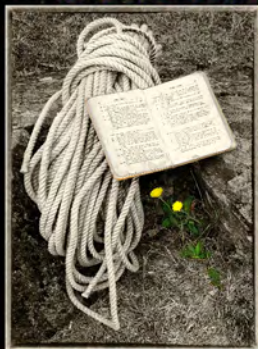


# THE FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE

September 2016



## BENTLEY BEETHAM



special  
edition

Big 40 page edition jam packed with meet reports from Mingulay to Calpe, England's North Country to The South West and down to Pembroke. We're also stopping off for Posh Nosh at Stair and discovering how FMC Sun Rock began.





September 2016

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**Well that's it! I've decided!  
I'm getting way past it for all this  
rough, tough, outdoor stuff.**

It's likely that anyone witnessing my hapless stumbling around at the foot of climbs on the recent Bentley Beetham weekend will have concluded that I'm no longer safe to be let out on my own.

And yet, wandering about on my tod is exactly what I enjoy most. Although I do of course value the company of others, stopping every five minutes to frame yet another photo is behaviour of a kind that no one with me should have to endure.

And then, there's the incessant gabbling!

Well there's good news on that front, because I'm now so out of condition that I get breathless, therefore gabbliness, when tackling even the gentlest of inclines.

So, this morning I dragged my old exercise bike out of storage and am now steeling myself to pedal the swine of a thing . . . into a fitter and healthier future.

Well, that's the plan. Doomed to failure?

Only time will tell, but if it doesn't quite work out, I'm not going to beat myself up about it. After all, one of the best things about this club magazine of ours is the nostalgic, vicarious buzz to be gained from reading about the exploits of those who are still young and fit enough to do it for real!

**So, help the aged, infirm & just plain knackered by keeping your reports and articles coming - and those shutters clicking - for the next issue!**

Roy

## STOP PRESS

The wallet that I lost in sordid circumstances above the Bowder Stone (see page 9) has now been found and returned. My huge thanks to Stephanie & Ben from Cockermouth for finding the un-findable and kindly getting it back to me!

editor: roy-turner@blueyonder.co.uk

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*This page: Mingulay.  
photo: Andy Dunhill*



Bentley Beetham

## from the Chairman

*With summer still in full swing, plenty of our members have been getting out and about, whether locally, elsewhere in the UK or on trips abroad.*

Weekend meets at our huts have been well supported and a highlight that I especially enjoyed was the Bentley Beetham themed weekend at Stair organised by Chris Campbell.

Reports suggest that attendance at mid week climbing meets has dipped a bit so I'm hoping that those able to get out will keep in touch with Martin Dale via Facebook and see if things can be improved before our climbing has to move indoors once more.

I'm glad to see that the club's website has been treated to a much-needed overhaul, pioneered by Dave Ball from up there in Cockermouth. We now have an enhanced events calendar, improved access to the climbing, walking and weekend syllabus and instant access to Facebook feeds.

Dave has now handed over future website development to our new Webmaster Steve Clark here in the Fylde. Steve is keen for you to take a look at the new website and welcomes feedback and your ideas for features and improvements that you'd like to see made.

Steve's email: [sbc23@cantab.net](mailto:sbc23@cantab.net)

Our winter social programme will soon be beckoning us once more to the Old Town Hall in Poulton and right now our new social secretary Tony Hulme is busy compiling the syllabus. If you have someone in mind who you'd like to see as a presenter, then please send ideas to [tonyhulme1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tonyhulme1@hotmail.co.uk)

So, let's make the most of what's left of the summer days and as always, so that we can share them with you, keep sending pictures and tales of your exploits to Roy, our magazine editor.

Darren



*front page photo by Chris Campbell is of Matt Reed on 'P2 Face Route' at Doves Nest crag*



# Bentley Beetham Challenge

In anticipation of the latest F&RCC Borrowdale Guide\* and in recognition of Bentley Beetham's unique contribution to climbing in the valley, the FMC decided to hold a special event at Stair

\* now on sale



The plan - over the weekend of June 18 and 19 - was to complete ascents of the 30 Bentley Beetham routes listed in the Lake District Rock (2015) Wired Guide.

Saturday June 18th began with teams heading off in opposite directions to divide their efforts between Shepherd's Crag (above) and Combe Ghyll at the head of the valley.

**Shepherd's Crag:** After ferrying Joanne to her Status Quo gig in Bowness, Martin Dale joined up with Andy Ingle and Steve Clark and headed for Brown Slabs at the northern end of the crag.



There was some debate as to exactly where the Arête started. Martin and mag editor Roy, who was tagging along to grab a few snaps, remembered it taking the obvious arête line on the left, running up from the tree growing out of the base of the crag.

Andy and Steve though, relying on a dodgy Wired Guide topo, reckoned it began well over to the right. By the time they'd made up their minds, the route was of course swarming with climbers, so while Martin took a solo line up the Arête, Steve and Andy made do with Brown Slabs & Brown Slabs Direct, devoting a fair chunk of their time to unravelling the mother of all rope tangles at the top.



Meanwhile, at the south end of Shepherd's, Hal Rzakiewicz and Dave Wood had been busy polishing off Jackdaw Ridge and Donkey's Ears, and were just

arriving back down from climbing Crescendo, when they met up with Andy, Martin & Steve at its start.

While Woody and Hal got stuck into Chamonix on the left, Martin - setting a purist *no-cams-no-chalk* example for lesser souls to follow - decided to lead a second ascent of Crescendo, a venture that proved a bit more of a handful than expected. *continues page 6*

Our brief Bentley Beetham life story opposite, draws upon facts and recollections of those who knew him, gathered in a fascinating and amusing recent biography, *Love of the Mountains*, by former Bentley Beetham pupil, the late Michael D. Lowes.



## BENTLEY BEETHAM

1886-1963

*a life well lived*



Born on the first of May 1886, the son of a Darlington bank manager, Beetham began life in comfortable surroundings. Tragically, his father died when he was just four. Unfortunately, his mother Frances proved unable to exert the strong parental influence that a father might have provided, and this was exacerbated by an unexplained withdrawal of motherly affection - a possible reason why Beetham, who never married, was unable to form meaningful relationships with women.

When he became a boarding pupil there in 1899, Barnard Castle School effectively took on the role of surrogate parent to the 13 year old who found his new surroundings very much to his liking. The opportunities to explore the natural world were many and he soon became an enthusiastic young naturalist with a strong interest in ornithology and a natural inclination to photographically record what he saw.

By the time he left the school in 1903 he was well on the way to becoming the man we know . . . or rather the man we *think* we know. For if the truth be told, Bentley Beetham was always something of an enigma - and a contradictory one at that!

In 1914, and despite having no formal qualification in the subject, he returned to his old school to teach Natural History. He remained there for the next 35 years, developing along the way a reputation for severity in dishing out discipline that some would suggest bordered on the sadistic. His teaching style too was quite conservative and other than maintaining agricultural plots in the school grounds and making occasional Alpine flower hunting forays into Upper Teesdale, was largely confined to the classroom.

And yet, despite his reputation as a hard taskmaster - hard on himself as much as on those around him - he was respected and liked by those who knew him well. An early conservationist, he inspired many to get out and about to experience the wonders of the natural world, a world that, well ahead of his time, he already considered to be precious, fragile and under threat.

In his book of 1911, *Photography for Bird Lovers*, Beetham makes a first mention of climbing - initially as a means to the end of photographing crag and tree nesting birds . . . but it was soon to become a passion! In fact, Beetham's love of high, inaccessible places

began long before he became the stern disciplinarian of Barnard Castle School. He found a kindred spirit in Howard Somervell from Kendal and the two of them would often make for Wasdale Head, the centre of Lake District climbing at the time. Those carefree days at the Wastwater Hotel were typically boisterous affairs but it was here that Beetham first began to appreciate climbing as a pleasure in itself, rather than the means to an end that his bird studies had previously demanded.

At the end of the war, Beetham again teamed up with Somervell to form a party of climbers keen to try their luck in the Alps. Initially guided by the leading Alpinist Godfrey Alan Solly, they soon progressed to guideless climbing and were elected into the Alpine Club in 1922.

Beetham once confessed that after he'd been bitten by the mountaineering bug, nothing else could take its place and his tally of 23 Alpine climbs during a few weeks in 1923 suggest he was more than willing to stretch himself.

His development as a mountaineer of substance did not go unnoticed and culminated in selection, along with his friend Somervell, onto the ill-fated 1924 Everest expedition on which Mallory & Irvine lost their lives. He was popular and handled most of the photography but any other contribution he might have made was hampered by dysentery and a crippling attack of sciatica.

Bentley Beetham's overseas adventures also extended to north Africa where, despite a complete lack of maps or guidebooks, he made a total of five expeditions to the Haut Atlas and soon became a respected authority on the climbing potential of this 1,000+ mile long range.

But it was here in the UK that his lasting legacy to rock climbing was to be created.

His tenure at the school included shepherding pupils over to the Lakes where the school maintained a hut near Mountain View at the top of Borrowdale and it was here in the then under-developed



valley that he, more often than not on his own and subsequently with pupils in tow, set about discovering and climbing all his many interesting and ingenious routes that would eventually appear in the *Fell & Rock Climbing Club Guide to Borrowdale* in 1953.



Those of us who remember the more or less straightforward V.Diff of old would be intrigued to see how polished the wall on the right has become - perhaps as good a reason as any for why it's now been graded MVS.

Following a series of amusingly executed chimney moves to reach the jammed block, Martin formed an impressive - looking bridge between the flake and the wall. He managed to get a bit of gear in place but then decided that getting from one side to the other wasn't really on any more.



Meanwhile, on the first pitch of Chamonix (above) Woody was having a few problems of his own, as in finding that his right arm wasn't quite long enough to reach a hold that he *really* needed.



... and then on up to a sunny Belvedere and a fine finish for all three of them.



Coming back down to the block and after much finger drying - which didn't go un-noticed by Steve and Andy, who were now wondering where they'd stashed their chalk bags, Martin took a line to his left that allowed him to scale the wall in his usual confident fashion . .



The Bentley Beetham Challenge, as it's now become known, was organised by veteran cragsman Chris Campbell and he was looking to include as many members as possible in the 'project'.

Although Andy Dunhill was keen to take part, he was booked to head for France on the day before the fun kicked off, so he and Chris got stuck in ahead of time on Shepherd's Crag, ticking off Brown Slabs Crack, Monolith Crack & Shepherd's Chimney (left)

They also bagged a trio of Trods on Glaciated Slab - Tan, Tethera & Lethera - in Combe Ghyll and also managed to squeeze in Quayfoot Buttress as well.



There were still a few climbs to be tackled in **Combe Ghyll** though and on the weekend itself Chris was joined by Matt Reed to grab three more Trods: Pimp, Methera & Dovera, thoroughly enjoying the superb, easy-angled Glaciated Slabs before moving onto Face Route, Dove's Nest where the dank, green confines of Central Chimney were appreciated rather less (right)

Meanwhile, over on **Raven Crag**, Simon Fenna and Darren Hartley were clocking up an impressive 1200' of climbing, finding along the way that the guide's description of Corax beyond the second pitch as being largely of broken vegetated rock . . . was exactly that - but then, some of Bentley Beetham's climbs can get a bit chossy here and there!

As well as Corax, the ever-popular Corvus was now also in the bag together with Pedestall Wall and Raven Crag Buttress, while back at Shepherd's Crag things were about to get rather busy on Little Chamonix. With almost the entire FMC contingent forming an orderly queue to have a crack at it, this was clearly the weekend's favourite climb.

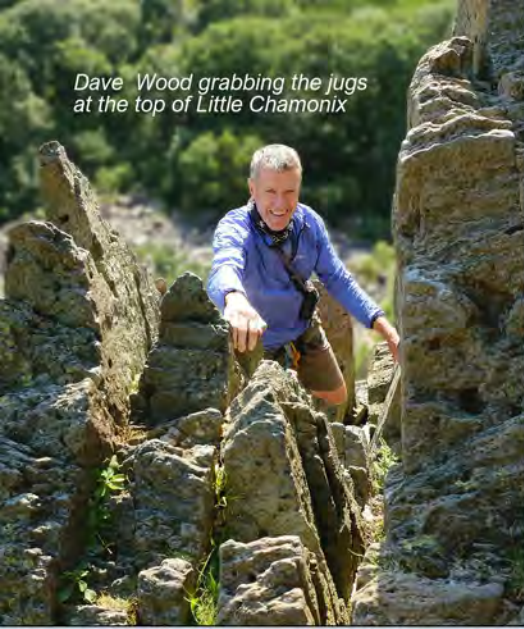
First to the top was Tony Hulme with Becky making short shrift of the final pitch. Next was Dave Hicks with Karen, briefly detained near the saddle until Woody made a gentlemanly intervention (now forever known as an 'Arse Assist')\* to help her on her way, allowing him to finish the climb with Hal, and Martin who'd led pitch 1.

\*badly-hidden-joke alert





Dave Wood grabbing the jugs at the top of Little Chamonix



He's not a narcissist, he's a very naughty boy!

Times like this beg The Question: is there any better way of ending a day's climbing? The Answer: of course there is, it's in a pub!

below: Karen describes what it feels like to get stuck on a move and have need of 'Mr Wood's Special Remedy'!



## WHO WAS THERE?

in no particular order and some members showed up for just one of the days:

Matt Reed, Simon Fenna, Becky Hicks, Tony Hulme, Hal Rzdakiewicz, Dave Wood, Joanne Leadbetter, Martin Dale, Andy Ingle, Dave & Karen Hicks, Steve Clark, Darren Hartley and meet organiser Chris Campbell  
Claire Addy & John Hickman also put in a supporting appearance at Shepherd's and Roy generally got in the way taking photos



## On Sunday June the 19th teams once again set off, this time dividing efforts between Bowderstone, Woden's Face & Gillercombe

On Bowderstone Crags, Darren Hartley and Chris Campbell were enjoying dry conditions for Woden's Needle while Roy, lost among the boulders below, was also losing his wallet . . . and the plot. His credit cards and more than a hundred quid inside were inspiration enough for a boulder-to-boulder search, but by the time Chris and Darren returned, he'd given up all hope of ever seeing it again.

On the way back to the car park, they bumped into Martin and Joanne who'd just come down from Bentley Beetham's very first Borrowdale climb of 1921 - the original Woden's Face route.

The day before, Tony, Becky, Karen & Dave had already climbed Woden's Face Direct which left the original face route and Woden's Cheek for Martin & Joanne to tick before it started raining.

Meanwhile up at Gillercombe, it was dawning on Matt Reed and Simon Fenna that they'd drawn the day's short straw as they stoically braved high winds and rain to get to grips with Grey Knotts Face.

Which meant that by late Sunday afternoon, and with weather rapidly deteriorating, we'd reached only number 29 on our 30 routes score board.

## So close, but not quite there! What was to be done?

Leaning heavily on the concept that this had after all been 'a long weekend', Chris teamed up with a friend from Eden Valley Mountaineering Club on the Tuesday evening to climb Gabbro at Gillercombe and triumphantly complete the challenge!

All in all then, a successful conclusion to a most enjoyable weekend. Consensus was that the routes followed good lines and, reflecting the continuing popularity of many, were often quite polished in places with fewer gear placements than perhaps might have been expected. Our respect for Beetham's pioneering efforts grew with

Thanks to everyone who contributed to such a successful and highly enjoyable weekend. *Chris*



Chris Campbell leading on Woden's Needle



Martin Dale on Woden's Cheek



Joanne, Martin, Darren and Chris below Woden's Cheek



Matt and Simon at Grey Knotts



Chris, not on Gabbro but at Dove's Nest on Saturday

every foot and hand hold on each and every climb. What's more, it's well worth remembering that of the 30 routes we tackled, 25 were in fact climbed by the man himself - nailed boots and all - as solo ascents!



# Somewhere <sup>VERY</sup> off the Beaten Track

## the Island of Mingulay

with Andy Dunhill, May 2016

*It's a place I'd wanted to visit for quite some time so I was keen to take up the opportunity to join a Fell & Rock trip to this tiny island just south of Barra at the most southerly tip of the inhabited Outer Hebrides islands*

In the 1880s as many as 160 people were living here. But the land isn't particularly fertile so life must have been hard and by 1912 the last of its inhabitants had left.

At just under 4 km North to South and about 3 km east to west, the island is now owned by the National Trust for Scotland who manage it as a wildlife reserve.

There are extensive areas of sea cliffs, some of which are loose and unattractive but in contrast, many others offer excellent climbing on good Lewisian Gneiss. Scottish Rock Volume 2 North covers the island and an update is in progress.

To get there you take the daily ferry from Oban to Castlebay on Barra. It's a 5 hour journey, the return passenger cost is less than £30 and unless you plan to visit other islands to the north, there's no need to bring a vehicle.

The usual thing is to pre book local boatman Donald to take you to the island. He'll meet the ferry and dock next to it, so you need carry your gear only a short distance. The ferry arrived at 5pm and within the hour we were on our way to Mingulay. We each paid £90 for the round trip there and back and the cost was based on there being at least ten passengers on board.



Donald will drop you on the rocks at the edge of the sandy Mingulay Bay (Bagh Mhiughlaigh) from where you need to carry all the gear up to the camping area. Although not far, it's still hard work getting there. This is camping at its most basic. There are no facilities at all on the island so you'll need to take everything with you: tents, food, alcohol (if you can't survive without it), a first aid kit and of course climbing gear - plenty of it. A spade is also essential for digging a toilet.

There's a mobile signal of sorts at higher points on the island but not all operators are served - and that includes Vodafone.

Fortunately, Donald left us with a radio for emergency use and to arrange the pick-up time when we were ready to leave.

We camped at the start of the old ruined village. One of the buildings has been refurbished to provide accommodation for the few Trust staff who monitor the island's wildlife, patiently setting out each day to count the numbers of nest birds.

Most of the cliffs require an abseil approach so static ropes are essential. Even more vital are rope protectors. Despite taking precautions, we trashed one rope, so if you don't take them, don't climb - or you might not come back!

There are a few non-serious cliffs which, to give us a feel for the rock, were good to start on. On our first day we went to Geirum Walls at the south end of the island. The climbs there range from 10 to 12 metres and VS to E3. I did 6 routes that day which served as an excellent introduction.



Ron Kenyon (above) on Geirum Walls, (left) on Arch Deacon and (below) at the top of Under The Pink

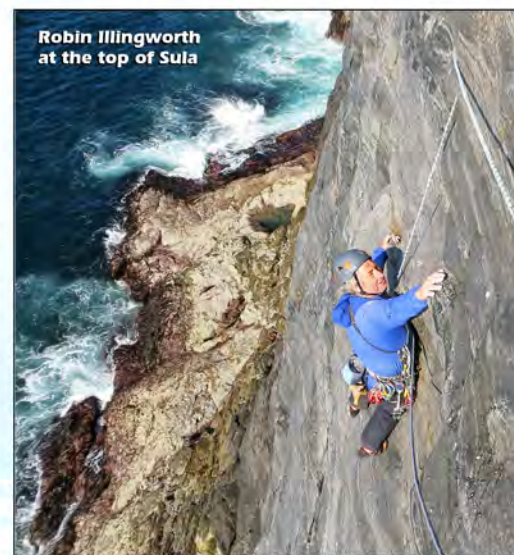


The main concentration of climbs is in the Guarsay Mor area on the west side of the island. We had three days climbing on various cliffs here. Most were single or two pitch from 50 to 120 metres. I did eight routes on these cliffs and all were excellent.

The Arch Deacon (above) is a 4 star 3 pitch HVS 5a which traverses out above a big sea cave in improbable territory for the grade. Several teams did this and all said superb. Another stand out climb was Under the Pink E1 5b (above right) a two pitch climb on excellent rock.

The highlight was Sula, a three pitch E2 on the main cliff of the island, Dun Mingulay. It requires a 90 metre abseil so a long rope is needed and much of it is in space, so quite exciting. Four of us did this in two separate teams.

Fortunately there are ledges to walk along at the foot of the climb but the sea is not far away. This is also the easiest way back up the cliff.



Robin Illingworth at the top of Sula

photos by Andy Dunhill

continues overleaf





A few specific features apply to the climbing here: Abseil points can be difficult to locate so it could be easy to go down into the wrong place. Setting the abseil is not easy as there are few blocks for slings and you need to search to place decent nuts & often friends.

Crucially though, rope protectors can then be hard to get past. I suggest that a long roll of hard-wearing stair carpet would be useful. The rock structure can change within a climb with upper sections remaining steep but often becoming easier and on big holds.

To save effort, it's best to take your gear over to a climbing area and leave it there for a few days.

After all, it's hardly likely to get stolen!

We had excellent weather; in fact it was near tropical. I even went for a swim one day - a brief one - and although we had a couple of short showers one night, it was otherwise sun and blue skies every day. I would not want to be there long in poor weather though. Midges were no problem but no doubt they'll appear in June. There are no trees on the island but there were literally hundreds of seals that came up onto the beach on a few evenings.

A fantastic sight.

On the return boat journey, Donald took us around the south of the island then up the west side, passing Pabay and Sandray.

The sea was so calm that even wake from the boat could barely raise a wave.

It was surreal!

My thanks to my partners: Roh, Rob, Robin and Steve

Andy

Steve and Rob starting out on Ossian Boulevard (E2)

# Meet our Librarian

**And if you reckon he bears a striking resemblance to long-standing Honorary Club Member Dave Earle, that's because it's him after all. The prospect of there being two of them would have anyone reaching for the bottle, so let's rejoice at his self-evident singularity!**

Yes, he's the guardian of the club's small but fascinating collection of mountaineering, climbing and walking books that you may not have known anything about... until now!

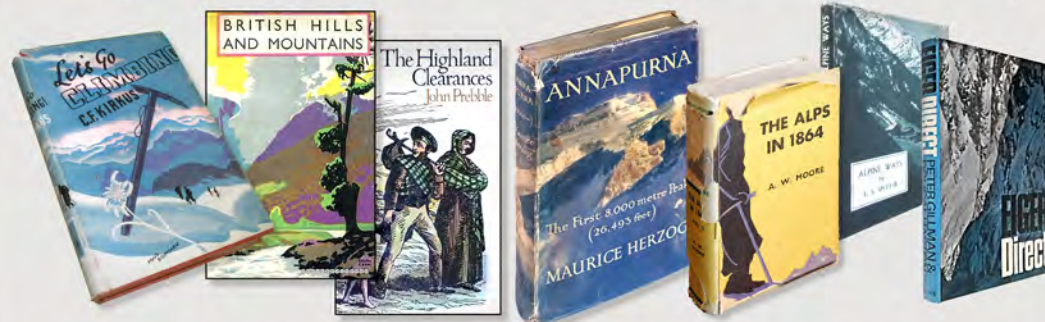
As it happens, there are two collections:

The original bequest, going back to the early days of the club, is the one you see on the right, plus a more recent collection which, because he's run out of room, is housed up in the loft at Dave's home in Poulton.

I've arranged with Dave to let everyone in the club know just exactly what books he's looking after and as soon as I've deciphered the hand-scrawled set of pages he posted off to me I'll be putting the list up on the club website.

From what I've seen of it so far it's really quite a treasure trove and I reckon there's bound to be something in there for everyone. Below for example, are just a few of the many that I liked the look of:

Roy



All of the books in the collections are worth reading, but I asked Dave to highlight those that he thought were the most interesting. He reckons that most Bonington, Shipton and Tilman books are a good read, as are those by Harry Griffin. He also gave me a list of specific titles he thought you'd like:

*Conquistadors of the Useless* (Lionel Terray), *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (Eric Newby), *Space Beneath My Feet* (Gwen Moffat), *Ten Great Mountains* (R.L.G. Irving), *Seven Years in Tibet* (Heinrich Harrer), *Tents in the Clouds* (Monica Jackson), *Playground of Europe* (Leslie Stephen), *Scottish Himalayan Expedition* (W.H. Murray), *Brenva* (T. Graham Brown) *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus* (Albert F. Mummery)

Three of the books shown above also featured on Dave's list: *The Highland Clearances* by John Prebble, *Annapurna* by Maurice Herzog and *The Alps in 1864* by A. W. Moore.

**So, how can you gain access to all these hidden treasures? Well, provided you're a member of the club, Dave is happy to loan out books from the collections. Just phone him beforehand with title(s) and arrange to collect from his home in Poulton. His phone number is in the Member's Listing.**



# HOT ROCK in CALPE

Once again we picked Calpe in Spain for our Easter Extravaganza

with Chris Thistlethwaite

Choosing this justly popular base wasn't at all difficult. After all, there's convenient access to many of the crags and the climate, for walking as well as climbing, is pretty much ideal.

Knowing that it would prove perfect for our needs, we booked 15 days at the same villa we'd stayed at two years ago.

For the princely sum of €1100 it worked out at less than €10 a night for each of the ten of us, so we were more than made up.

Andy Dunhill, Geoff Brindle and I had booked our flights to meet up at Alicante at around 11 on the Monday night but then, a few weeks before we left, Andy's flight was brought forward and was now due to arrive mid morning.

Our flight landed over 2 hours late so it was three in the morning before we eventually reached the villa.

Best laid plans and all that!



*Roughing it in Calpe - but then what do you expect for under €10 a night?*

The first 2 days were most un-Calpe-like. It rained and was quite cold so we went for walks in the immediate area.

Our walk on the second day took us on a circumnavigational bumble around Olta, the big hill overlooking Calpe to the north, and we also made it to its summit.

The early hours of Thursday morning saw the arrival of our second group, comprising Dave and Karen Hicks, Christine Fry and Caroline Webb.

The weather for Thursday was much improved and with everyone keen to get on the rock we took ourselves off to Toix, a local crag where, despite a few of us having climbed there before, we found that there's always something to do.

We each enjoyed several routes, so much so that we returned there on the Friday. Team Hicks had never been here before so they were made up with what the crag had to offer.

Martin Dale, Joanne Leadbetter and Nick Hepburn were the last to arrive in the early hours of Saturday morning - later than expected due to a car hire 'glitch'.

With a full team assembled, we generally visited the same crags. I say generally, but with this being their first visit, some wanted to explore the town etc. while others decided to take rest days.



*Always something to do at Toix Crag*

So, the crags visited in order were Alcalali, Guadalest, Font D'Axia, Echo Valley and the remote but idyllic Morro Carlos.



*continues overleaf >*

*photos by Caroline, Joanne, Nick and Christine who contributed our main picture of the Peñón de Ifac*

*\* to find out the details, wait for the 'Mug' awards at the next club dinner*





Heading up the Peñón de Ifac



So, what the hell do I do with this?



On our rest day, Andy, Geoff and I went for a superb walk up and around Monte Ponoig (1183m) from where we'd climbed on the previous day at Echo Valley. On the return leg, we followed paths through thick woodland but when they faded out we finished up bushwhacking our way in what we hoped was the right direction.

After much cursing we eventually found a path which to our surprise brought us to within 20 metres of where we'd parked the car. We put it down to brilliant navigation!

The 'Hicks' team departed early on the Friday morning so while the others had a rest day, Nick and I returned to Guadalest.

Since Andy was leaving late on Saturday, we climbed with him at the local Pena Roja crag and on our remaining days we visited Abdet, Marin and Alcalali before departing late on the evening of Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>.

On a few occasions, some of us ate out in Calpe (left) but most of the time we dined communally at the villa (below left).

As usual Andy took over initial chef's duties but Karen & Dave also provided a few meals as did Christine and then Joanne. All of them were excellent. Cakes were also baked by Christine - a first for a trip like this. Food costs worked out at €6 and alcohol less than €2 per person per night. Economical or what?

So, yet again this was another excellent trip and a great start to the climbing year.

Chris

# SUN ROCK 30 YEARS AGO and how it all began

**It was April 1986. Six holidays had been arranged with Bourne Travel of Highfield Road, Blackpool. Each holiday cost £135 and the vouchers bore the names: Andrew Blaylock, David Cundy, John Hickman, Thomas Knowles, Paul Taylor and David Wood.**

'Climber' magazine had recently carried an article on Sun Rock and featured many crags near Calpe on the Costa Blanca. It was going to be an introduction to the relatively unknown world of sport climbing. No more trembling on muddy footholds in wet quarries; no sea-soaked lashing by the Cornish winds. That Easter we were going to the land of the shining bolts and we were going to them ALL. We were going to be stainless steel heroes - if just for one day. Prior to our departure, we had each been busy in our respective jobs and were looking forward to a well-earned break. In particular, as well as his regular job, John had also become responsible for inducting some young trainees. By all accounts they were very pleasant - but high maintenance - and were trying his patience to a considerable degree.

As we sauntered down the airport concourse, relaxed in the belief that we would soon be in the land of sun and San Miguel, Mr. Hickman's amazingly long strides began to falter as three figures approached. Following a brief conversation John remarked on how co-incidental it was that his trainees were *also* heading out to Spain. "But it is" said John, "a big country" As we neared the departure gate John took a sharp intake of breath as now closing in on him . . . were his young trainees. He assured us that we needn't worry, since after all, the Costa Blanca was 'a big place'.

The plane journey was uneventful. By way of advance information, we had just one magazine article and that was soon read. As we boarded our transfer coach John stopped and smiled awkwardly. He did all he could to reassure us that he had no intention of embarking on a 'vacaciones busman' and since after all, Benidorm did indeed have thousands of hotels . . . we believed him.



Forty five minutes later, as we walked into the Hotel Colon, John was now being followed - at a respectful distance - by Debbie, Jennifer and Noreen.

The next day dawned bright and colourful. We'd ordered an economy-size hire car but when it arrived at the hotel we were in for a surprise. Those with long enough memories may recall that the Spanish-made Seat Panda wasn't much bigger than a fallen over wheelie bin. Although its soft top was a welcome bonus, with three of us of average size and another three of the larger variety, we knew it was going to be a tight fit.

Figuring out how six of us, together with our gear, could somehow be squeezed in, was getting us nowhere so we decided that we'd drop the biggest at the train station and then pick him up at Calpe.

None of this had escaped the attention of the locals, and as we made our clutch-burning departure, it was accompanied by raucous whistles and applause. With the largest installed in seats (no belts) and Andy riding shotgun on the back, we hurtled along the motorway. With speedo rattling against the end stop and gaining just about enough momentum on the down-hills to take us up to the motorway exit, we made it to Calpe where Tom was waiting to be picked up.



Martin samples newly bolted line probably 6a+/6bb at Marin





We arrived, reeking of clutch burn, at our first location, Sierra-de-Toix, a limestone crag looking out over the Mediterranean and perched high above the Mascarat Gorge and its infamous bridge jump. Routes were mostly single pitches, protected by bolted chain links, with optional extensions.

Andy, the best climber in the bunch, acquitted himself well while the rest of us cranked, smeared and fumbled our way up the colour-coded routes. None of them, except for Dire Straits, were named.

We wondered if as the week progressed, this might turn out to be less of a route and more of a prediction.

### *hijacked by the local colour*

After taking full advantage of our half-board dinner we set out for Benidorm old town. We didn't get far though. Calling in at the local bar we became engrossed in the floor show. A man with a hammer was setting about a bullet on the floor. Grinning inanely and looking to us for some gesture of camaraderie, he was aiming

reckless blows at the floor in the hope of triggering an explosion. We expected that the barman would be having none of it, but quite to the contrary, there he was, heading towards us laden with carafes full of wine which he then insisted on pouring down our throats from a great height. So much so that after several downings and drownings we were in no state of dress or demeanour to do anything but surrender.

The next day, with transport skills now refined, we flashed the motorway and were soon drawing up before the *Peñón de Ifac*, that enormous plug of rock (*right*) dominating Calpe's proudest beach.

We'd managed to find a guidebook, the front of which bore a picture of a climber with an uncanny resemblance to a young Martin Dale. We planned to take on its mighty south face with an ascent of *Valencianos*, so we unloaded our gear. John had bought a batch of enormous karabiners that could easily have doubled as railway couplings.

I think he still has them. He needed a rucksack to carry the weight, while the rest of his stuff roughed it in a plastic Asda bag (*below*) Reckoning we were in about the right area, we looked around and who should we spot, not more than a stone's throw from us? None other than well-known Lakeland climber, Rick Graham. He and his friend were on something that appeared to have more e-numbers than a Vesta curry.

Assessing our readiness - or more likely, lack of it - for the big adventure we had planned, they politely suggested that perhaps *Via Pany* might be better suited to our way of doing things. As we shuffled off round to the shady north side, I'd swear I saw a couple of thought bubbles hovering over their heads:

### *'No Gear' and 'No Idea'*

Day three was spent at Dalle D'Olla. This involved another engine-searing motorway drive, taking us just short of the Mascarat Gorge on the Altea hillside.

This once open countryside is now now occupied by a group of super-rich Russians who arrived in the late 1980's with suitcases full of dollars. Our crag was another chain-link affair, put up by the same German who equipped Sierra de Toix. Few of us had ever skied, so it took us a while to realise that the colours represented levels of difficulty. Andy was on the blacks (F6A/6A+) and the rest of us were rainbow. We'd all liked to have been Mr Black, instead of Mr Red, or Mr Green, but we were the Reservoir Dogs of Altea Hills . . . just for one day.

With visits to the Old Town, our evenings had now taken on a familiar pattern. We'd moved on from Bar Crazy after a fight between the locals forced the barman to bang a few heads together.



*An immaculately turned out John Hickman ready to rock 'n roll in style. But is that 80s style or are we thinking 70s? It's too close to call!*



*the view south from the Sierra de Toix area*





We were now to be found in bars and over pool tables, that is, except for John and Andy. They'd taken to sampling other hangouts in the company of John's trainees, who by now had become rather fond of Flaming Sambucas, so Andy Blaylock's fire-fighting skills were on standby, ready to be put to the test. The technology in those days was such that there was no chance of Carling Widescreen football nights we know now, and in any case, we were climbers and preferred San Miguel which stayed in the system long enough for our days to start feeling more like nights. Paul and I were serial offenders and often arrived back in the early hours. I was always up for breakfast alarm call though and often found others fully clothed, asleep in bed or even occasionally in the bathroom.

### *endless amusement for the locals*

Morning departures had also taken on a familiar pattern, but with a growing pantomime feel to them. Our comical attempts to shoe-horn ourselves into the Seat had attracted enthusiastic support, with the locals now hanging over balconies, cheering and shouting "Ole!"

Wednesday was no exception when, under a clear blue sky, we rattled the tin can towards Sierra-de-Toix East. Facing the l'fach, the only way to it was via a labyrinthine journey through the German villa land of Maryville. But it offered us a good, safe but steep limestone experience and even though we didn't know it at the time, we were now getting into our stride.

That evening, sensing that Paul and I were increasingly lacking what could reasonably pass for sleep, John mentioned that he and the others had visited what he referred to as 'an interesting bar' and that if I insisted, he could be persuaded to make a return visit. Insistence took all of five seconds and soon I found myself descending into an underground, beige coloured, lounge-like bar.

The moment John caught sight of the barman though, his usual confident demeanour deserted him. Apparently a new addition to the scene, he was a figure of unusual stature in that he was as wide as he was tall - and he was not a short man.

### *John falls for the Big Stitch-Up*

As we sat down and ordered drinks, a lady of uncertain nationality seated herself next to John and placed her hand on his leg. She suggested that should he care to buy drinks, she'd show him an exceedingly good time. John shuddered, took a gulp of beer and politely declined her generous offer, mumbling something about already having a drink but thank you very much. Thinking that he hadn't quite got the drift, she persevered for a while before shifting her attention onto me. The nature of the entertainment was such that I'd barely taken a sip from my glass, so I gave the same excuse, but seeing that

John had already drained his, I suggested that surely he'd be only too keen to buy 'the lady' a drink! In his best major-like voice, John delivered the rebuke he's always reserved for his friends - 'you complete bastard!' - before mounting the stairs three steps at a time and bolting from his 'interesting bar' in one hell of a hurry.

By then it was nearing the end of the week and we were running low on energy, so decided to take a rest day by the pool. We did what everyone does around pools but before long we were planning the next, and our final day's adventure - an ascent of the Puig Campana, the 1408m limestone mountain that towers over Benidorm.

We'd read that the several routes up its steep faces were separated by prominent ridges, pinnacles and spires. The climbing was a combination of traditional and sport that was to be popularised by Rowland Edwards and his son in the years that followed.

As usual, Friday dawned clear and blue.

Cynics reckon that no good deed should ever go unpunished and Tom, who'd put his back out helping a lady who'd fallen next to the pool the day before, was now painfully aware of exactly what that meant.

So now there were just five of us up for the climb.

### *we need a holiday to recover from this*

With no motorway to contend with, we were soon speeding northwards up the hills towards Finestrat. That is, until a curious combination of smells coming from the bowels of the engine compartment, as well as smoke and strange noises, forced us to abandon the car and set out on foot across open ground towards the big hill.

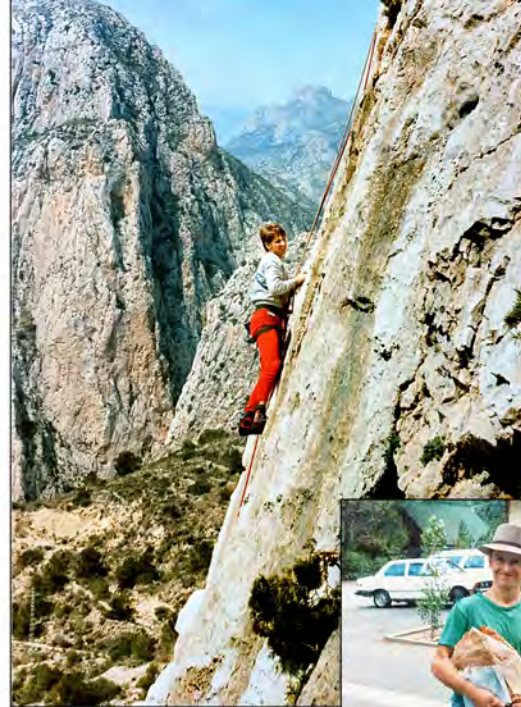
Strung out in order of fitness, we were Andy first and Dave last and though we gazed forever upwards, we got no further than the base of one of the walls - the very same walls where several years later, Paul and I would be forced to spend a long, cold and uncomfortable night.

It was then that we decided to face facts. Our pioneering Sun Rock trip had run into the buffers and all we needed now was another holiday . . . to recover from this one!

Although initially we'd sought out the safety of bolt protection, our holiday had taken us places that we could hardly have anticipated. We came to appreciate the understated ability of Spanish climbers on the bolts as well as on traditional climbs. Some of us perhaps, also reflected on the nonchalant tolerance displayed by our hosts to the antics of us, their visitors.

This was to be the start of the Club's long-standing relationship with the crags and hills of Spain and for us at the time, it was an enjoyable and much appreciated antidote to an increasingly sanitised world.

*Dave Wood*



(above) Andy Blaylock at Sierra de Toix West and (right) on firmer ground, looking, for all we know, as though he's bringing home the shopping.

Eat your heart out Dave Cundy (above at Sierra de Toix West)

Judging by this recent pic (left) your lurid taste in fashion looks like it might soon be making a comeback.

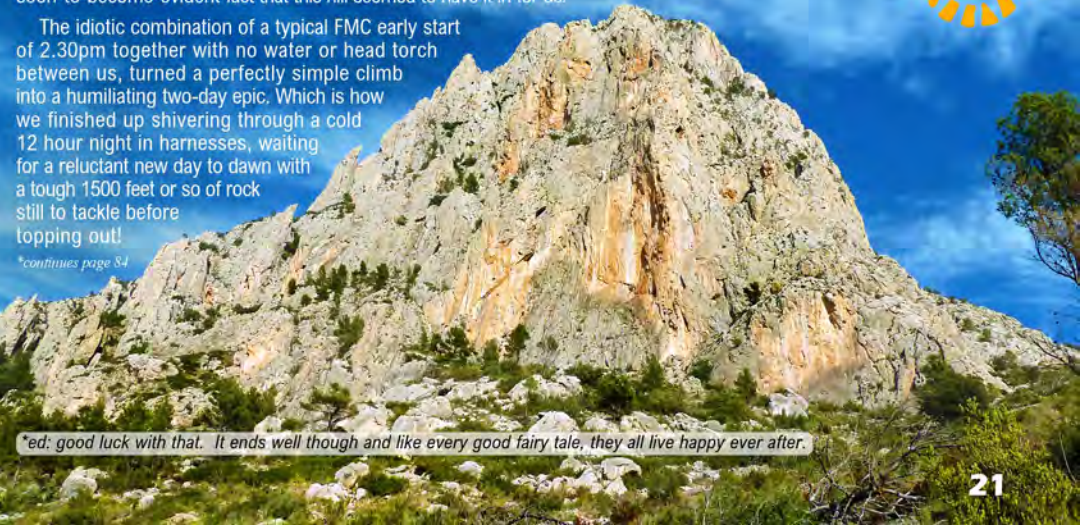
Now if only you'd hung onto those alarmingly inappropriate pants of yours . . .

## **Puig Campana**

Perhaps a bit miffed with failing miserably on the first Sun Rock trip, Paul Taylor and I set out a few years later to make a south face ascent via the normal route - Espolón Central. That was the plan anyway . . . but if only we'd allowed for the soon-to-become-evident fact that this hill seemed to have it in for us!

The idiotic combination of a typical FMC early start of 2.30pm together with no water or head torch between us, turned a perfectly simple climb into a humiliating two-day epic. Which is how we finished up shivering through a cold 12 hour night in harnesses, waiting for a reluctant new day to dawn with a tough 1500 feet or so of rock still to tackle before topping out!

*\*continues page 84*



*\*ed: good luck with that. It ends well though and like every good fairy tale, they all live happy ever after.*



# SOUTH WEST

## with Andy and Nick

**In keeping with changing weather patterns we had a mixed experience this year with some good hot sun but quite a lot of rain**

We headed down to our usual starting point to stay at the campsite in Hartland Village North Devon, a friendly site with decent facilities.

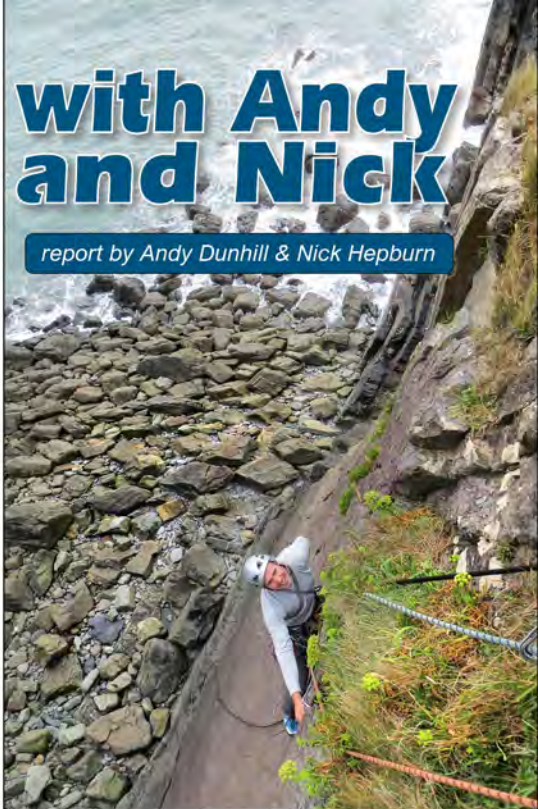
The tides were in our favour so we headed to Gull Rock, Marsland to start the trip. This is an amenable cliff with several good single pitch routes in the middle grades. We did Solid Air VS, Crazy Streak HVS, probably E1, and Walking on the Moon HVS\*\*. All offer very good technical slab climbing. The first two get no stars, in the definitive guide – but 2 and 1 star respectively in Rockfax, but both deserve at least one. It is tidal so by early evening we had to rush off to avoid spending the night there, using the handily-placed fisherman's rope on the north side of the fin to descend back down to the beach.

### *the next day, it rained*

We considered visiting Clovelly Village but the £7 entry fee got rid of that idea. A visit to the West Country Inn which had a stack of beer left from their washed out weekend beer festival proved a worthy alternative.

The following day was nice weather. Comakey Cliff is described in the guide as *'The archetype of Culm crags, full of tradition, vegetation, and as a special bonus, a fair amount of loose rock'* It comprises a series of overlapping slabs with a steep but reasonable descent down grass slopes. We climbed on the smaller Seaward Slab and opted to abseil down it because the top of the climbs are a steep grass slope and the abseil rope provides a belay. We did Stormy Weather HVS\* and Sunday, Bloody Sunday E1\*\* in the guide but E2 in Rock Fax, which seemed correct.

The next morning it was dull but dry so we headed to Lower Sharpnose Point which is probably the most popular cliff on the Culm coast offering a lot of very good steep wall climbs, some being very hard. The cliff comprises three quite dramatic narrow fins of rock that *'stand precariously balanced in the turbulent Atlantic seas'*. Strong winds and a short shower stopped play for half an hour but then things brightened up a bit so we abseiled in to the north fin and did The Smirk E1\* and Mascon E1\*. Both are very good climbs with reasonable protection. The walk back along the top of the cliffs provided an excellent sunset finish to the day.



above: Nick on the E2 at Comakey



below: 'The Smirk' at Lower Sharpnose

### *the next day, it rained*

So, after a cream tea at our favourite café in Hartland - the only one - however it is great, we drove down to West Penwith and camped in the grounds of the Land's End YHA near St Just. This meant we were able to use their facilities. The price to camp is similar to other campsites in the area and it's recommended. We stayed three nights and didn't manage to do any climbing because it rained, not all of the time, but quite a lot!

It was misty and very humid. We cut our losses and on one of the days we went for a walk along the coast as far as Bosigran. There were a couple of teams climbing in between showers but after watching them for a few minutes the cloud came down obscuring the cliff even though we were only a couple of hundred yards away.

We hitched a lift back to the Hostel with the chef from the Gurnard's Head Inn. All the talk of food meant a pasty stop in St Just became a necessity. It's odd how every shop claims to sell 'Cornwall's finest pasties'. Maybe they ought to be made to take a leaf out of Carlsberg's advertising and be forced to add 'probably'.

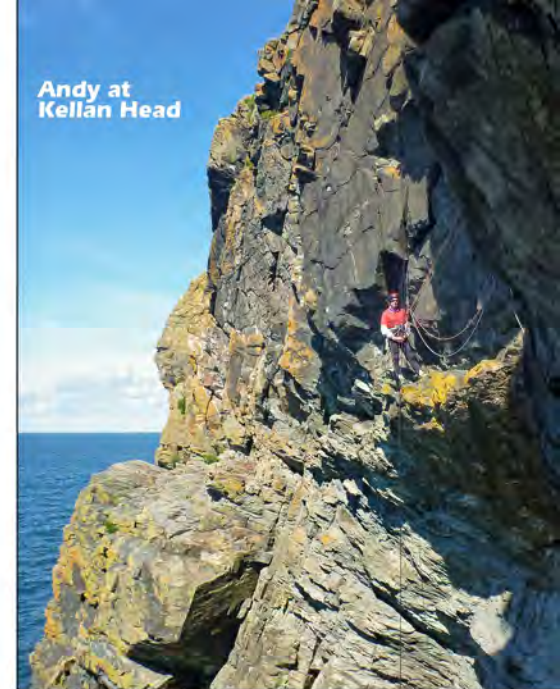
The next morning saw more cloud and rain so Nick decided to check out the beach at St Ives and hire an SUP. Unfortunately, today's H & S seems to have now reached Cornwall, because an offshore wind put paid to any kit hire and the slight chance of Nick heading off out into the Atlantic. I went for another good walk along the coast finishing in St Ives by which time the weather had improved and we even saw some sun.

For the final few days of the trip we moved to camp at Polzeath near Wadebridge. There are many sites in the area and some seemed quite poor. Fortunately, we chose to camp at South Winds which is very good with some of the best facilities we've seen. On arrival though, rain rolled in preventing any climbing so we sussed out some of the cliffs, had a look at Polzeath and had a beer - as recommended - at the Pity Me Inn.



We had two good days climbing on what's referred to as the Comish Atlantic Coast. On Doyden Point we did Lotus E1\*\*, Caprice VS\* and Flying Circus E2\* - it's low in the grade but deserves two stars.

Andy at Kellan Head



All three were very good and only slightly affected by the tide. The Rock Fax guide is more helpful to access the cliff, advising an abseil down the centre of it.

On the final day we had a full-on sea cliff experience at Kellan Head where we did Zugzwang E2\* on the Waterslide Wall, which deserves two stars. It's an easy scramble descent but the cliff holds some damp and loose rock, and it's steep! The description refers to two pegs on the main pitch so we decided to abseil down the route to check them out. Only one was in place and after being there for 30 years, was very rusty. It was a very good gymnastic climb in an impressive position. The second pitch is given 5b but is probably nearer 5c. This is a cliff that's worth another visit - in nice weather.

### *the next day, it rained*

So, we headed for home!





# Don's North Country Double



Two FMC Day Walks fondly recalled by their organiser, Don Nichol who only rarely gets lost but has been known to occasionally prefer a track less trodden to a map more carefully read!

## 1 Five Cross a Bog and find a Picnic Table

John & June Wiseman, Kevan Ebbrell and Cherry Earle met up with me at Slaidburn Village car park on a dry April morning to set off up a quiet lane which eventually lead us onto Dunsop Fell, the top of which was extremely boggy.

Despite my advice to keep to the right, John and Kevan tried to dodge the damp by going to the left! Although a decent enough way to test their boot's waterproof qualities, they soon found that wellies would have been more suitable footwear. They rejoined us where the path goes through a gate in the wall as we followed waymarking provided by the Water Authority, which was entirely appropriate for John and his squelching socks.

We then descended to Whitendale Farm where we found a handy picnic table with seats just big enough for the five of us to sit down for lunch . . . which we did.



A curious feature of the farm is a large Monkey Puzzle Tree festooned with toy monkeys - extremely weird!

A little later, on the way up the Whitendale Valley, the meet leader took his eye of the ball - but then I never was any good at ball games and some may say the same of my navigation skills. This resulted in a difficult climb (to put it mildly) up a rough, tussocky hillside as we struggled to get across to the old packhorse route known as Hornby Road or Salter Fell Track.

The plus side of this navigational cock-up was that we had less of the tedious track to follow down to Slaidburn, although it also meant that we missed this newish white pillar inscribed with verse by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, in memory of the notorious Witch Trials of 1612, the unfortunate victims of which would almost certainly have been taken along this very same track to their trial at Lancaster.

*photo of the memorial taken on a previous visit*

Further down, above Slaidburn, there's a sad memorial to allied airmen lost during WW2 when their aircraft crashed on the surrounding fells.

Once down, Kevan left for home while the rest of the team enjoyed a superb meal and beer at the Hark to Bounty in Slaidburn before driving home through the Trough of Bowland.



*photo of Whitendale by Don Nichol*

*continues overleaf >*

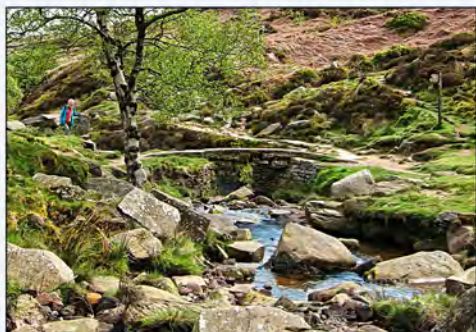


## Brontefied!



Christine Fry, Cherry Earle and Mike Howe met up with me at the car park near Stanbury, a mile or two (don't do kilometres!) outside Haworth.

We followed a path to the Bronte Bridge



and then on to the ruin of Top Withens said to have been the inspiration for the Earnshaw family house, Wuthering Heights in the Emily Bronte novel. We stopped here for lunch . .



and that's when I realised that while taking photos, I'd left my walking pole at the bridge. My attack of Lostpoleitis cured by retracing my steps, we carried on past the ruin, but before long we realised the path wasn't going where we wanted. Another retrace was needed and

after passing Top Withens yet again, we headed off in the opposite direction. That didn't work out too well either. The path eventually died on us, so we made our own way over the moors and up Crow Hill. From there we came down past Ponden Hall, apparently the inspiration for Thrushcross Grange in Wuthering Heights.



I visited Ponden Clough Valley and by the time I met up with the others and

we headed back to the car park, the rain had moved in and was getting quite heavy. Mike made for home and the rest of us for the pub, not as it happens, The Bronte Arms as originally intended. Instead, we drove to the one we'd patronised last year on the Wycoller Walk - the excellent Trawden Arms. *Don Nichol*



## MYSTERY SOLVED!

### The strange 'old' building at Pennistone Hill Country Park

When doing the recce for this walk Don saw what looked like an old building being renovated at the back of the car park chosen as the rendezvous. The trouble was, neither he nor John 'What's On' Wiseman could locate it on any map.

Well, this 'old' building turned out to be a very new chipboard replica of the Parsonage in Haworth and the whole thing was a specially-built film set for a one-off Sally Wainwright drama about the Brontes that's due to be shown by the BBC this Christmas!



## PRESTON GUILD WHEEL MILES OF FUN WITH FRIENDS

Martin Dale's Preston Guild Wheel cycling meet of 2014 was such a big hit that I decided to repeat the occasion this year and nominated myself as Meet Organiser. So, on a dry, sunny Wednesday evening in June after work, Martin and I loaded our bikes into the back of his car - not as easy as you might think - and drove to the Continental pub in Preston, in the hope of meeting up with a group of enthusiastic FMC cyclists for an enjoyable 33 kilometre (21 miles in old money) ride around some of the nicer areas in and around Preston.

Disappointingly though, numbers couldn't match the previous heady heights of 2014. There were eight of us which was just under half the last turnout. But as they say, it's the quality that counts, not the quantity!

As each member arrived we noticed a subtle change in the air, with males of the species enviously eyeing up one another's lean, mean, cycling machines. As Darren observed, it was like a bunch of stray dogs weighing up the opposition! Raring to go, our team was made up of Dave Wood, Hal Rzdakiewicz, Darren Hartley, Martin Bennett, Steve Powell (aka Mark Radcliffe), Don Nichols, Martin Dale and me.

Eventually - just after 7pm - we set off with Martin near the front of the pack and me at the back. With hindsight - and since my 'lady's bike', as Darren described it, proved to be the slowest - my role as back marker was the right place for me. Well that's my excuse anyway and I'm sticking to it. My thanks to Donald for keeping me company for most of the route and encouraging me up the hilly bits!

And of course, not just the bits going uphill. There's a particularly rough-tracked, steep, winding descent - near

Brockholes I think - which proved the undoing of Mr Dale. In the dwindling light and while trying to 'keep up with the boys', the brakes on his machine went all dodgy on him, forcing him to deliberately bale into a muddy puddle. It was either that, or he'd have ended up over the handlebars!

Wooden barriers mark quite a few of the entries to the route, with just enough space to squeeze through, provided that is, that your handlebars aren't too wide! Which was fine for most of us but Steve had a bit of trouble with his shiny new state of the art mountain bike. In his own words: 'all the gear but no idea'.

As it was, Steve, Darren, Woody, Hal and Martin B set the pace for the evening, allowing me, the Meet Organiser to catch up and lead the team triumphantly for the last quarter of a mile in a very reasonable final time of 2hrs 45mins.

We were welcomed back at the Continental by a smiling Cherry Earle, who couldn't manage the ride but wanted to show support for those of us who had. And surprise, surprise! Once we'd all sat down with a well deserved pint of ale, Nick Hepburn arrived to complete our gang of ten!

If you haven't tackled it already, this is a route I can thoroughly recommend that you try. Sooner rather than later though because Preston Council are already in the process of ruining it all with plans to build on quite a bit of the route.

As it happens, an online petition has been mounted against these proposals and you can show your support by signing it, so that who knows, by the time 2018 comes round, it'll be back on our syllabus once again!

*Joanne Leadbetter*



# PEMBROKE

## BACK ON THE MENU

After a break of three years the Pembroke meet re-appeared in 2016. An annual event from the late 1980's through to 2013, it had always been well-attended and attracted more than 30 members in its heyday

This time around we took advantage of the best tide times which were one week later than the May Day holiday. Our base was the old village of Manobier with its splendid castle overlooking the beach and a comfortable pub just up the road.



We were lucky enough to get hold of two excellent places to stay: one a modern bungalow and the other a 1930s country house (above) which could easily double as a film set. All very posh for the FMC!



Pembroke is home to over a thousand routes many of which though excellent are accessible only at low tide. Abseil descents into the unknown add more than a touch of fear factor and at times, sorting out venues for all proved a tough task.



Tony & Becky on Bow-Shaped Slab

However, all of the weekenders got their acts together and made the most of the good weather. Becky and Joanne were shown the ropes on Bow-Shaped and Crystal Slabs by Martin D and Tony and here and at Stennis Head, Simon and Martin B introduced Pete Smith to the delights of Pembroke climbing.



Pete Smith on Limbo (VS)

By all accounts he found it to his liking, though not at all like the Preston Wall! At the same venues Dave Cundy led Terry Robinson on a sea traverse over the waves (Riders on the Storm HVS) and I decided to re-visit Manzuko (E1).

*like a film set it may be but central casting have let us down again.*

Our long-stayers had mid-week rain to contend with, involving shower dodging at Giltar Slabs for Chris and Geoff ably assisted by Simon and Martin. Meanwhile, in full-on rain at Chance Encounter Zawn, Dave Cundy made a good showing leading me and Hal up the HVS Goodge Street.



Dave Cundy and Hal on Goodge Street

A trip to Carew Mill and various pubs in the vicinity made the best of a poor weather day and pressing commitments elsewhere together with an unfavourable forecast for the following day saw Chris, Simon and Martin B heading for home.

Undaunted and with the forecast starting to improve, the remaining four of us had a good day at the Giltar area again and a rather frustrating one at St David's.



Paul Taylor on Giltar Slabs

With the weather now looking better, Paul, Geoff, Hal and I were coming to the end of our stay in Manobier. This was marked by Geoff's toe-curling misfortune of draining his last pint at the local - only to find a slug at the bottom of the glass!

All slugged-out and with nowhere to go, we decided to book into some chalets at Freshwater East and though Geoff thought we were heading into Chavland - and our digs were hardly a match for the manor house - things worked out just fine for the time we spent exploring the coastal path and a final visit to Bow-Shaped Slab.

Terry Robinson on Sunset Boulevard (HVS)





We reached the end of the trip without any real epics and I'd originally intended to leave out this next bit:

Having chided Martin Dale for his habit of sand-bagging his seconds into descending on a rising tide, I felt ill-prepared for taking on the mantle - until a text arrived from Tony suggesting that 'sand-bagging into the near watery demise' should feature in my report, so that's why I'm including all this - just for Tony's sake you understand.

It was on the second day, after an afternoon of easy stuff at Saddle Head, when I felt a need for some excitement. My only mistake was inviting people along. The tide was actually out and to be fair, the high-tide shelf gets only the tiniest bit wave-washed... honest guv! A rope of four abseiled down the Keelhaul wall. (below) I'd been there 10 years before and perhaps should have remembered that Rockfax's 'slabby wall' wasn't in fact slabby at all!

**WHO WAS THERE?**

**we had seven weekenders:**

Becky Hicks, Tony Hulme, Pete Smith, Joanne Leadbetter, Martin Dale, Dave Cundy and Terry Robinson.

**another seven stayed all week:**

Martin Bennett, Simon Fenna, Chris Thistlethwaite, Paul Taylor, Geoff Brindle, Hal Rzedkiewicz and Dave Wood

Steve Longworth, who was caravanning in the area with his wife, also joined us for a day or two.



We'd set our sights on Baker's Door (E2). Its start isn't well-protected and the middle section is sustained. Thinking it was taking me longer than it should have and without me knowing, Tony and Steve had left Hal holding the ropes and had snuck off around the west face to see if they could effect an easier escape.

Not only did they fail to find an escape, but their way back onto the platform was then all but blocked by the incoming tide. Oh dear - wet feet time! Meanwhile, I'd managed the final section and Steve and Hal were climbing - not without considerable effort - leaving Tony dancing around the narrow shelf. Soon though, and with his ankles only mildly moist, he too was cursing his way up the 'slabby wall'.

Like they say: 'all's well that ends well'!



Dave

report & photos from meet organiser Dave Wood

# CLIVE'S POSH NOSH goes down a treat



But it doesn't happen all by itself. Hard work, dedication, a soupçon of culinary nous, judicious use of the microwave and a dollop of good luck all came together under Chef Clive's watchful eye.

Fortunately he had plenty of keen helpers on hand to make the magic happen and between them they whisked up 16 servings of tasty hors d'oeuvres, delicious soup and a terrific main course of succulent braised steak, mash and peas, accompanied by lashings of mulled wine and the inevitable popping of corks from the little extras we brought with us.

The next occasion when the gourmets (and the gourmands - you know who you are!) will gather for another of Clive's feasts is March 18<sup>th</sup> 2017





# SUMMER WORKING WEEKENDS



## Little Langdale July 23rd

Although these working weekends are of course always light-hearted, this one was definitely not for the faint-hearted! It was rub 'n' scrub time and anyone who didn't rub 'n' scrub hard enough or fast enough was in danger of not getting fed.

Fortunately, the Hird family: Andy, Liz, Ed and Jess were able to call upon the enthusiastic efforts of members Liz Rawcliffe, Clive Bell and Kevan Ebbrell as well as Kev's wife Glynis and their granddaughter Grace. Roy, the editor did his nominal best not to be a nuisance, even though he was seen applying more OCD zeal than strictly necessary to the simple task of cleaning windows. *(ed: they can never be clean enough!)*

This was one of those 'let's get stuck in' occasions that we all gallantly rose to. The kitchen was left in gleaming condition by the combined efforts of Liz H, Jess and Grace, Kev replaced the old Toilet Duck-embellished loo seats, which are now up for a Turner Prize and Andy got his brum-brum strimmer to work on the front and back, generally spruced up the outside rather nicely and fitted the secret emergency key safe. Snacks and brews miraculously appeared, were downed and work resumed.

Clive decided he'd had enough of gingerly wobbling up a ladder and set about freshening up the memorial bench with a much needed coat of teak oil and everyone else carried on with . . . you guessed it: the Rubbin' 'n' Scubb'n', Washin' 'n' Wiping and Grinnin' 'n' Bearin' it! Thank goodness that time was called and we could all sit down to a well-deserved meal served up by Liz H and her helpers. We'll be back - anyone want to join us?



## Stair August 13th

The Stair Working Weekend had much the same 'get stuck in' feel to it but with one big difference - inside was where all the humdrum hard work was being done while outside it was all fun and frolics, digging a hole.

Not exactly an overwhelming turn-out either but Hal Rzakiewicz was soon cleaning every surface she could find, Dave Wood was hoovering every cranny he could reach, Christine Fry(up) was giving the kitchen a right good seeing to as well as spiriting up brews exactly when needed and cake to go with them, while editor Roy - since it's become a speciality of his - took fastidious and excessive care of all the windows.

Which was all very well but the real fun was being had outside. A new gate post was needed and digging the hole for it had become a job for three tough types.

*continues overleaf >*







A delivery van had backed into the old post and broke it at the base. The crushed bit had then rotted away, meaning that though the top section was easy to shift, the bit still in the ground resisted almost every effort to lift it. Chris This, Caroline Webb and Andy Dunhill had a job and a half on their hands but after much sweating and swearing, they got there in the end - just in time for Andy to rustle up one of his tasty veggie meals. Both it and the Fryup cake that followed went down a treat . . . as did a trip to the pub!

Mike Howe showed up on the Sunday and fitted a bolt and staple and fashioned a couple of neat metal rain hats to protect the the tops of the posts. Dave and Roy sussed where the Stair Stink was coming from but that's a story for another day. **Andy thanks those who showed up to help and hopes to see a few new faces next time.**



Mrs Fryup (aka Overall) wobbles onto the set, trying not spill anything, bump into other cast members or fall over any props



All we said was you're digging it round and it ought to be square.



You're right Dr Van Heising, those vampires certainly take some shuffling



Nice cake but where's the bleedin' knife?



Fatal mistake - she got what she deserved



Sanity restored and a new gatepost installed



# intro BBO meet

Stair July 16th

## WHO WAS THERE?

### THE USUAL SUSPECTS:

Tony Hulme, Becky Hicks, Dave Cundy, Simon Fenna, Geoff Brindle, Chris Thistlethwaite, Hal Rzakiewicz, Dave Wood, Christine Fry, Caroline Webb, Roy Turner, Martin Dale and Joanne Leadbetter

### AND THE ONES WHO MATTERED MOST:

Our Intro Members, Neil Baines (right) and Andy Ingle (above) and Dave and Karen Hicks who organised the meet



First and foremost of course, this was an Introductory Meet. Fortunately the weather was kind and a grand day out was had on a variety of climbs at Bram Crag in St John's in the Vale.

But even those not climbing had their own introductory moments to savour. Geoff was introduced to some nice new boots at Cotswold and with Roy dragged disapprovingly along, introduced to the considerable delights of the new distillery at Bassenthwaite.





As far as Dave's heart-attack barbecue was concerned, clearly everyone had a hell of a good time. Our chef fed us all exceptionally well but let's face it, mere words mean nothing; it's the pictures that remain to remind of us of a great, fun-packed FMC meet.



# Photo Roundup

No words - just a very odd mix of pictures from a busy six months







Barrie Crook remembers  
**DAVID GREENHALGH**  
 1942-2016



Regretfully I have to report the death of former club member David Greenhalgh after a short illness, in Royal Preston Hospital. He was 74 years old. David, brought up in Fleetwood, joined the club in the mid 1970s shortly after his elder brother Eric joined. He was an active hill walker and occasional climber until the late 1980s when heart and leg circulation problems brought his days on the hills to a close.

Because I knew David and Eric I was allowed to join the club in 1977, despite being from East Lancs - probably the first. With people like George Parker, Dave and Cherry Earle and Gerry Senior, on many occasions we met on Sunday mornings at The New Hollies on the A6. Because I was a member and David and I were friends with Mike Howe, Mike, another one from East Lancs, was allowed to join the club.

David, a chartered accountant, was Treasurer of the FMC between 1983 and 1985 and appropriately, through the Greenhalgh connection, many years later Mike eventually became Treasurer - and still is.



*David on Sulven with friends in 1981*

In 1978, inspired by the enthusiasm of Peter Roscoe, David and I, together with George and Gerry, signed up for *The Tour du Mont Blanc*. It was wonderful - an experience of a lifetime.

David's experiences were not always so elevating. He was an amateur car mechanic, and when cars were still being built by British Leyland, he was keen to tune his Morris Marina, sometimes while on club meets.

On my first of these near Conway, we travelled slower in the car to the pub than our colleagues walking alongside and on another lovely summer evening after climbing near Widdup, we eventually left David at a bus stop after his Marina failed to climb hills in either direction.

At the end of March David rang me from hospital and when I visited him he'd already had a leg amputated. Two days later, when Mike and I visited, he had no legs but we thought that after such a long road, he was going to make it. He didn't.

Our thoughts are with Cynthia and family and also Eric Greenhalgh and Cherry Earle and all those who enjoyed David's company.

*Barrie B. Crook 13 April 2016*





Dave Cundy and  
Hal Rzakiewicz  
on *Spin Up* (VS),  
Falcon Crag,  
Borrowdale.

*Photo: Dave Wood*



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**The Fylde Mountaineering Club**  
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