rock, Leeds MC, Holiday Fellowship, Fylde MC and many who had known him as the affable person he had been.

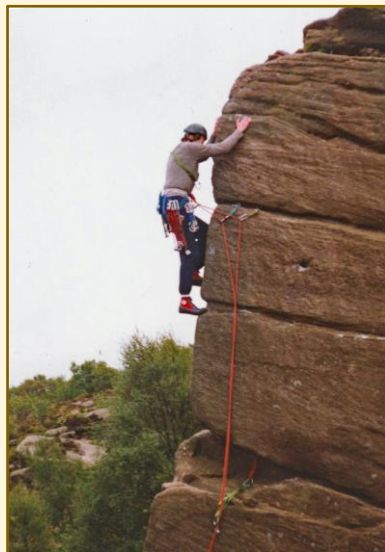
The collection of music, slide display and tributes assembled by his partner Andrea were a fine testimony to her care and his being.

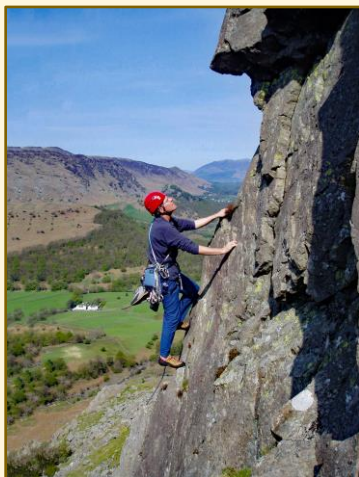
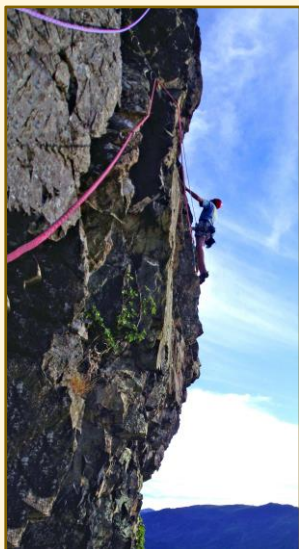
He had been a very active member of the FMC in the late sixties, and also the Editor of the newsletter, at a time when funding to pay-off the Great Debt for Stair was a major undertaking.

Peter was forthright in engaging members to "do their respective bits" towards reducing our debt and outgoings, and worked hard at chasing-up late membership payers, much to their chagrin!

My respects.

Peter Roscoe





William "Bill" Compstive.

Bill may have been a Founder member of the Club, however his part in our early development and progress is well established.

His efforts in the early Fifties, in recruiting potential members from the YHA Holiday Fellowship, Co-operative Holidays Association and other walking clubs led to a substantial increase in membership and outdoor activities.

With the increase in membership (and lack of private transport) the idea that the Club should look to purchasing property took seed.

Bill was instrumental in seeking-out such a place, and after some fruitless meetings with various bodies and estate agents was involved in finding the row of cottages in Little Langdale.

The EGMS, Funding Meetings, Working Weekends and Jumble Sales that followed are the Foundations of the Clubs History.

Many Thanks Bill!

Peter Roscoe

KAREN AND DAVE'S C2C BIKE TRIP – OR HILLS, HILLS, AND MORE HILLS!

Following our two long distance walks in 2024, Karen had really got the bit between her teeth, and I was soon under pressure to plan and prepare for walking the Wainwright Coast to Coast from West to East. I dug my heels in and said “not ‘till next year!”

2025 arrived but following our trips to Morocco and Kalymnos I found myself nursing debilitating injuries; tendonitis in my



glutes/hip and tendonitis in my ankle. Following some physio, much self-treatment and a steroid injection, I decided we could have a go at doing the Coast to Coast, but on our bikes as some

compensation to Karen for my not being able to do it on foot.

We have Ribble gravel bikes with electric assist, supposed to have a 60-mile range with the assist. The plan was to go from Workington to

Stair on day one and stay the night there and pedal to Nenthead on day two where we would camp, and on day three we would make it to Sunderland and get the train home.

A few folk I spoke to had told me that day 2 was the difficult stage with the section up Hartside being the crux. My cunning plan therefore was that we wouldn't use the assist until that stage as it is allegedly all over by then, and also, to keep the weight down I wouldn't pack the chargers as they are quite heavy and obviously, we wouldn't need to charge up anyway as all the hills were over with on day two.

Whisky and Gin

We just took the essentials, tent, sleeping bags, mats and stove, oh and a flask of whisky, a flask of gin, and a bottle of wine and a couple of cans of tonic water and a chink of lemon.

We had booked our trains to Workington in advance, Kirkham to Preston, Preston to Carlisle (plus permits for the bikes for this leg) and Carlisle to

Workington, all for £42 with our 2 together railcards. Various mishaps by the rail companies

saw us get to Workington almost an hour later than expected (stories for the pub) and it was 2pm by the time we set off from the lighthouse.

Retracing uphill

It didn't take long for us to realise how heavy our

bikes were. Each slight up-hill was tougher than expected but I consoled myself with the fact that we could polish off the wine, whisky and gin 'n tonic tonight which would make the bikes lighter tomorrow. (*I like your thinking Dave!*) (Ed). Road closure and a jobsworth site worker saw us having to retrace one hilly section which we did not find funny. We then had to find an alternative route and ended up on

the A66 for miles until we could get off a couple of miles before Braithwaite. It was 6:30 when we got to Stair, pretty tired and worryingly it had taken much longer than anticipated to do the 32 miles (should have been 23). My legs and bum were killing me and I could hardly walk.



Dinner was an egg and cress butty each left over from lunch. We had planned to get something from the corner shop in Braithwaite but they had closed 20 mins before we got there. We bucked ourself up when we washed it down with our decent alcohol supply. Whilst we were eating, we were joined by Andy Dunhill and Chris Thistlethwaite which was really good, and we had a grand old chin wag and catch-up, but I am worryingly still struggling to stand up and move around.

After a shower and a good sleep, I was feeling pretty good in the morning. We were away by 7:30 and at Booths eating breakfast by 8:00. The ride from Keswick to Penrith was superb and we were now actually enjoying ourselves at last. It felt less hilly on the bikes than it does in the car, and by 12:30 we were in the square in Penrith having our lunch and psyching ourselves up for the push to Nenthead.

Dead battery

The initial pull out of Penrith is hard work and we had to deploy our electric assist but we were soon on rolling lanes through Langwathby, Little Selkeld and on to Renwick. From here the climbing starts in earnest up

Hartside, following a minor road/track up the moor for around 3 miles until it joins the main road. The next 1 ½ miles would bring us to the summit, where we were hoping to find that the café there had been rebuilt, sadly not to be. At about half way up the minor road my battery died. It had probably only done about 15 or 20 miles of assistance, so the additional weight on the bikes must have affected the performance significantly. I now had no assistance but still had the added weight of the battery along with our kit to push up these hills. This was a slight low moment for us, but hey ho, the show must go on and therefore we walked, rode, walked, rode our way to the top which is the site of the old café



that burned down in 2018 and is still awaiting redevelopment.

Nothing left in the tank

The descent to Alston is amazing along a perfect, not too steep and

gently winding smooth tarmac road for around 3, miles which was heaven after the previous 5 miles of ascent. We are now only about 5 miles from Nenthead and around 7 miles from our chosen campsite. When we arrived in Alston, we took the right turn out of the town, to find ourselves going uphill again and again and again. After around 4 miles I had had enough and spotted a bus shelter-I needed to sit down and take stock as I had nothing left in the tank. In desperation I got my phone out and did a quick search and miraculously it told me there was a campsite 300yds down the road! One minute later we were at the site and very soon the tent was up and I was making our almost inedible evening meal in the wind and rain, constantly trying to keep



the stove from being blown out and the food from boiling over (unsuccessfully).

It is amazing how we are able to switch so quickly from despair to

elation and back again and then to “pheh, I’m ok now, life’s pretty good”. We both found today a pretty tough day. I think we both dug in well, and of course as we all know, the tough bit is behind us now.

Olde Worlde

Last day today so we were up and out early. I slept ok but Karen spent a lot of night sliding off her sleeping mat, I think it will be on Vinted when we get back. No breakfast or brew, we just wanted to get to the café in Allenheads about 5 miles away. The guidebook says “drop down into Nenthead”, and forgot to say “climb steeply, then.....”. The next couple of miles were desperate and there was no way Karen or I could have done it the previous evening so we thanked our lucky stars that we found our campsite. However, eventually our already tired legs got us into the village of

Allenheads and we pulled in at the most delightful Hemmel Café. It was Olde Worlde and the customers and staff were unbelievably



Nenthead community shop-where we bought a couple of flapjacks

friendly, and everyone wanted to talk to us and talk about our journey, both behind and what was ahead. We both tucked into superb breakfasts and huge brews of tea and coffee. The locals told us about next hill waiting for us just around the corner and everyone wished us well.

As expected, when we turned the first corner we saw the hill, and at a shout of “get in your lowest gear” from a passing car we clattered down the gears, pedalled a few dozen yards and promptly got off our bikes and walked. We only got on them once for a short while before giving in and walking the rest of the way. We were rewarded with a great long descent, albeit with some steep twisty sections and quite tough on the forearms. We cruised into Stanhope where a left turn led us to a sight that almost broke us. What lay ahead was a 2 mile hill with long sections of 17%.



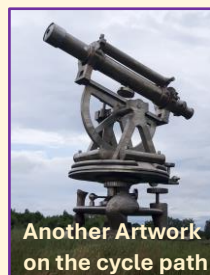
I think we walked a mile and a half of that hill, it was brutal. The



summit was Parkhead Station and the start of the track that follows the old railway line, downhill, wind behind for 9

miles most of the way to Consett. It was blowing a hooley and at times it was a little unnerving as it blasted us from the side. A not happy Karen gritted her teeth and set off fighting the cross winds. Fortunately, the track curved around to the right and as a result the wind was now directly behind us, absolute heaven!

On the few occasions that we spoke to people today about riding to Sunderland we were met by sharp intakes of breath. The last two were chaps we met back at Parkhead Station who both said “you’ll never do it” and “not possible”. We were now thinking they were probably right and maybe we need to find somewhere to stop tonight. Camping



was not an option for me; I fancied a hotel and a restaurant. Karen had started to feel unwell an hour or so back and desperately needed the loo. We reached Consett which I am afraid to say is not very appealing so I encourage Karen to dig-in and we plodded on in the direction of Sunderland. Within 5 minutes we came across a great looking pub so I went in to ask if they did accommodation which they didn't, but a very talkative couple told me about a place a few miles further on. Karen appeared and visited the ladies at speed and was gone for a long time. When she reappeared, it was with a look of let's get out of here fast! (Maybe another pub story!).

Great Hotel

Our destination was 6 miles down the road, great hotel with a restaurant – perfect. Cycle path all of the way and we were soon at our haven – Hotel 52 in Strange. We managed to secure the last room available and the receptionist was fantastic (if a little talkative). Room was ace, bed amazingly comfortable and bathroom huge. We were soon

showered and out for dinner in the restaurant attached to the hotel. The food was fantastic as was the beer and wine and the prices very reasonable – half the price of the Swinny. Again, everyone was very friendly and talkative and we met lovely people both guests and

staff. We had a fantastic night's sleep and the following morning we had a relaxed start and superb breakfast before checking out and getting on our way for 10:30.



Representation of Frank Atkinson who created Beamish open air Museum

The final leg, only about 17 miles to go. The first few miles were relatively flat and we went along the old railway track again which had all sorts of engineering based arty stuff reflecting the steelworks history of the area. The track passes 200yds from Beamish but we didn't divert as we just wanted to get to the finish line. The track became more undulating but we dug in as the end was almost in sight. We dropped down to the quay side following the designated C2C cycle path. About 10 minutes from the finishing line, we were stopped in our tracks by a building site hoarding across the path to

the water's edge with no way through. This was possibly the low point of all low points as there was no obvious way of getting around the obstruction without cycling back for miles and a long way uphill. With no other option we turned around and retraced our route and as we started to pull uphill again, we spotted an unmade path leading past some housing that looked like a scene from Shameless. This was also



Roker Lighthouse which symbolises the end of the C2C

uphill and we had no clue where it went but it felt like the right direction. As luck would have it a couple of the characters from Shameless came out of their back yards and turned out to be a couple of the friendliest and most helpful guys you would ever meet. After a very long conversation and much debate between the two guys we were given our directions on off we went. After a bit of to-ing and fro-ing we reached the promenade and our first sight of Roker Lighthouse at the end of a narrow curving stone pier that was a few hundred yards long. The idea

was to ride down the pier and around the lighthouse. It was not to be as there were building works and the whole pier was cordoned off. A bit of a shame but it did not dampen our sense of achievement and the elation of finally making it to the east coast.

All that was left was our train journey home which was eventful in itself but really a story to tell over a beer. It was about 2 O'clock when we arrived at the finish point and 8 O'clock when we arrived back home in Kirkham. We had an amazing adventure and certainly learned a lot along the way. The main advice would be to travel light, use hostels, B&Bs or hotels and if you have electric assist for your bike - **TAKE THE BLOOMIN' CHARGER!**



2 weary cyclists

Dave and Karen

Of Gods and Goddesses, Birthday Girls and Cake

The weather gods were rampant for the Ladies Midsummer Meet 19-21 June this year.... the Sun God shone, the Rain God rained, and the Gods of Thunder and Lightning put on a spectacular display. We Ladies are beloved of the Weather Gods, who also outdid themselves by sending Storm Darroch to our Christmas Meet.

So, two octogenarians, four septuagenarians and a younger svelte Nordic goddess met to celebrate four 75th birthdays all on this year's calendar.

Birthday parties require cake and cake was duly produced.



The Ladies enjoying the party were-Pat Bennett, Chris Fry, Liz Rawcliffe, Liz Hird, Liz Stephenson Angela Lovatt and Sue Denmark.



It was the Sun Gods who dominated

Saturday morning and threatened to fry and bake our intrepid band. A shady walk to Coniston was prescribed. By lunchtime, the

Rain Gods had vanquished the Sun Gods and rained on our parade and on our lunch, (the



chips at the Black Bull come highly recommended).



Lunch in the rain at The Black Bull



Soggy sandwiches

One difficulty about walking to Coniston is the necessity of walking back, by which time seven pairs of knees had seized up, seven hips protested, seven pairs of feet complained and the lack of suitable rainwear was revealed. None of this of course applied to the svelte Nordic Goddess who took pity on us mere mortals.

However, it is not the years in your life that count. It is the life in your years.

Ladies' members are stubborn old boots and determined to variously limp, hobble, dodder, and crawl back to the hut, naysaying the Gods of Pain and Suffering. Thanks to the Water Gods for providing an icy cold stream en route for us to soothe our aching feet.



Ahh lovely!

After showers and donning of party wear, it was **PARTY TIME!** With copious amounts of drugs and booze (painkillers and prosecco) the party began. Feasting and fun followed. If it was not Baccanalian, it was terribly jolly

in a properly English sort of way. The singing was as bad as ever, the games were silly and Sue and Chris won the quiz. Hurrah. The losers complained it was too hard. Let them eat sour grapes.

Sunday morning saw the usual eating up of left overs (trifle for breakfast anyone?) and packing, and the party weekend drew to a close.... after all, it's not how old you are, it's how you are old.

Thanks to members who travelled a long way to come, and to those who defied illness to make an appearance.

No prizes left for those readers who guess which one of us was the svelte Nordic Goddess.

Pat

Eskdale Granite

July 2025 With Andy
Dunhill

Tortoise Crag (best of my love 1)

Those climbing-Andy and
Chris Thistlethwaite

A new guide was published by the FRCC in 2024 containing lots of new crags with easy access which are worth a visit. I am pursuing a pointless ticking exercise trying to do a route on all of the crags in the current set of definitive FRCC Lakes guides, and this included lots I hadn't been on.

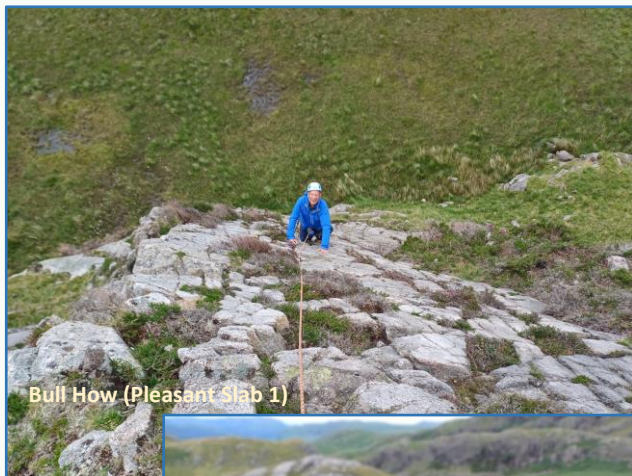
Hare Crag has been climbed on for many years and has a wide selection of routes in the middle grades VS

to E1. I visited in 2024 with friend Robin. We did Jugged Hare a popular 2-star VS on the Central Slabs, and more challenging The Groove a 2-star E1 on the Lower Buttress, plus a few others.

Steep buttress

In June this year Stuart Gascoyne and I drove down from Stair to visit Bell Stand and did the excellent, very well protected Plumbline,

another 2 star VS. This is a steep buttress with some hard climbs. We then crossed the valley to go to Milkingstead Wood Crag. It is buried in the wood and suffers from moss and pine needles. We did Yoshimi another 2 star VS. I had to do a bit of cleaning as I climbed but it was worthwhile. While Stuart sat in the pub, I walked up to Fell End Crag and soloed a couple of Diff/V Diffs. This was developed by the outdoor pursuit centre so offers a range of short easy climbs a short walk from Eskdale Green Station.



Pouring rain

In July Chris This and I were at Stair in dubious weather so drove down to Eskdale in the pouring rain. When we arrived at the café at Dalegarth Station the sun was out, so after a coffee and cake to let the crags dry a bit, we headed up the valley. We parked below Hare Crag but went to visit some of the newer slabs a little further away. Bull How was first where we did Pleasant Slab, an enjoyable V Diff. There are a few



sections to the crag with a range of climbs up to HVS.

21 routes

We then went to the nearby Tortoise Crag. This is a short featureless slab with 21 routes up to VS and lots of V Diffs and Severe grades. We did Best of My Love a 1-star V Diff.

After this we went in search of the more extensive Goat Crag. Perhaps it was us or it's just difficult to find, who knows. After the 500 hundred metre mark on the path, you head N West over the low hills for a few hundred metres. An App on our mobile to give coordinates was useful. We did Goat Rib V Diff on the Right Buttress which was very enjoyable. There were several other routes that looked worthwhile. The Left Hand Buttress looked a bit overgrown but with a few reasonable looking routes. Oddly the guide gives no stars for any of the routes although they do deserve some. There is a clear path at the bottom of the crag but we lost that on the descent!

All of these crags are less than a half hour walk. They are generally south facing, clean and fast drying. They offer a wide range of routes in the lower and middle grades. There's an



excellent cafe in the valley and a few pubs. Eskdale is an hour plus drive from either of our huts. There are

campsites in the valley. Also, lots of



new crags to explore in Upper Eskdale, Hardknott and Harter Fell, plus a few granite ones I haven't been on yet.

ANDY

FMC Annual Dinner

29th November 2025

This year's dinner will return to the lakes at the Skiddaw Hotel in Keswick. Although we held the dinner on the Fylde last year, I'm sure you will agree it wasn't a success.



I think most people are happy to travel to the lakes and make a weekend of it with accommodation in abundance in Keswick and at Stair hut.

The dinner itself is a great way to show commitment to the club, enjoy a meal and get together with members we haven't seen for some time.

Saturday usually starts with a walk from the hut followed by a few drinks in Keswick and then off to the dinner. The evening then involves an awards ceremony for members who contributed to their own success, the club's success and some who've contributed to their own calamities, followed by more drinking.

It would be great to get as many members there as possible. I will send out further details closer to the time.

Thankyou

Tony



WILDLIFE AND NATURE



PHOTOS WERE TAKEN BY DAVE
WOOD IN MOROCCO 2022



If you have any wildlife or nature photos you would like me to include in the magazine, just email them to me-chris.paddy61@gmail.com or magazine@fyldemc.org

Don't forget the FMC are members of friends of the Lake District and the Snowdonia Society so why not check them out at; -

www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk

www.snowdonia-society.org.uk



Dave Milton by Cima d'Oro

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