

THE FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE

February 2017

in this issue



Red Rocks in Nevada, meets in Northumberland
Scotland and Wales. Fell Race and Ladies' meets,
the Club Annual Dinner, Evening Climbs & Walks
and our COVER STORY: the Cuillin Ridge on Skye



contents

You may have noticed that this issue of the Club Magazine feels a bit slimmer than usual - a shame for those of us greedy for excess but at least, as our treasurer Mike is always keen to remind me, it makes it a bit cheaper to print and costs less to post out.

Well, as it happens, I'd rather we were squeezing as much as possible between the covers - and sod the expense. Why, if I had to, I might even consider saving us a quid or two in postage by shoving copies through all the local letterboxes myself.

Which is all fine and dandy but I can't help noticing that most of the reports and articles coming in are from quite a small, if enthusiastic, pool of talent.

I don't expect their much-appreciated efforts will stop coming in any time soon (perish the thought!) but wouldn't it be nice, just once in a while, for new contributors to be featured as well?

Whether you're new to the club or have been with us for yonks, you're almost certain to be nurturing memories and experiences that deserve to be shared, so why not grab the opportunity get them into print?

I'm told that part of my job is to rally the troops and remind everyone in the club that whatever they get up to in the Great Outdoors (with a few exceptions!) really is of genuine interest and that the stories they have to tell are assured plenty of eager readers.

So troops... consider yourself rallied!

Deadline for the August issue is middle of July. arte.roy@gmail.com is where to send contributions, so if you're up for becoming fabulously famous on these pages, you know where I am.

Roy

4 THE CUILLIN RIDGE TRAVERSE
Woody and Hal take on the big one

7 AUTUMN LADIES' MEET
Wine and laughter at Little Langdale

8 HAIRY BIKERS HEAD NORTH
Scotland's west coast explored

9 LADIES' CHRISTMAS BASH
More raucous goings-on at Stair

10 EVENING CLIMBING
Mr d'Ale sums up the action

12 THE 2016 FMC FELL RACE
All the embarrassing stats

14 NORTHUMBERLAND MEET
for walkers, climbers and bikers

17 A COUPLE OF DON'S WALKS
Longridge Fell & Wolfhole Crag

18 NEVADA HERE WE COME
Tough(ish) FMC dudes go Stateside

24 THE WONDERS OF WALES
Chester, Oread & VAGs hut swaps

26 2016 ANNUAL DINNER
Back in the Lakes and tasty as ever

The strange case of the Incredible Shrinking Man

Alan Blackburn is a perfectly normal sort of guy. But leave him out in the rain...



Is that for real?? Or is this just one of the weirdest photos of the year? Either way, better play safe and keep him dry!

from the Chairman

It's that time of year again when many of us start to sow the seeds of ideas for the year ahead.

What targets have we set ourselves? What routes do we want to complete, which hills do we plan to tick off and what new areas would we like to explore?

Please share your thoughts and ambitions with Dave Hicks who right now is helping compile this year's events syllabus. Already, we have a volunteer to lead a trip to the Isle of Arran during the Spring Bank Holiday in May and it's many a year since the club visited Arran so I for one will certainly be making every effort to attend!

Looking back - the Club Dinner moved back to the Lakes and was acclaimed a great success, with many members managing to get out to enjoy wintry conditions on the hills.

We plan to continue hosting the dinner in the Lakes, while also keeping in mind that every five years we should also hold it on the Fylde.

Dave Wood is stepping down as Membership Secretary and I'd like to thank him for his efforts and his significant contribution to this important role, including launching a brand new promo leaflet to tell the world just how great a club the FMC has now become.

Copies are available from Roy Turner.

I hope that we can all be as active as our ambitions allow throughout the coming year and I look forward to hearing about all your exploits in the *Club Magazine*.

As well as our Facebook pages, please remember to check out the Club Website regularly, and of course, our very own *What's On* for the latest news and updates of up-and-coming events.

Darren



front cover photo by Dave Wood, of Hal Rzadkiewicz on the Cuillin Ridge,

The Cuillin Ridge Traverse

June 2016

in words and pictures by Dave Wood

Often considered to be the finest mountaineering route in Britain, the Cuillin Ridge on Skye features prominently on the lists for scramblers and climbers alike.

The BMC describes it as 'the holy grail of British scrambling' and it was one of the reasons behind Hal joining the FMC twenty-five years ago.

Although not particularly long, the Cuillin Ridge and its 22 peaks - including eleven Munros - packs a lot in. With 4000 metres of ascent/descent and several hours to get onto and off the Ridge, it could hardly be considered a walk in the park.

Hal and I had previously been to Skye on a handful of occasions and more often than not, the hills had been shrouded in mist. The previous two years we'd stayed, courtesy of the Austrian Alpine Club, at the Glenn Brittle Hut but this time we took advantage of a window of clear weather to install ourselves on the camp site by the sea.

In 2015 we gained some knowledge of the Ridge, which lead us to attempt the traverse in mid June. This however, because of poor incoming weather, was abandoned at the half way point and that was despite advice from a local guide (and leader of the mountain rescue team) suggesting that we carry on and give him a ring 'if it didn't work out'!

As we stepped into the early morning light of Saturday June 3rd, I wondered how the day might end. I remembered that guidebook writer and Skye Guide leader, Mike Laker noted that less than 10% of attempts were successful and of those that *did* make it, the majority involved a planned bivouac over two full days. He added that no one had ever told him it was easy.

We decided against the bivi approach, not least because of the need to retrieve gear after the attempt or else carry it with us all the way. This meant that the day ahead was going to be a long one with a total of two and a half hours worth of road to tackle at either end ... and we were no longer young.



Coirre a Ghrunnda yielded to a steady approach and the improving light allowed us to solo the slabs and gain a little time. Leaving rucksacks by the col near Sgurr nan Eag, we summited Gars Bheinn (*above*) before 7 am and returned to ... no rucksacks! It took us three quarters of an hour to find them. By a freak of coincidence we'd dropped them at one of two identical-looking places! Annoyed with ourselves and cursing, we then managed to miss the best line of traverse to Sgurr Dubh Mor and instead, had to take in Sgurr Dubh an Da Bheinn as well, which then put us over an hour behind schedule.

Previous experience had taught us that Thearlaich Dubh Gap (affectionately known as TD Gap) could get busy and that we'd end up

queuing for the Inaccessible Pinnacle. On the recommendation of one of the written guides, we decided in advance to substitute the west face of Sgurr Alasdair for the TD Gap and Corrie's Route for the King's Chimney. The detour led to a stroke of good luck that lifted our spirits when we found two old but full bottles of water.

We'd planned to solo the Inn Pinn and climb Naismith's route on the Bhasteir Tooth which reduced our gear to four slings, one lightweight harness (the other fashioned from slings) two quickdraws, a 40m rope and Rocks #6&7.



The Inn Pinn loomed large at midday and we hoped to take it in before lunch. By then we'd been caught up by Jim, one of only two soloists who passed us on the route. He'd set off that morning from Blaven and was doing the greater traverse. Economical in his movements, Jim was less confident in his climbing and wanted one of us to pitch the Inn Pinn with him.

We obliged, even though we'd intended to solo it and knew he would slow us down ... and there was a queue! Two of the guided parties let us pass but the third, lashed to his clients, was having none of it - nor would he even allow me to solo past him. We'd lost over an hour, but then Jim was off and soon no more than a distant speck on the horizon.



We had some knowledge of the beginning and end of the ridge but knew little about the middle. Andy Hyslop's mini guide, which had proved useful throughout, described this as the most complex section which could be psychologically defeating. Working largely on intuition, we threaded a way through. There was hardly any breeze, humidity was high and at 23 degrees, it was thirsty work.





As the hours passed and with the worst of the obstacles behind us, the summit of Bruach na Frithe came into view. I knew that the Sligachan Hotel would be serving until 1am and briefly entertained the idea of bypassing Am Bhaisteir and legging it down the valley.

Our legs however, were getting weary and we had some emergency survival gear with us so, with the night fine and the views excellent, we settled down for a short while. Hal fell asleep immediately and even I managed an hour or so.

some water for him to carry on and complete his traverse - only the third person to do so in one push.

We bumped into him again when we hit the Slig hotel in time for an early lunch. Three pints of Skye Gold were ordered - but before our glasses were drained . . we'd all fallen asleep!

Dave

P.S. If anyone's thinking of doing the traverse in the next year or so, I'm happy to share information about the route, accommodation and logistics. Hal and I will also be back on Skye in mid June 2017.



Four hours later, and with the bright new day ahead, we climbed Naismith's (Severe) at 5.30 am



On the final ascent to the summit of Sgurr nan Gillian (right) a lone figure appeared at speed from the depths, meeting us on the summit. An ultra-marathon man, John Fleetwood, had set off the day before at 7 am to complete the Red Cuillin, Black Cuillin and all the Outliers in one push. He'd recce'd our route two days before and had left food and water but failed to find it. We gave him



Ladies Autumn Meet

October 15th at Little Langdale report & photos from organiser Christine Fry



The forecast was a bit mixed so not sure what the weather would do . . . but we would see!

A fair few members had other commitments and were unable to come so there was to be just four of us - Jennie, Delphine, Mary and me. I set off after Friday lunch and arrived late afternoon to find Delphine already there and unpacking. Jennie and Mary then came along together not long after.

Unpacking done, we decided to go for a short walk over the ford and along towards Blea Tarn. The weather was fine and all was very pleasant, including back at the cottage for tea and then chat, laughter and wine . . . of course!

Saturday dawned cloudy but no rain so . . . should we walk on the higher fells, walk into Coniston or have another low walk? In the end we decided to walk to Elterwater then over into Grasmere and though it became a little drizzly at one point, on the whole the weather wasn't too bad.

On coming down over the fell into Grasmere we decided we couldn't possibly pass by the famous Gingerbread Shop without buying some of those yummy biscuits of theirs. Needless to say, it wasn't long before we were munching them with our lunch!

Through Grasmere we ventured towards Dove Cottage, taking the 'Coffin Route' on to Rydal Mount and over to the other side of Rydal Water. We then decided to head up to Loughrigg Terrace with its lovely views of Grasmere and Dunmail Raise!

Back down the road we were then to Elterwater where the Britannia Inn was beckoning us for a nice refreshing pint of real ale.



Delphine Stockton, Jennie Tolley and Mary Aspin in Elterwater

Once we were back at the Cottage we had creamy chicken and rice which I had made, and some homemade cakes from the others.

A good night was had with - as expected on these Ladies' Meets - more wine and laughter!

Sunday was very cloudy, dull and threatening rain so after a leisurely breakfast and chat we decided to pack up and head for home.

And so ended yet another pleasantly enjoyable Ladies' Weekend Meet

Christine

NORTH OF THE BORDER BIKERS MEET

May 2016

report by Chris Thistlethwaite

Surprising though it may be, it took more than twenty years to get our second FMC Bikin' Meet on the road

The first one, with Chris Bell, Adrian Clifford, Mick Tolley and me making the most of our trip down to Derbyshire, was held as long ago as June 1995, so you could say that this, our bike trip up to Scotland, was more than a bit overdue.

Fortunately it was well worth waiting for; the Spring Bank Holiday weather stayed glorious throughout and we had a superb time up at Ullapool and then down along the west coast of Scotland to Glencoe.



We stayed at the FRCC Kinlochleven hut. Tony and Dave went home on the Bank Holiday Monday while Andy and me climbed three routes on Aonach Dubh, high above Glencoe. I set off home on the Tuesday.

Although it's over 20 years since the last Biking Meet, I still remember Chris Bell and me climbing three routes on Wild Cat Crag at Matlock Bath and I hope that the next meet is in the not too distant future.

Are you taking all this in Terry, Darren, Chris, Danny, Mark and Viv? *Chris*



We set off on Thursday 26th May, stopped the night at Perth then on to Ullapool for 2 nights. After a circuit around the northwest of Scotland, we headed south on

Sunday 29th. I set off early to meet up with Andy Dunhill at Kinlochleven and climbed a route near Ballachulish.

Tony Mitchell & Dave Hughes arrived later having taken a detour around Applecross where they left Dave Laycock for a night or two. He might even still be there.



Ladies Christmas

December 3rd at Stair



report from meet organiser Sue Denmark

It seemed to come around oh so quickly but there it was again: time for our annual Christmas bash!

Fourteen ladies met up on the Friday night at Stair. Sadly, this year we were missing our good friends Steph and Pam who weren't able to join us this time.

Things didn't go too well at first. Just as we arrived at the hut, Angela realised she'd forgotten her sleeping bag and Liz discovered that she hadn't brought anything for her evening meal. A quick turn around and back into Keswick we went. Retail therapy concluded, we then could start our long anticipated weekend of fun and frivolity.

On Friday evening, five of us made our annual pilgrimage to the Theatre on the Lake to see their Christmas production of the Emperor and the Nightingale. It was a really lovely show and when we returned to the hut, it was followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Saturday dawned fine and bright and eight of us set off to walk up Outerside and the Barrow Ridge. The A team however, decided this was not going to be enough for them, so raced off to complete Sail, Eel Crag and Grizedale Pike. The B team meanwhile, continued on to complete what they'd set off to do... and even managed a pint in the Coledale on the way back.

The highlight of this weekend is always the sumptuous



meal on the Saturday night and this one didn't disappoint. It was followed by the usual carol singing, the quality of which was mediocre to say the least but had nothing whatsoever to do with the wine you understand!!!



Sunday saw some members making an early start for home. Those left attacked Walla Crag from the Great Wood car park. A great little walk with lovely views across the lake and down the Borrowdale Valley. So, once again, a super weekend amongst great friends.

Sue

Evening Climbing

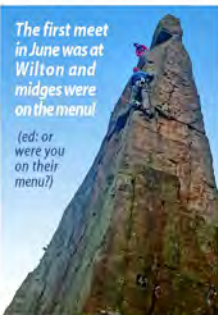
2016 report from Martin Dale

The summer of 2016 threw up a mixed bag of weather. Never was it great but it did seem to be nearly always climbable mid-week. 6 meets out of 23 cancelled. Not bad I'd say!

The Towers in Blackpool remain unpredictable. They were closed for the first two early season meets, resulting in us going elsewhere for the first meet. Denham proved a popular alternative with 11 members tackling some classics as well as some more obscure routes. The Top Lock at Heapey was also on good form afterwards.

A Towers meet was then the first casualty. It was Preston wall again for some.

Slightly fewer folks turned up at the first real rock meet, again at Denham. Trowbarrow was next up and it was too hot! 12 members attempted to climb then drink in the Woodlands. A popular venue. Cadshaw was the first real casualty to rain. No midges at Anglezarke & routes done on every facet. 6 members attended & Nick Hepburn in the Top Lock afterwards making 7.



The first meet in June was at Wilton and midges were on the menu (ed: or were you on their menu?)

Our June 'wild card' - Pinfold Quarry - proved hard to find and despite some interesting features, (an animal fat-smear ledge and an oily wall), it wasn't too bad. Seven of our members managed to find it and some good routes were ascended, but I doubt that we'll be rushing back.

Robin Procters was rained off so the next week it was a keen team who went to Widdop, hungry for action - and it didn't disappoint (below)



Evening Climbing

2016 report from Martin Dale

Big grit routes were done on Mystery Buttress and a nice breeze kept the midges at bay. Back to rain again the week after and Giggleswick South got postponed and then cancelled.

Into July and the Crookrise meet was switched to Gigg South by members who perhaps don't like walking. No midges this time but mosquitos were about. On one route we came across a Sparrowhawk's nest with three chicks in residence.

Next week it was Crummackdale but the two members who made the trip didn't pick the best routes to try so left unimpressed. We were late getting out of work so went to Trowbarrow for a pleasant evening. The next meet was to Witches and must have been on the best evening of the summer because every man & his dog was there.

No parking available in the quarry and loads of cars scattered down the lane too. I've never seen so many there. It was sweltering! Beer in The Dog in Whalley afterwards - superb!

We visited Witches again the week after as Attermire wasn't a popular choice. August came along, Troy was the next victim of the weather and Hutton Roof followed.

Bridestones (below) was next and for a change, the weather was kind.



Only 3 of us attended but we had a great night with a lovely breeze to keep the midges off. Beer was had afterwards in the Crooked Billet in Worsthorne. Wilton was visited again - number one quarry this time. Six of us climbed around the prow in the company of Wilton legends, Hank Pasquill and Ian Lonsdale.

We also came across a Barn Owl and chicks opposite the prow. An amazing sight.

Trowbarrow again (right and below) at the end of August proved popular with ten members present and beers in the Woodlands afterwards.



The last proper rock meet of the season was at Denham and on a Tuesday night so that we could take advantage of Mo's curry night at the Top Lock. A couple of quick routes and then a great curry washed down by good beer.

This proved to be the best attended meet of the summer - fourteen members!

In summary: not a bad year's evening cragging. We were missing some of our regulars, mainly due to injuries, so numbers were down on previous years. My thanks to all those who attended a meet and if you do have any venues that you have a burning ambition to visit, let me know and I'll try to include them in the syllabus.



By now the Towers in Blackpool were open for business. Two meets followed there under the floodlights with beer afterwards in a new venue for the FMC - The Velvet Coaster.

The last meet was a cold affair, so before we knew it we were back at Preston Wall for the winter!

Or, if you fancy actually arranging the syllabus yourself, then you're welcome to have a go . . . and I'll have a holiday for a year!

Martin

The Fylde Mountaineering Club ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This, the 67th AGM in our club history, is the most important event in the club calendar. It's where decisions that affect us all are made, where those who act on our behalf are elected and where our voice and our votes will have a real and lasting impact on the governance and future of our club.

PLEASE READ THE AGENDA & REPORTS ENCLOSED WITH THIS ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT YOU CAN TO ATTEND

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 22nd

2017 at the
Old Town Hall
Poulton-le-Fylde

7.15pm
for meeting
commencing
8.00pm

PIE & PEAS
SERVED at 7.15

The FMC 2016 Fell Race

This year's race was blessed with better weather than recent events, so our fifteen competitors had no excuses on that score

As expected though, Friday night saw our runners deploying every trick in the book to blag a more favourable handicap than they deserved from adjudicator Mark Broughton.

But he'd heard it all before and was far too experienced in this department to let anyone get away with such underhand tactics

John Hickman was chief timekeeper and our returning runners and hobblers - in most cases looking rather the worse for wear - were caught on camera by Becky as they arrived back at base.

THE RESULTS

Runner	HANDICAP POSITION	TIME (actual)
Claire Addy	1	68.55
Richard Duerden	2	49.59
Mark Broughton	3	45.27
Leanne Sutton	4	64.02
Tony Jackson	5	45.24
Kevan Ebbrell	6	55.56
Viv Broughton	7	62.03
Karen Hicks	8	67.12
Martin Dale	9	73.03
Chris Thistlethwaite	10	61.05
Tony Hulme	11	58.06
Dave Hicks	12	78.35
Caroline Webb	13	75.57
Dave Earle	14	110.5
Christine Fry	15	116.05

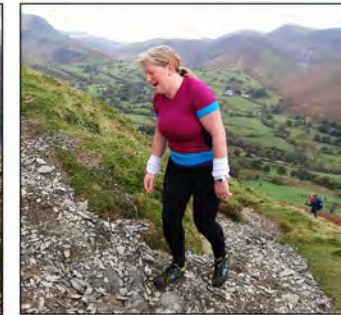
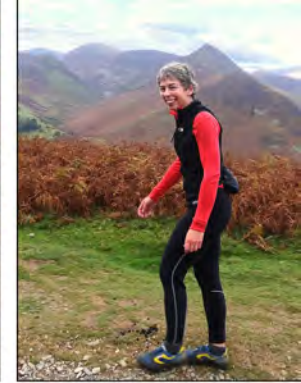
Tony Jackson was fastest male & Viv Broughton fastest female

Following our exertions, we all tucked into a very welcome lunch of soup and cake, created and served-up by Christine (Fry-Up) Fry.

In the evening Karen produced a banquet of Indian starters, then a main course of Kashmiri curry and a vegetable curry, followed by Christine's desert of fruit crumble and custard.

This was washed down with a plentiful supply of wine and beer, all of which conspired to ensure that no health benefits whatsoever had been gained during our earlier exercise on Cat Bell.

Dave Hicks



a pictorial guide to the main event, food & drink



Northumberland, County of Castles

This year we tried a new Bunkhouse at Chatton Park Farm, about 10 miles north of Alnwick, which turned out be quite good and crucially, to most who came on the meet, just down the road they sniffed out an excellent pub, The Percy Arms.



Meet report from Andy Dunhill (climbing) Tony Mitchell (biking) and cobbled together by the editor (walking and generally just trying to keep up)



Northumberland is blessed with many historical attractions and Chillingham Castle with its famous wild cattle park is just three miles south of the bunkhouse.



We booked for twelve but just eight of us made it, which was a shame really, especially since, as usual for this part of the world, the weather was stunning, with blue skies and sunshine from dawn to dusk.

The eight of us made up a nicely mixed group with three each of climbers and walkers plus a couple of hairy bikers thrown in for good measure, so it made sense to gather ourselves into three distinct daytime groups.

The climbing trio consisted of Chris Thistlethwaite, Nick Dalzell and me. Chris and Nick had been suffering from a variety of injuries over the last couple of years (details of which are far too involved for a short article like this) so it was a case of searching out some Hard 4s.

There are a few in the county and they're certainly hard for the grade.



On Saturday we made for nearby Bowden Doors. On such a beautiful morning, things were already starting to get busy (left) but soon we were climbing on quality sandstone, enjoying three excellent single-pitch climbs: Exhibition Crack HS, Flake Crack S and Grovel Groove S.



Andy leading Exhibition Crack

The boys needed a rest so we went to Belford for tea and cakes in the agreeable surroundings of the Blue Bell Hotel which we can recommend.

Then, feeling refreshed we headed over to the south facing Berry Hill where we started on the classic VS of the crag – March Lord. Or at least Nick and I did, as it proved too hard a 4 for Chris.

With the sun beginning its descent behind the Cheviots, our final climb of the day was Slanting Crack. MS.

The walkers, Geoff, Rob & Roy began Saturday by heading for the coast at Embleton Bay and walking along the shore northwards from Dunstanburgh Castle in anticipation of a pint at the Ship Inn.

It was not to be! The place was absolutely heaving so Geoff led his thirsty companions south again along the cliff tops to the Embleton Links club house which, tragically, had nothing worth drinking, so things were now getting desperate. Fortunately, the doors of a nearby hostelry were soon welcoming our walkers inside and a decent pint or two later they were ready for a bucolic ramble in the Northumbrian hinterland.

Oh, if only that could have been so! Instead, they found themselves tramping along the ploughed-up edges of a tedious sequence of gigantic fields.



No blame for this should be attached to their guide however. He was 'only following orders' from a benign-looking map. Nor could he be blamed for the impenetrable thicket of brambles into which Roy took an unseemly dive and was from then on marking the trail with his blood. They brought all this hell to a halt by somehow happening upon a road and were soon on their way back to the car, muttering 'well, we won't be x!@%XEx doing that again!'

The above was penned from the perhaps somewhat jaundiced point of view of the one who fell into the thicket, but even he admits that the weather stayed glorious throughout and the company was of course as agreeable as ever.





Saturday report from Tony, our biker correspondent.

Passports at the ready we crossed the bridge into Scotland, across to Kelso and down to Jedburgh then a scamper through the winding lanes found us at Wooler again and so, back to base.

Tony



Much the same as on the Friday night, Saturday evening was spent in the Percy Arms sampling their quality ales. Quite a lot of 'sampling' as it happens. Then back at the Bunkhouse it was Lindisfarne Mead, wine and song until the early hours.



On Sunday, Geoff decided to head off on a circular mountain bike ride while Rob and Roy, finding the Lindisfarne car park at bursting point, returned to the causeway to explore the fine dunes and shoreline along that part of the coast before setting off for a pre-arranged rendezvous with Geoff at Lucker.

It's a slightly odd place with something of the upmarket 'holiday village' feel about it. Its only pub though was more than satisfactory and by the time the saddle-sore one pedaled into view, ales at the Apple Inn had already been sampled and approved.



While all this indulgent supping was going on, our climbers - Chris, Nick & Andy were polishing off more hard 4s on Kylloe Crag which they reckoned fully deserves its popularity. An ominous bank of cloud glowered to the north west but kept its distance and this friendly crag managed to stay dry, which allowed our team to climb Cloister Wall HS, Deception Crack HS and the 'rather bold' Slab and Groove VS.

The bikers had headed home via Kielder Water and Andy took Chris & Roy on an early evening walk out to Ross Sands. A whole mile from parking, the beach is wonderfully secluded with sublime views south to Bamburgh Castle and north to Holy Island - **a fitting conclusion to a great Northumberland weekend!**

Saturday - and a quick brew and toast saw us on the road fairly early - before lunch anyway - and on our way to Lindisfarne. I'm quite familiar with the area on family holidays etc and this was my third trip this year, but it was the first time Dave had been, so I made sure we took in a few of the highlights.

Lindisfarne, as always was very busy so having bought a bottle of mead and had a quick wander about we headed to Bamburgh, planning to pop into the Copper Kettle for brunch but yet again, having our plans thwarted, this time by a film crew* taking over the place.

* (ed: for Transformers 5: The Last Knight)



So we continued down the coastal route - stopping only to plan a visit to the Farne Islands next year - via Alnmouth and to Alnwick for an early lunch. This weekend the annual food festival was on so choice of grub was great but the crowds made getting about a pain. Oh, and the damn film crew was in town as well.

Onwards and upwards out towards Rothbury and Wooler, again heading towards the border, via a quick pit stop in Heatherslaw near Ford and then a blast up to Berwick for fuel and out to Chain Bridge Honey Farm for a brew. If you've never been and need to while away



a couple of hours, it's great. The honey farm has a visitor centre, there's a decent transport museum, all of which is free, and even the cafe, housed in a converted double-decker bus is good too!

A COUPLE of WALKS with DONALD

1 It was all June Wiseman's fault!

Earlier in the year, during a walk that coincided with her birthday, she handed out celebratory cakes to everyone with her and John on the walk.

That's nice I thought and before I knew it I'd rashly promised to do the same on the last walk of the FMC season up **Longridge Fell** that was scheduled for the beginning of September - within days of my own birthday. And so it was to be, with seven of us making our way up through the trees onto the open fell-top.



The trig point reached, out came my very own celebratory home-baked cake which seemed to go down well enough, and then with the eating done, I was treated to an obligatory single verse rendition of 'Happy Birthday to You' before we headed back down through the woods as darkness began to fall.

Then it was just a short drive into Chipping and a conclusion to our evening walk at the Sun Inn with the traditional FMC pint or two.



2 DAY WALK TO WOLFHOLE CRAG so good, Don & Cherry did it three times!



As is often the case, Cherry accompanied me on the recce, starting from Tower Lodge on the Trough of Bowland Road.



We headed uphill - and downdale - along a shooters' track and onto the crag, a collection of massive grey gritstone boulders of all shapes and sizes. (ed: with the dubious distinction of being the longest walk-in to hard grit routes in the UK)



Our only 'customer' John Wiseman on October 6th at Wolfhole Crag

From there we headed across boggy moorland to the distant Trough road, the last section of which involved descending a steep rocky slope through bracken & scrub. Not wishing to inflict this on others - or endure the ragging I'd be sure to receive - we returned later to sort it out and found that despite following a fairly new guidebook, we'd actually been on the wrong side of a new fence that had hidden the path.

On the walk itself - and the third for Cherry and me! - only John could make it. Although it was a bit cold and windy, we had a fine and sunny day out which finished up with us at The Plough in Galgate enjoying their excellent food and beer.

Don Nichol

RED ROCKS, NEVADA & ZION, UTAH

October/November 2016

by Martin Bennett

photos by
Martin Bennett, Simon Fenna
Matt Reed and Marshall Miller



After a previous visit to Red Rocks in 2012 with Alan Blackburn I wrote up our routes in this journal. The last paragraph of that write-up went '*Red Rocks altogether lives up to it's reputation . . . I'd go back like a shot!*'

The shot fired by Simon Fenna, ricocheted off me and caught Matt Reed a glancing blow, so the three of us set about it.

We decided on a trip of similar length to the previous one - just short of 3 weeks, the first two to be spent at Red Rocks leaving a good few days to explore Zion National Park which is two or three hours away in Southern Utah.

In the course of planning, our first surprise was a happy one - Thomas Cook now do a direct flight from Manchester to Las Vegas and at around £500 it's not only highly convenient - and at 10 hours, quick - it's also cheap.

The next stage of any trip planning is to find accommodation and once again we employed a medium not known to me last time - the AirBnB website. Knowing from experience the area of Las Vegas best situated for climbing as well as safety and a pleasant ambience, we found a splendid house in Summerlin which we booked for our first fortnight. Car hire was also booked early at a fixed price so when the proverbial hit the fan with the value of sterling thanks to

the (insert here the adjective of your choice from: idiotic; laudable) Brexit vote, the big three items of expenditure had already been made.

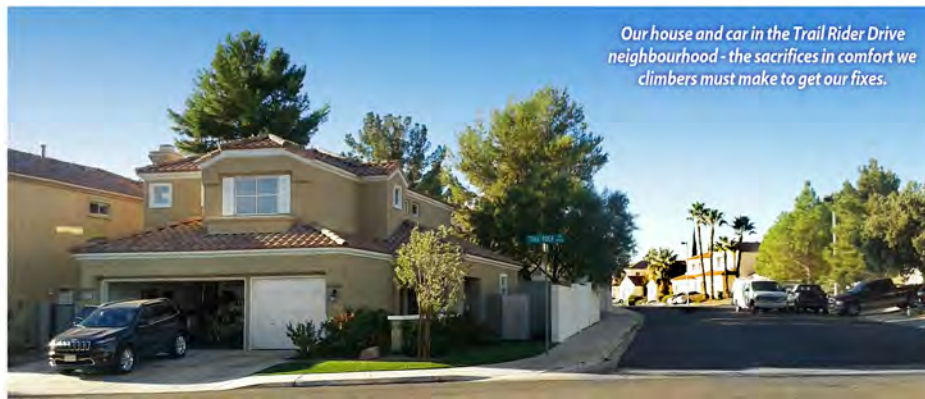
Landing as we did at lunchtime we had a relaxing afternoon collecting the car, driving along the famous Las Vegas strip for the only view of it we were to get, and finding our house in the far West of the urban sprawl in its advertised 'secure gated community'.

This is not necessarily any guarantee of good neighbours we later learned when we met other climbers who reckoned the gates to their neighbourhood were there to keep the residents in!

The house belongs to a girl called Jen but she lives in New Orleans and it was left to her Mom Laura to do the meeting, greeting and looking after general requirements. She's a pretty laid-back lady who's tour of the house and facilities was brief to say the least, but she got our vote when she opened the fridge to reveal that the previous occupants had left some beer.

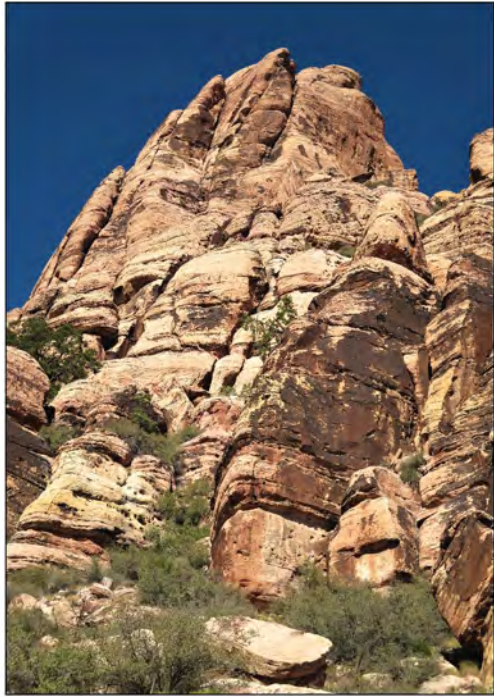
She also generously accompanied us to point out the nearby supermarket, petrol station, pub (mediocre) and breakfast cafe (excellent) and also lent us a local mobile phone to contact her if we needed anything while there. We reciprocated by building the bed - bought for one of our bedrooms - which was still in the garage as she'd failed to work out how to put it together IKEA style!

There followed two weeks of the excellent fare that the area has to offer in the way of climbing. Since Red Rocks offers 'summat for all' in the way of diverse climbing opportunities - trad routes (often with the odd protection bolt and bolted belay stances/abseil stations) from one to 12 pitches as well as full on sport climbing areas - our plan was to alternate a cragging day with a big route day and largely speaking this is how it worked out. The photo below of First Creek Canyon shows how these different styles lie in juxtaposition to one another. The yellow bracket indicates the 30 metre slab on which we did some routes on our first day, dwarfed by the huge routes surrounding it, some of which finish at the blue line which shows part of the descent route.

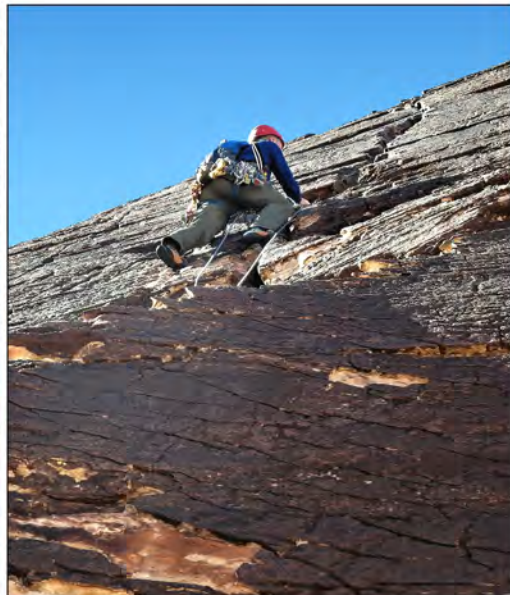
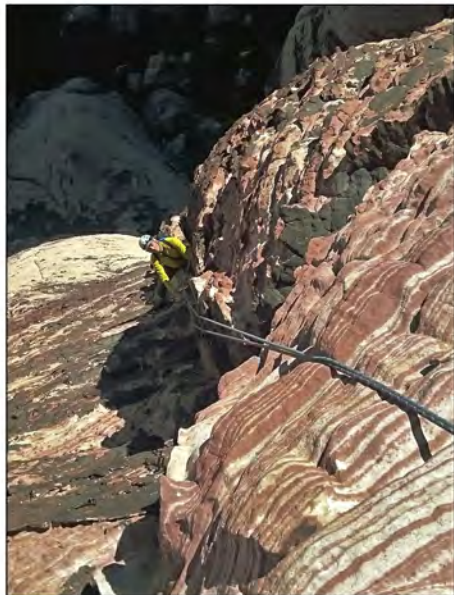


Our house and car in the Trail Rider Drive neighbourhood - the sacrifices in comfort we climbers must make to get our fixes.





Climbs followed climbs on formations with such evocative names as The Rose Tower (above left) and Mescalito (above right) and climbs called Olive Oil (below left with Martin Bennett) and (below right) Matt Reed leading The Cat in the Hat with Martin Bennett



... as well as Whisky Peak Black Velvet Canyon and Calico Basin for, among others at these excellent venues, Schaeffer's Delight (above right) - 3 pitches (blue line on photo below), Frogland - 6 pitches (orange line) and Big Bad Wolf (right) a 3-pitch foray by Simon into 5.9 sport territory.





Martin Bennett: Calico Basin approach



The last climb of the trip proved altogether unique, in the approach (*above*) over miles of bare sandstone, as well as in its execution.

The 700 foot climb is on an isolated formation called Aries Butte (*right*) which had never been climbed (by man) until the first ascent of its only route 'Led By Sheep' in 2006.

It follows 5 pitches of easy-angled but very smooth rock with a bolt or two in each pitch for protection. Graded 5.7 it's probably technically only 5.5 - but pretty intimidating.

On the way down we met a guy whose girlfriend needed a rope, pitch by pitch, on the approach. Not sure how they got on . . . on the route itself!

The thought-provoking name of the climb comes from the fact that the first ascensionists chose the line by observing the rare desert bighorn sheep that skip over the smooth rock with complete equanimity.



Matt Reed leading and not at all intimidated!

We had a rare day of rain - a rest day, driving to take a look at the Hoover Dam - but because rain softens the sandstone, which then needs an extra day to bake back to it's customary hardness, we could have been looking at two days without climbing, so on the fine day following, we drove 60 miles into Arizona to a limestone sport climbing area called Lime Kiln Canyon which proved an adequate alternative, located in a beautiful isolated spot ten miles along a dirt road into the desert hills.

time to head north

The main course being over after two weeks, we then went north into Utah for the desert dessert of Zion National Park.

Here, among truly spectacular, almost lunar scenery we did much exploring both in The Zion Narrows and above the canyon and enjoyed two memorable events:

Because of a chance encounter a year or two ago with Utah resident Kim Miller, we were able to avail ourselves of the local knowledge of his son Marshall and grandson Parker who led us in the descent of one of Zion's (in) famous slot canyons (*right*).

This proved to be one of the many highlights of the holiday, providing exciting scrambling as well as abseils into cold bottomless pools which had to be swum through, causing some distress to yours truly who was glad



to be in the company of an open-water swimmer and a speleologist, not to mention a professional skydiver and wingsuit flyer and his unflappable eleven-year-old son.



We were lucky enough to see a trio of them during our descent. I'm not sure who was the more surprised, nimble or attractive - us or them? Opinions on this should be written on a £20 note and sent to me via the Hon. Ed.! *Martin*



Matt, Martin and Simon on the summit

The Wonders of Wales

enjoyed from our 'reciprocal rights' Welsh huts

We scheduled four Welsh Meets in 2016 but despite North Wales being a brilliant area for mountain walking, climbing, biking and steam railways, few members took advantage of the three well-appointed huts that we visited - though to be fair, on only one of those weekends could we rely on a good weather forecast.

April:- Oread Hut at Rhyd Ddu. Nestling between Snowdon and the Nantlle ridge the village of Rhyd Ddu even has its own railway station. June and I were joined by Tom Knowles and Dave Earle and even though the weather was a bit variable, we got out each day and remained dry. As with all these meets we'd arranged extra nights for those who didn't have to rush back for work. The second Rhyd Ddu meet though suffered a bad September weather forecast . . . and nobody went.

July 2nd. Chester Hut swap at Llanberis. Only June and I went. Although it was cloudy in Snowdonia and hundreds were going up Snowdon on sponsored walks we thought the weather would be better away from the highest mountain, so we headed for a cliff walk on Anglesey which was great - a bit breezy but warm and sunny with lots of sea birds fishing close inshore. (below) Brickworks on Anglesey.

report from John Wiseman

Sunday, we went back to Anglesey and had a good day ending with us watching puffins, guillemots and razorbills on South Stack, where some areas clear of nesting birds were also attracting climbers.

July 30th. Vagabonds Hut , Nant Peris.

This was forecast to be good weather and attracted more people. Darren arrived first on Friday with an electronic key, a disc that you wave over a sensor and "hey presto" the door should open. Emulating Tommy Cooper, though without an audience, nothing happened even though he waved it over every inch of the door ... or so he said. June and I, with the second key, had stopped at Great Orme on the way but my phone was off, so Darren rang a puzzled Woody who eventually asked 'are you at the door by the car park?' Problem solved when the white bulge on the door jamb betrayed the sensor location.

We had suggested an 'interesting' route up Elidir Fawr via the Bwlch Meynwyn ridge from the hut which Darren thoroughly enjoyed (below) and the sun shone for him, as it did on Saturday when he headed off to the Nantlle ridge with

Megan Beaumont on a leisurely walk along the ridge, dropping down to Nantlle village and then hitching back to the car parked at Rhyd Ddu. He could have extended this superb walk with a variety of interesting return routes - which many of us have done, but easier when staying at Rhyd Ddu as you just walk out of the door and there they all are. Take your pick!

Dave and Hal took the bus to Pen-y-Gwryd and walked back over the Glyders and June and I headed for Cnicht and the Moelwyns. A good day was had by all and John Hickman and Claire Addy joined us in the pub later on.

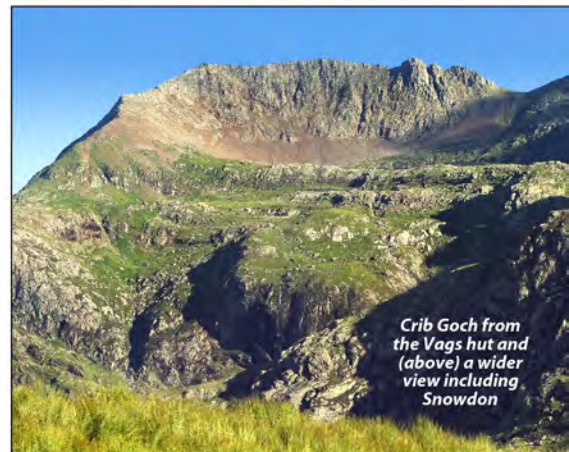
Sunday, June and I went with John and Claire to Capel and went up the north east east ridge of Moel Siabod, a nice route if you keep to the crest. Dave and Hal got geared up and were well-pleased with their ascent of Kirkus's Climb Direct on Clogwyn-yr-Oen in the Moelwyns, while Darren and Megan headed up the pass and onto Snowdon.

Monday saw the weather begin to change and Darren had refused the offer of a quick walk up Tryfan, opting instead for the slate Quarry Museum and the scenic route back home.

Hal and Woody headed home while June and I had a local walk from the hut to the Slate Museum and then onto one of the trails from there before returning through the old quarries.

A right good four days.

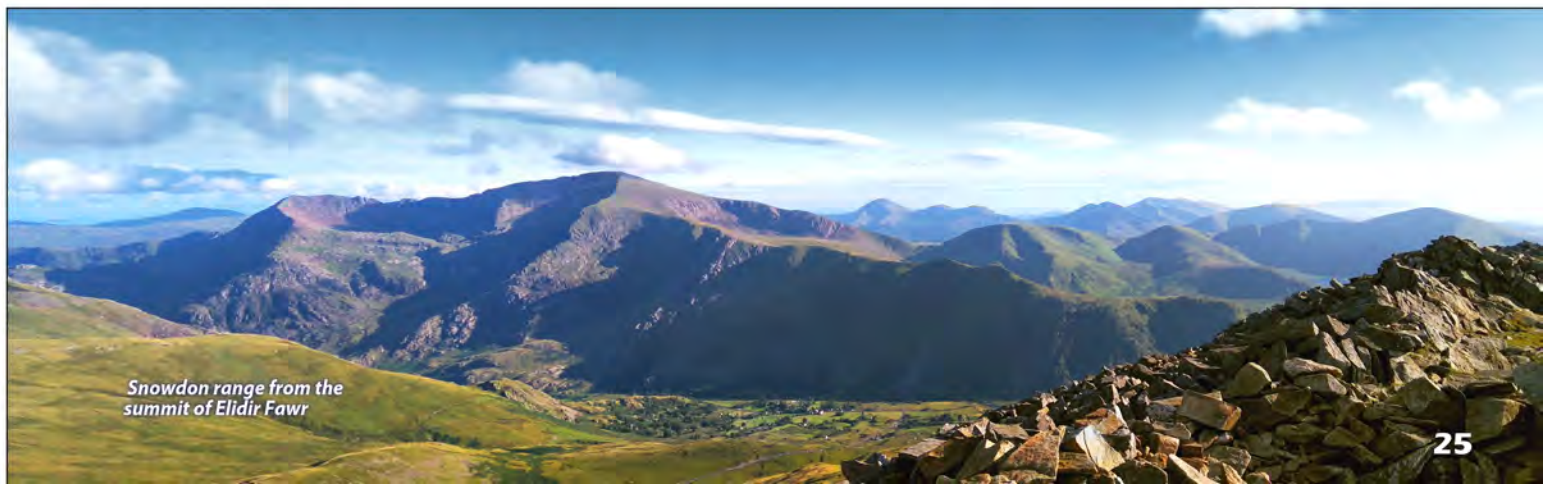
John



Crib Goch from the Vags hut and (above) a wider view including Snowdon



Mynydd Mawr, Snowdon and Nantlle Ridge from Llyn Nantlle



Snowdon range from the summit of Elidir Fawr

Annual Dinner

returns to the Lakes

After last year's resounding success at the Villa in Wrea Green, we decided to throw caution to the wind and book the 2016 annual dinner back at the Skiddaw

Following Steve's Fylde-based triumph the year before, it seemed a bit unrealistic to expect attendance numbers to increase year on year.

After a slow start, confirmations began to gather momentum and our final tally reached fifty-eight, one more than last time we were here.

An excellent dinner from our hosts was followed by the usual speeches, but this year, with a notable difference. It was evident from the start that more time and effort than we've come to expect had been spent in preparation by our speakers and their deliveries were most entertaining, although I also reckon that some of them just like the sound of their own voices.

The opening presentation was delivered by our chairman Mr Hartley followed by the uncrowned King of Mugs and Lushes, Mr Hicks.

Surfing from my vat of Loweswater Gold I was tasked with presenting the Fell Race trophies.

whatever you do, don't mention the Fell Race

Did I mention that I won it last year? I must've. I remember it as though it was yesterday, but no, it was last year - the year I won the fell race.

The rest of the evening was spent chatting with old friends, reminding them of the time I won the fell race and making new friends too, who also deserved a casual mention of me winning the fell race . . . last year. The Loweswater Gold may have begun to work its magic by then!

Which reminds me - and I'm not supposed to mention this, but I thought I ought to - Miss FryUp was seen making an early bid for Lush of the Year with her attempts to snap Simon's Nick (AKA Fenna's Posterior) with her camera.

I'd say a grand time was had by all. *Tony Hulme*



Stanley Ghyll Force, Eskdale



www.fyldemountaineeringclub.org

The Fylde Mountaineering Club
is affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council

