

# Fylde Mountaineering Club Adventures...and more

**Autumn 2021**

*STEEP ROCK WITH STABILITY ISSUES*

*A FALL AND BLOOD*

*POLICE*

*A LOCKDOWN HOBBY*

*TARMAC AND GRAVEL*

*DARKNESS FALLS*







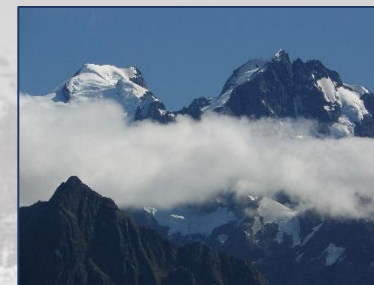
As I write this introduction to the latest magazine the sun is shining and I am preparing for a trip to the Western Isles. This feels so different to this time last year, as we are now able to get out and about once more and enjoy doing what we love the most and also each other's company. It has been really encouraging to see so many members getting out and about and I have enjoyed seeing many of you over the past few weeks. The hut meets are now in full swing and I am looking forward to reading this latest edition and seeing what everybody has been up to. I am also looking forward to meeting up with many more of you in the coming months.

Dave

Cover photo-Martin on a crag at Kalymnos  
Photo-Chris Fry  
Opp page -photo-John Wiseman

## CONTENTS

- 4 SUSPECT HOLDS**  
on outcrop climbing
- 7 WILD WIND AND MURK**  
on the tops
- 12 REMOTE BUT IDYLIC**  
excellent rock
- 14 PERSISTENCE**  
does it pay off
- 24 LOCKDOWN**  
a musical time
- 26 POLICE AND BARRIERS**  
plan B
- 29 TORCHES NEEDED**  
a descent in the dark
- 30 LOCHS HILLS AND WHEELS**  
a long ride
- 34 BRAIN POWER**  
is needed



Hi all

First I must apologise for this edition of the magazine being a little late-I had a bad back for a while and couldn't sit at the computer desk. I am happy to say now that it has recovered (for now anyway).

I am glad to see you have been getting out and about and enjoying yourselves now the restrictions have been lifted! I know I enjoyed getting back to the hut on the bbq and wild swim weekend, it was so nice to see everyone and we had a fun time! I have been camping too and it was so nice to get away after all this time though the weather was a bit iffy with fine rain on and off-I still so enjoyed it though.

In this issue we have tales of police, some historic climbs, Lockdown hobbies, and we even have a crossword to give your brains a testing! Thanks to Peter and Gillian Llewellyn for that.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy reading your magazine and thanks as always to those of you who contributed. I am a little worried for the next mag though as I only have a couple of articles at present-please could I have some more articles for the next magazine!

*Christine*



# Savage Simian at Armathwaite

Andy at Savage Simian

**21. July 2020.** I met Andy on the bridge at Armathwaite for a short day on the sandstone crags overlooking the river. It was just the two of us this time. The day was blue and promising. Before long we were established

In the very pleasant Sandy Bay and looking at Glenwillie Grooves Direct, a one star MVS as a starter. Andy led off up the awkward corner groove but before he had progressed far up the route we were joined in the bay by three



youthful swimmers from Carlisle who seemed unable to do anything except repeatedly swear at full volume.

The corner groove had a number of interesting problems which were not easy to overcome and I thought that perhaps a full VS might have been more appropriate as a grade - but this was outcrop climbing! The finish was a vertical back and foot before a flopping over the top move. Then there was a steep loose hillside to get up before the path and good belays.

We decided to abandon Sandy Bay (and the noise!) and move along the crag until we reached the Central Buttress. Strictly it was my lead next but Andy was eyeing up what looked like an overhanging wall which also didn't appear to have a lot of protection. This was *Savage Simian* (HVS). Hmmm - Simian - monkey/ape plus savage. I weighed up our relative abilities.

'Your lead then,' I said.

Andy seemed quite happy with this and made short work of the easy but protectionless lower slabs. There were cracks to the right of the crux wall and by moving up a slab

Andy managed to get some gear in. It wasn't on the route but a fall would probably have only resulted in a minor pendulum if, say, a hold had broken. This was quite possible as those on the wall looked friable.

### *wild horizontal traverse*

Andy set off up the wall moving fluidly and quickly via a succession of good holds. There was no gear. He paused for some time to arrange this when he found a suitable horizontal crack at the top of the wall. Then he was off on a wild horizontal traverse rightwards across the roof of the crag for several metres before finishing up a groove.

My turn. Pleasant slabs to start. The steep wall was just that but with very suspect holds, mainly large thin flakes. I wondered if my weight might be too much for one of them but they all held. Andy had placed two friends in a horizontal crack at the top of the wall and they had worked themselves in. My fingers were too large to get hold of the release levers. I spent a considerable time getting them out - after all, it was my gear! I took advice and pulled over onto the



traverse line. This featured small holds and decent exposure for a small crag. One move, swinging round a projecting rib and very out of balance felt most insecure. Then I reached the security of the pleasant



final groove. This was an excellent route and given two stars in the guidebook.

We went to Hetherington's bay after a brief lunch to attempt Joe Soap's Corner, a one star VS. Andy led this one as well - just as well as the difficulty is right at the start where balancy moves with small finger holds mean you teeter up the corner before a dynamic pull is needed. Andy did this well and disappeared leftwards up the slabby

continuation of the route. After a while he called down that he was safe as I couldn't see him after he left the corner.

### *Delicate balancy moves*

I struggled with the small fingerholds but eventually overcame the difficult start. The rest of the pitch was an easy rising slab at no more than severe standard but with some loose rock and a great deal of sandiness. The top part of the route involved some delicate balancy moves and an unprotected slab. A place where you needed to keep your head. Andy grinned at me from a belay in the trees as I worked it out.

When we returned to the bottom of the climb a local climber and his young son were repeatedly climbing the 'difficult' groove and soloing off across the overhanging left wall. Ah well...

We called it a day after completing three excellent routes on what was the first crag only, rather than hybrid outing of the Summer.

***Rob***



# Karen and Dave's Wild

## CAMPING



(or SHOULD that be Wild Karen and Dave's camping!)

### Dave & I - 1<sup>st</sup> Wild Camping Adventure - Karen Hicks

Route: Newlands Watershed – Catbells (1481ft), Maiden Moor (1890ft), High Spy (2143ft), Dale Head (2473ft), Hindscarth (2385ft), Robinson (2417ft), Knott Rigg (1790ft), Ard Craggs (1860ft).

I've been wanting to wild camp for years, but to be able to do it we needed a new lightweight tent. I did my research and the Simon (Fenna) told us about his Vango Xenon and how fantastic it is so why not we thought!

Tony and Becky had asked us to join them at Stair for the week at the beginning of June. I was really excited about my first ever wild camp. As always, I had food on my mind so the first job was to go to Keswick and buy some dehydrated food and give that a go along with some snacks and boiled eggs. Back at the hut we packed our bags and set out with Tony and Becky for company until we reached the

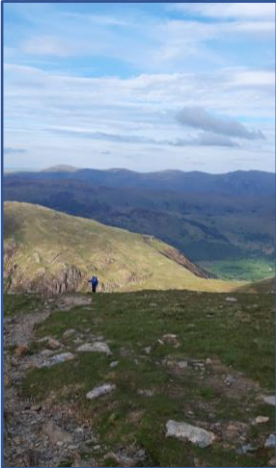


Catbells col where we said our goodbye's and headed on up Maiden Moor in fab weather. We plodded along over Maiden Moor and up to the



top of High Spy and hardly met a soul on the way.

### *Fabulous weather*

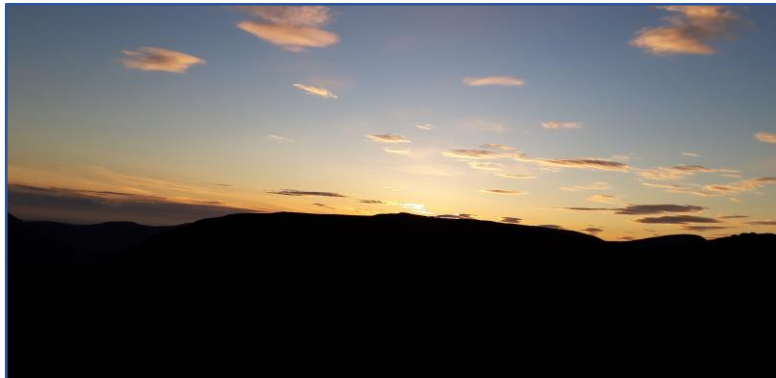


We continued up to Dale Head in still fabulous weather and wonderful views with both of us in high spirits. As we hadn't set off until about 2:30 it was getting a little late now and we were tiring but the views were terrific and I took many pictures capturing its beauty,

colours, contours and magnificence.



It was about 8:30 when we arrived at our chosen camping spot between Dale Head and Robinson, just below Hindscarth with a fantastic view of Buttermere below us. It was now when the adventure really began as the wind began to pick up just in time for us to begin pitching the tent. All credit to the tent we got it up in a few minutes and Dave made our tea which was just about edible but we were hungry and it filled a hole. I opened the tent to take a picture of the sunset to be met by a cold wind, the temperature had really dropped and the wind was getting stronger.





## Wind pummelling the tent

Into our sleeping bags we got at about 10:30 with me as excited as ever (I was doing it!). We (I) couldn't get to sleep because the wind was pummelling the tent so hard and with me and my imagination running wild thinking a tornado was about to lift us up in the tent and deposit us into Buttermere. I kept Dave awake for most of the night with my imagination continuing to run wild.

Thankfully we made it although the wind was still strong in the morning and we were also in cloud. By 7am we had

a brew and packed up with me hanging on to the tent for dear life while Dave packed it. We could just about see the path up to the top of Robinson, but with the path at



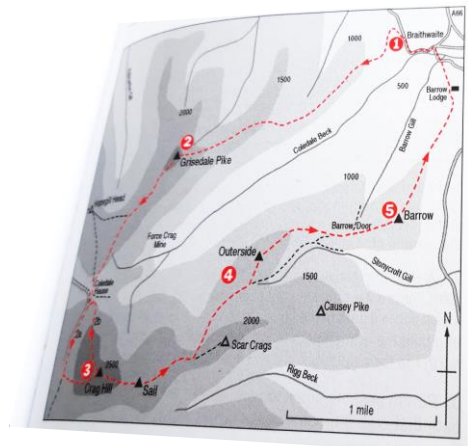
Time for the map and compass!

the top really vague Dave had to take a bearing and guide us to the distinct path which led us across Buttermere Moss and over High Snockrigg, where we dropped down steeply to Newlands Haus and a well-deserved breakfast of boiled egg and jelly babies. The

weather was looking pretty grim and black clouds were down low over the hills ahead. We headed up and over Knott Rigg and then Ard Craggs dropping down to the Newlands road and across the fields to Little Town and back to Stair where I cooked the steak and chips I had been drooling over all day.

Steak, chips and a glass of wine was the perfect end to a perfect adventure and I was already pestering Dave saying "when can we do it again?" We had also brought our climbing gear, swimming gear and our new paddle board so we swam and paddle boarded the next day (a rest day!) and we climbed the following day. Friday came and I persuaded Dave to take me on another wild camp adventure – yippee!

## We decided to do the Coledale Horseshoe:



Barrow (1494ft), Outside (1863ft), Sail (2356ft), Cragg Hill (2751ft), Grisedale Pike (2595ft).

Food wise we bought 2 pots of rice puddings (cheers Becky, they were ace) and two tuna salads in foil packs which were rather tasty. We also had our boiled eggs and snacks. Bags packed, we set off towards Braithwaite and up the path from the road up Barrow and enjoying the views on the way we carried on up Outsider. From there it was down, across a marshy



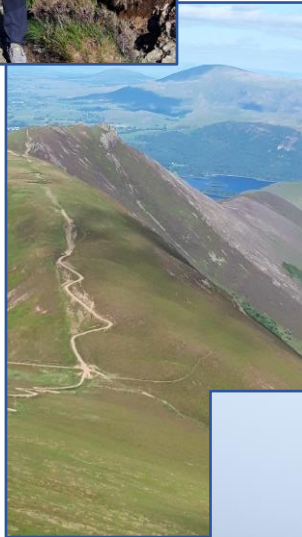
Once more we opened the tent door to see nothing but cloud so we

had another hour in bed. It didn't make any difference as we still set off into the mist and



murk. The path up Cragg Hill wasn't as bad as it first looked and we were on the top in no time. We

walked along Eel Cragg and then slowly down the steep scree like path down to Coledale Haus. We took the pleasant path up to the top of Grisedale Pike and then began the very long walk down the very long ridge. Walkers constantly stopped us



bit and then the slog up and over Sail where we camped on the col before Cragg Hill. The scenery was fabulous again and so out came the camera and I was once more marvelling at the colours and textures, and the remoteness. It was a lovely sunny, warm evening and we relaxed and ate our food and then slept.



asking where we had come from as it was only 9am. Lots of 'medals' were



given to Dave in admiration when he told them we had camped up on Sail the night before. All the way down we were stopped, Dave would tell our tale and there would be oohs and aahs from his new fans (I wondered if they actually thought – blimey old trout, what’s she doing?). Nonetheless it was great to be given positive feedback from so many. We finally dropped into Braithwaite (no beer and medals) and walked straight back to the hut where we did award ourselves beer and medals.



We met lots of people along the way including a young man mid 30s who had completed all of the Wainwrights in 2 weeks bar 10 and had wild camped the whole way round. He was fettling his feet when we stopped to have a chat with him – what a lovely guy. I hope I have inspired some of you to give this a go, there is a wild camp meet on the syllabus at the end of August – anyone interested?

*Karen*



# Good to be climbing again!

Says Chris Campbell

## “FMC - The Northern section”

With Chris, Andy Dunhill,  
Christine Barbier, Chris  
Thistlethwaite and Rob Lewis.

With restrictions easing, Andy - The Dynamo - Dunhill had arranged a number of "meets" for FMC members resident mainly in the North. These have been in the North Pennines, from the tranquil beauty of Teesdale in the East to just north of Brough.

Andy, Christine, Chris This on trusty BMW, Rob Lewis and I have met up several times. Near Brough climbing was on Windmore End, a long quarried Limestone escarpment 5m high. Steep rock with a range of grades and stability issues in places.



Chris and Rob at Goldsborough Scar

*remote but idyllic location with excellent rock*

In Teesdale we all met at Goldsborough Carr near Cotherstone. A good quality Gritstone crag again 5m high. A number of climbs were done on excellent rock covering a range of grades. Following advice in strong terms from a GP at the outset of the pandemic not to handle climbing gear, they were my first climbs in over 18 months. So good to be back even at such an amenable level. Bentley Beetham who taught at Barnard Castle School and pioneered climbing in Borrowdale took pupils climbing here. A remote but idyllic location.





Andy and I subsequently met up to savour the delights of Pallet Crag. Suffice to say that the first route attempted - a HS 4b - I couldn't follow, and the second - inspected - crucially had a hollow-sounding flake which did not justify climbing.

### *Screened by trees*

There was nothing else worth looking at. We returned to the cars and went in search of Cotherstone Crag described as a variable quality sandstone outcrop on the North bank of the River Tees. A very pleasant stroll

brought us to a field where the crag was supposed to be visible. It wasn't by virtue of the fact the base was screened by trees and it is heavily overgrown. A non-starter. We enjoyed a picnic on the bank of the River Tees in a lovely quiet spot. Needless to say these last 2 crags are not recommended, however Golsborough Carr is. If you are in the area it is well worth a visit.

Onwards and upwards.

*Chris*



# Camouflage

## Martin Dale's route in Langstrath

**B**ack in September 1998, I made the first ascent of a new route on Cam Crag in the Langstrath valley up in the Lake District. I've never really written about this route before but seeing as though articles were needed for the club magazine, I thought I'd do a piece on the process and history of it.

My interest in this particular piece of rock was sparked when Paul Cornforth made the first ascent of his route, Camikaze in 1994. I had been up there previously with Andy Dunhill and had seen the big blank looking headwall, so was interested to know where Corny's route went on it. I had assumed that it went straight up the middle, accepting the main challenge of the wall. Myself and Andy had tried a route on the left hand side wall and had found it hard! The route, 'Arry 'Ardnose was originally given E1, but is now E3! The head wall had been crossed by an easier route via a diagonal ramp line. There was also a route up its far right hand side called Teenage Kicks, put up by a very young Ian Vickers with Dave Cronshaw back in 1988. We had also been up to look at that, with Dave Westby I think, but did not make a very good effort.

*'you'll not climb that'*

Anyway, I collared Corny in the Golden Rule one night and asked about Camikaze. I was surprised to find out that the route just skirted the right side of the headwall. I enquired about the blankness to its left and Corny just said "It's blank man, you'll not climb that". He'd put some pegs in his line, a couple of them stacked blades, which didn't sound good. Well, I thought, worth a look at that blank wall some time then!

*dwelling amongst the rocks*

I was up at Stair for the Whit bank holiday in May 1997. I didn't have anyone to climb with and it was a nice day, so I thought I'd go and take a look at Cam. It's a



nice flattish walk up Langstrath until you are almost under Cam Crag. You then slog up to the Woof Stones, a bunch of boulders on a flat area below the crag. A new age hermit had built a dwelling in amongst the rocks, complete with “open sesame door”, fire and bed. Difficult to find on first acquaintance! However, Tony Greenbank had the knowledge, and had tipped me off about how to find and open the entrance. A hidden lever ingeniously opens the door, and it swings open! A dry stone wall constructed on a metal frame! Must have taken some effort! This cave dwelling is worth a visit in its own right if you’re ever stuck for something to do. The Woof Stones are also now home to some quality bouldering! The Cam Crag ridge scramble also starts nearby.

I started up the ridge scramble until level with the top of the wall, then traversed across tentatively looking for something to abseil off. I didn’t find a nice spike or block, but I did find a good crack which took mostly friends and a couple of smaller nuts. I threw my rope over and slid down, armed with all the new routing tackle-wire brushes, soft brush, tooth brush, peg hammer and flattened blade tent peg! I could see Corny’s pegs down below me over to the right. It was blank, as advised, but there were holds! I began to brush randomly without much of a plan. I stopped at the halfway ledge, tied off my bag and attached my shunt. Firstly, I set off rightwards up what looked like the less steep, slabby part of the wall but soon found that any holds ran out into smooth blankness. So, I swung leftwards into a very shallow corner/overlap which ran up the wall and curled over into nothingness. There were however a series of reasonable holds running up the wall by the side of this feature. At its top, a couple of small nobbles were kind of stuck to the wall. They provided upward motion but again the way ended in blankness. The wall here though was rough in texture and on closer examination revealed some tiny edges. There was just a small problem of reaching these from the nobbles. I attached the jumar and bypassed the blankness and proceeded to clean the upper section which had some nice side pulls on it and eventually a good sloper and even a finishing jug!

### *landed on the ground*

I had managed to climb all but a short section! I was pleased with that so decided to have a look at the lower part of the crag below the halfway ledge. This was going to give easier climbing, slightly out of character with what lay above, but still good! Just above the deck, an overhanging groove gave access to the slabby upper section. I put the shunt back on and set off up the overhanging groove. Proving trickier than I’d anticipated, it spat me out and I landed on the ground on the rope stretch! I got up it second go and continued up to the crux. Again, I was just a move or two short on the crux! Time was getting on so I

stripped the belay and made my way back down to the base and hiked out. As I walked back down the valley, I thought to myself, well, it's a project! It may be doable with some more effort. One thing that was worrying was the protection, or rather the lack of it! I convinced myself I'd go back for another session soon.

### *‘I fell off the move and sped downwards’*

Several months went by. Either the weather or other things had put paid to another visit. Eventually the opportunity presented itself and I went back up in July. This time, I had some more friends for the belay and some other gear to try out for protection. The route was still clean, so just needed a soft brush. A pathetic RP3 just about sat in a horizontal slot at foot level below the crux. There was nothing else! It would have to be pegs in the very thin break at the same level. Maybe even RURPs! I didn't have any with me anyway, so I concentrated on the climbing. At the crux, a barn door move allowed me to sometimes reach the upper nobble. If I was able to hold it, I could then reach the next finger hold but with the wrong hand! So, I was still a move off! Then, in one of those funny moments that you have sat there swinging about, I reached over to my right and there was a sharp side pull, just within reach! Back on the shunt, I reached right off the upper nobble and held the side pull with my right hand. By adjusting my feet I could then take my left hand off the nobble and reach the upper finger hold. A quick pull and I had the good side pull above, then the sloper and then the jug. I'd done it!! I lowered back down for another go. Next time up, I fell off the move and sped downwards! The shunt had failed to grab the rope! I hit the knot with a jolt a few feet further down. Shaken up, I was so glad I'd knotted the rope just above the halfway ledge. That was all a bit off putting, so I pulled back up the rope and gave it up for the day.

Back in Rock N Run in Ambleside the day after, I handed the shunt over to Stuart (Woody) Wood behind the counter. "That failed on me yesterday", I said. The owners, Andy Hyslop and Rick Graham came over for a look. They reckoned the shunt was mis-shapen. "Good job you tied a knot in the rope, eh Martin". Anyhow, the upshot of this was they wanted to know where I'd been and what I'd been doing. I had to be cagey to put them off the scent as they were all prolific new routers. I got a new shunt and Woody gave me a bag of RURPs and sky hooks. I didn't really trust shunts after that, and lost the new one on Pavey Ark, whilst cleaning another new route some years later. I decided I needed to get a top rope on my project so that I could have multiple goes on it to get the moves wired. I recruited Bob Killen, that famous postman from Fleetwood. Bob was keen to see the hermit's dwelling up Langstrath. He'd given up climbing a couple

of years earlier but he still had his harness and knew how to belay. So, we did a deal. I would show him the cave and he would hold my ropes on the project.

We went up to Stair on a decent weekend in late September. Saturday was good weather

wise, so we wandered up. I amazed Bob with the hermit cave, then I decided to lead Camikaze. My diary is a bit vague about when I actually did lead Camikaze,



so apologies to Bob if I didn't do it on this occasion! Now I'd got some good beta from Greg Cornforth, Corny's brother so I knew how to do the crux and where the crucial half friend went before the top section, the only gear

*"Me and Bob in the hermit's dwelling Woof Stones Langstraath. The door is the stone structure to my right"*

after the stacked knife blades at the crux and the top. It all went very smoothly. I executed the crux then pressed on up the unprotected wall to the overlap. There was a perfect half friend in a break, then some interesting moves on rough slopers leading through a bulge to the top. I then set up the top rope. I'd brought a length of 11mm rope to extend from the anchors and dangle over the edge to enable the rope to run smoothly for top roping purposes. I'd also brought the RURP's and my own pegs and a hammer. I spent some time trying to place the RURP's to no avail. The thin break was hairline at best. The only spots I could get pegs in were bottoming out after only a couple of centimetres. I could see that protection was going to be a problem! I started working the moves on the top rope. My percentage success rate on the barn door move was not getting much better! I managed to hold the top nobble about one in every three attempts. The rest however was sorted. After a couple of hours Bob was getting bored, so I had one last burn then called it a day. I managed a smooth ascent with no wobbles! Only



the lack of protection was now holding me back! However, when I got to the top I had a shock. The sheath on the 11mm rope had worn through and there were only four strands of the core left! The action of me swinging around had worn it through. If I'd have carried on much longer we might have had a catastrophe on our hands!

*“A fall from the crux would be unthinkable”*

I was now in a quandary as to what to do about the route. With winter approaching, it was unlikely I would get any more time on it that year. I then also thought that leading it may be beyond me. A fall from the crux would be unthinkable. You would hit the halfway ledges, probably bounce off and then hit the deck some 70 feet below. Serious injury or worse would be inevitable! I also questioned myself as to whether it was actually any good as a route? Compared to Corny's route Camikaze, it was just as good but probably harder technically and also much bolder. So I thought it would have to be E7 and 6b. I also had serious doubts as to whether I had it in me to actually lead the route. I tried to forget about it. I even told Woody in Rock N Run where it was. More foolishly, I told Mick Lovatt about it at the Preston Wall one night. Now Mick is best known for his sport climbing exploits, however in his earlier days he was also prolific on the trad climbing front and had done most of the top routes in the Lakes and North Wales. His interest had been fired! Unbeknown to me, he went for a look in the spring of 1998. It was just a look, because he came up to me down the wall one night to ask me whereabouts on the Cam Crag headwall I had actually been trying! Thankfully, he had sport climbing projects to tick so he headed back to his ledge at Malham.

### *sawn off pegs*

I was climbing well in 1998. I'd had a great Easter over in Spain, so my thoughts eventually turned back to Cam Crag. A conversation with Dave Birkett about one of his new routes got me thinking. Dave had used sawn off pegs for protection. Maybe they would work on my new route? Sort of stubby thick blades! I went home and sawed off a couple of pegs at the length I thought would fit. I couldn't stop thinking about doing the route. I was having sleepless nights which was not good! I needed to get back up there before anyone else nicked it off me.



*“The two sawn off pegs used in the first ascent and a couple of RURP's”*

For one reason or another, the summer came and went and it was September. We had started visiting the climbing wall again in the evenings. One night at the Preston wall, Mick sidled over and asked me if I had done my new route on Cam yet, and indeed if I had any intention of doing it. He'd caught me off guard so I had to think on my feet. Yes I replied, I was still intending going and doing it, if I could. He was obviously interested, so I thought I'd better get my act together and get up there pronto. I had been climbing with an Australian lass called Melissa Bock for a few months. She was on a working holiday to the UK and had already been with the club over in Spain at Easter. However, I was also still occasionally climbing with Joanne Nelson, my ex-girlfriend and she was keen for a go on the new route up at Cam. Joanne was unavailable at the weekend, so I arranged with her to go up on the Wednesday. I'd also tentatively arranged with Henry Iddon for him to come along and take some photos. Melissa agreed to accompany me up to Cam at the weekend so hopefully I'd get it done sooner or later. Unbeknown to me, Mick Lovatt and his rope boy, Steve Wilcock were also planning on going up for a recce. We walked in on the Saturday morning, early so I had plenty of time to mess about trying to place the pegs and to maybe make an ascent. We warmed up by climbing a newish route up the right hand side of the crag called Camalot. At HVS, it was a pleasant excursion. Maybe worth a star. The route had been put up by Rick Graham and Ted Rogers a couple of years previously. Proof that Rick had been up for a look! I rigged up a top rope again and abbed down, giving the route a quick brush as I went as it had laid dormant for 12 months. I could see some newish brush marks and assumed they were Mick's. They were way off the line which encouraged me further. I got to the break by the crux where the pegs would have to go. The one sawn off blade that I had hoped would be good was disappointing. It did go in but was not likely to be able to hold a fall. However, to my relief the other fatter peg went it a good three quarters of an inch! The best thing though was that it didn't stick out, and had a lip under it creating a lever effect. It felt good!

### *“There was blood!”*

At the base, I tied into two lead ropes, and also the top rope. Melissa took in the top rope, and I just dragged the lead ropes up behind me putting in the protection as I went. I got to the crux, chalked up, then committed to the first barn door reach to the second nobble. I missed it and careered sideways across the wall, scraping my head badly on the rock. There was blood! I lowered to the half way ledge and cleaned myself up. I managed to stop the bleeding temporarily but I must admit to being a little shaken up. Up I went again. This time making no mistake, I climbed cleanly through the crux and reached the top jug! Things were looking good! I had stashed a small bag at the top with my cleaning stuff in and some other bits of gear. I clipped into the top rope anchor, and had Melissa transfer to belaying on

the lead ropes, so that I could drop test the pegs. She locked off the ropes and heart in mouth, I lobbed the bag off attached to the climbing ropes. The pegs held!! An ascent was on!! Then Melissa said “you’d better get a move on, look up the valley”! I’d been engrossed and had not noticed the incoming clag. It didn’t look good! I lowered down to the half way ledge and re-tied in to the lead ropes. I left the top rope in place, just in case and put on my windproof. Off I set, climbing as quick as I could under the circumstances. Open hand pinch, first nobble, second nobble, stand up on the ripple with right foot, reach the side pull with right hand, left foot up, shift the weight, reach the finger hold with the left hand then quickly up to the good layback edge with my right hand, feet now smearing. Up to the sloper, then almost as soon as I hit the jug at the top of the hard section I was engulfed in a wall of drizzle! Success!

I pulled up the ropes on the top section as it was almost immediately wet. I’d made an ascent but not in the best style. I’d only led the route from the halfway ledge, hadn’t put the gear in as I climbed, had left the top rope in place, knocked the poor peg as I passed it and not climbed the very top section. I abbed down and stripped the gear. Now I had a dilemma on my hands. The good peg moved when I got hold of it. The poor one had already fallen out. I didn’t have my hammer with me. Do I pull the good peg out, or leave it in? I wiggled it a bit and it came out with a tap from a karabiner. The drizzle had intensified and I was now getting quite wet. Melissa was sheltering under the overhangs over to the left. I nipped round to the top and stripped the belay, not nice on wet grass and rock! We stashed Vince (the top rope, named after the politician, Vince Cable) and my cleaning gear under some boulders at the bottom of the crag and trudged out down the valley. The clag had well and truly set in.

I had mixed feelings. In some respects happy that I’d done the route in a fashion, but also some regret. Melissa, on the other hand was happy with things and felt I should claim my first ascent!

Sunday dawned good. We went up to Great Gable and enjoyed a mellow day on The Napes. Meanwhile, over on Cam, the opposition had arrived. Due to the rain there was no evidence that I’d been there, and no tell-tale pegs insitu either. Mick went about his business of setting up the ropes and cleaning his line and top roping it. According to Steve, Mick did set off to lead the route and climbed up to the crux several times, reversing down each time, but would not commit. He admitted to be “shitting himself” at the prospect. The onset of darkness meant that Mick didn’t make an ascent. He decided to come back midweek. Again, I was unaware of his activities. It was before the advent of mobile phones, otherwise I’m sure he would have called me to check on my progress.



## *‘brilliant job Martin!’*

The weather was settled for the week ahead. I drove myself and Joanne up to the Lakes on the Wednesday. There was no sign of Henry, and he had not been in touch (I think he had car trouble?). Again, with mobiles I guess we'd have sorted it out much better. We could have gone elsewhere, but Joanne was keen to see what all the fuss was about. She had not been up there before so I had to give her the tour of the dwelling! Up at the crag, I could see that someone had been on the route due to the chalk. I assumed Mick had been, but had he done it? I put that thought to the back of my mind. I wandered round to the top for what I hoped would be the last time. As I abbed down, I could see traces of Mick's chalk but they didn't go up to where I'd been climbing! From the open handed pinch he'd gone left and into a slight depression then straight up to the slanting break and then back right to the top of my line. The holds looked better, however my line was more direct. I placed the pegs again. The best one felt good as it went in, giving me some confidence. We had some lunch then I tied in. Up the short overhanging groove with the tough move out of the top onto the slab. Up the pleasant slab and cracks to the halfway ledge. Past the detached block on the right which I had not been able to remove, and the two TCU's in the flared slots to the left and on up the very slight crease/groove to its top. Clip the pegs. Open handed pinch left hand, first nobble right hand, bring the left hand over the top to the second nobble. Step up on the ripple right foot, right hand reach the side pull, adjust weight onto the left foot, reach the finger hold left hand then up for the good side hold right hand, feet smearing now, sloper then the jug! Done! "That'll do, Martin" shouted Joanne. "Good Job"! I finished up the final easy moves to the belay and set up the top rope for Joanne.

Now Joanne had not been climbing much over the last few months but she made a good effort. Struggling with the first groove, she pulled over and carried on up as far as the crux, stripping the gear as she climbed. She had one brief foray onto the crux but soon sat on the rope. "No way, far too hard for me". "Brilliant job Martin". And that was that! I'm sure we stopped for a celebratory beer on the way home. "What you gonna call it"? Well, I had thought of "Cam on feel the noize". Nah that was a bit naff for such a good route. Definitely three stars and E7, 6b.

## *Camouflage*

Of course, that's not the end of the story! Mick, Steve, Michelle Evason and Arran Deakin made the trip up there the day after on the Thursday and Mick pulled out the lead. He removed the peg beforehand with a couple of swift blows

of the hammer. He knew that I'd been there because of the peg and chalk. I went to the wall on the Thursday night, and as I got out of the car Mick pulled up, fresh from the Lakes! Well, he said here's your peg back. I did it without. There was no animosity, just mutual back slapping. He did question why the peg was not there on the Sunday, and why there was no chalk. I had to explain that I had taken it out as it moved, and also how it had rained Saturday late on. He felt that without the peg the grade should be E8 due to the seriousness of the route! Wow, that's a big number! Mick described how he'd climbed it, and he definitely did it a different way to me. So much so that it could even be classed as a variation. We discussed a name for the route and Mick came up with Camouflage. So, I called it that. Thought it best to let him name it as he'd been so close to pipping me to the first ascent.

Since our ascents, the route has only seen two more (to my knowledge). One from a young James McCaffie, and one from an old Rob Matheson. Both have climbed the route the same way I did. James's ascent was on sight, an amazing achievement! Rob's was after practice, and employed a taped down sky hook for protection at around the same level as my pegs. The consensus on the grade is now E7, 6b.



The main sawn off peg used on the first ascent. This was the one that was left in the route and removed by Mick Lovatt.

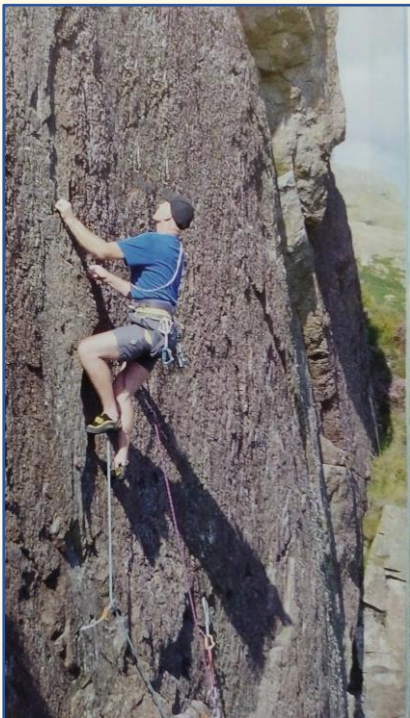
### *horrendous finger change*

I was aware of James from the Keswick climbing wall. He was always there with his mate, Adam Hocking. They were young lads, and very strong and super keen. James is Ray McCaffie's son. For those who don't know, Ray was a larger than life character who pioneered many new routes down Borrowdale mainly. He was known as "The jaws of Borrowdale" and was well known for climbing Little Chamonix on Shepherds Crag in boxing gloves and roller skates. I was in Needle Sports in Keswick one day when Colin Downer entered the shop with the young James. Martin, he said, James wants to meet you. Apparently you're someone who he looks up to. I think he wants to ask you about Camouflage! So, there began our friendship! James did indeed want to ask about Camouflage. Every detail! He told me he intended on-sighting it. I did try and warn him off doing that, but it was to no avail. He went up there with Stuart Wood (Woody) in 2000. His ascent was not a smooth one! Woody described it as sketchy at best. He couldn't watch! James firstly only put the two small cams in, one of which fell

out. He did however find the RP. He then went up for the second nobble with the wrong hand, resulting in him having to do a horrendous finger change on the small finger hold above. His feet came off in the process, and some bicycling ensued. Sounds like he was lucky! The exuberance of youth seeing him through.

Rob on the other hand had practised the route thoroughly. I met him down by the sea at St Bees, one day in early 2010, just by chance. He was with the Barrow Lads bouldering. He told me how he'd climbed it, saying that the foot weighting change was the crux move. I agreed. He used a taped down sky hook for protection at the same level as the where the pegs had been. He did however have his son, Craig abseil down beside him to take photos as he committed to the moves. Craig has since said it was the scariest thing he's ever had to witness in climbing! Craig has no intention of repeating the route!

So, whether anyone else will go up and have a go is anyone's guess. I believe it to be my finest hour. With the dangers involved, and the unlikely outcome should you fall, with a ground fall possible, E8 is a reasonable grade, but the powers that be have settled with E7. I doubt very much I will ever climb anything else of such a dizzying grade!



*Paul Clark on Camouflage. The photo was taken by Ron Kenyon during work on the latest Borrowdale guidebook. You have to be up there early to get decent photo as the sun leaves the face in the morning. Paul is actually on a top rope in this picture. It has been removed by computer trickery. He did not get any further up the route than this. He is just below the level of the pegs. You can just make out the curving groove feature and the open handed pitch hold.*

*Martin*



# Dave's lockdown guitar designs

With Dave Hicks

With lots of time on my hands this was the perfect opportunity for me to do something I have always wanted to do, albeit with a bit of a twist. I have always played the guitar with varying amounts of enthusiasm and ability, and for decades I have promised myself that I would build my own guitar one day.

I was never a star student in the woodwork class at school, so I have always been a bit nervous about taking on such a big project until I saw something that caught my imagination. I was looking at some music stuff on the internet when I came across a guy playing a 3 string cigar box guitar, or as some call them a poor man's guitar. They originated in the deep south of America where the poor black Americans loved to make music but could not afford instruments, and so they made their own. They made all sorts from one string tea chest basses, diddlybows, canjos, 3 string cigar box guitars and many more weird and wonderful instruments.

For my first attempt I bought a kit that provided the plans, cigar box and the wood for the neck and fretboard, the tuners and also the electronics as I fancied an all singing dancing one. After only a few days I had made my first guitar and it sounds pretty good. I have since made quite a few, and for the majority have made the bodies out of 3mm plywood and sourced varying hard wood for the necks. Experience told me that I needed a few basic machine tools as whittling everything with knife was not the way to go so, I bought myself a small table saw, band saw and a pillar drill for about £250 and I now have my own little guitar workshop. I have also learnt how to make



my own fretboards as well as these are quite expensive to buy ready-made, especially when you are trying to make low cost instruments.

I have now made quite a few guitars, a canjo, a diddlybow and a couple of lap steel guitars which some of the older members may remember from the '70s when the Hawaiian sound was popular. I even made my Belgian son-in-law a lap steel guitar in the shape of a surfboard for his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

It is great fun and it has kept me occupied and out of Karen's hair during these weird times.

DAVE



# SPADEADAM CRAG, THE TIPALT AND HADRIAN'S WALL

With Rob Lewis, Andy Dunhill  
and Christine Barbier.

**16 July, 2020.** The F.R.C.C. Eden Valley guide describes Spadeadam Crag as, 'a pleasant outcrop in a delightfully remote position in the Irthing Gorge.' Andy, Christine and I decided to take a look and so off we set, meeting for a coffee at the little cafe in Greenhead before making our way to the remote narrow roads leading to our destination which are on M.O.D. land.

## *Police car*

When we arrived at the T-junction which would enable us to access the minor road above the Irthing Gorge, we met with a problem. It was partitioned with two barriers with no entry signs and 'road closed' displayed prominently. The barriers were placed in such a way that it was possible to drive between them, so after some consultation, we decided just to take a look by driving on for a while. This proved to be a bad decision.

Half a mile up the road was a police car which immediately flagged us down. Apparently the road was closed - a *Temporary Traffic Regulation Order* having been imposed due to problems that had occurred with the waterfall and pool in the Irthing Gorge at Crammell Linn. In the hot weather, such had been the number of cars parking in the road that they had caused obstructions to M.O.D. vehicles which were trying to pass. Even worse, due to the lack of social distancing at the pool, an outbreak of Covid 19 had occurred.

## *£100 fine*

The policeman was uncompromising. 'You've passed the barrier - that makes you each liable for a hundred pound fine and three points on your licence,' he flatly stated.

We tried to explain that we were going nowhere near the waterfall but to no avail. He suggested that anyone going





down into the gorge could be in trouble, 'Like these two.'

For the first time we noticed that there were two teenage girls, who had obviously been intent on swimming, sitting in the back of the police car.

'Of course, I can't stop you carrying on,' stated the officer.

We thought the better of it and turned round. We were doubly glad we had done so when we saw that he had stopped and waited to see if we were going to comply.

### *Cold, windy and rather damp*

Another hasty consultation, not on forbidden ground, and we were heading

for the nearest viable alternative, The Tipalt which the UKC Logbook describes as 'a really nice little crag.' Now the problem with The Tipalt is that it is right up on Hadrian's Wall and in a very exposed position. The routes are also generally very steep. When we arrived, instead of being tucked away in a gorge, we were exposed to the full force of the elements. We decided to take a look, but in unpromisingly cold, windy and also rather damp conditions.

It was too cold for heroics. Andy liked the look of the overhanging V groove which splits the crag, but this was not a day for an attempt on such a serious undertaking. Eventually he decided to attempt 'That!'; a severe on the left flank of the crag, a fairly brief but steep wall.

We then turned our attention to the centre of the outcrop. 'Goose Fair' is a hard severe with an alternative VS+ finish - Northumbrian VS! This route climbs a steep pleasant pillar with very good holds, but then the alternative finish traverses onto the front of the buttress and over a difficult overhang. This pillar was delightful, however, Andy isn't one to let me off lightly - he clearly wanted me to experience the full pleasures of the crag. Overhangs where I have to bring my very long legs up into a high position then attempt to rock / pull over on no holds are not my favourite. I knew what was coming as Andy had taken some time arranging protection before making the moves. I managed the overhang eventually, on a very tight rope.

By this time we were both getting really cold despite the layers of clothing (July on Hadrian's Wall!) and so decided to go for a walk instead. Christine had appeared briefly when we were climbing but had shown good sense by going back to the warmth of the car. We joined her, left the climbing gear and set off.

### *a steep quarry*

We made our way over Hangingshields Rigg which is boggy marginal land under the wall until we found a way up onto the top. Here there were wonderful views in both directions; worth being there despite the wind. As we made our

way further along the wall we came across a maze which we found our way to the centre of. Here we paused to enjoy our sandwiches. Further on still we came to a steep quarry and decided to descend to have a good look at it. This was full of interest for climbers, having a selection of bolts both old and new in places, but no completely bolted routes. We amused ourselves by tracing lines whilst keeping away from the quarry's tottering left face.

A meandering route through streamside meadows and woods, followed by footpaths across farmland eventually completed the circuit back to the car - an empty landscape where we saw nobody, not even at the farms we passed through.

As we packed up at the cars we were entertained by a farmer who appeared in an adjacent field with a machine which coats large round bales with plastic.

### *It was all Rob's fault!*

When I arrived home I found that Andy had texted me a copy of the Prohibition Order at Crammell Linn. He said it was all my fault. Why? I wondered. I read through the document which was in diminutive print. Then I got the point. It had been signed by an official named Robert Lewis.

***Rob***

# Another Pendle Triumph

**Says Barrie Crook**

With Barry was-Peter Scholefield, Howard Shaw, Jill Hodge, Kev Ebbrell, Clive Bell and John Wiseman.



**T**his year there was still a demand from some of us to visit Pendle for an evening. After several Covid cancellations 7 of us turned up at 6.30 on August 10<sup>th</sup> below the Nick, to make yet another summit bid. Apart from young Kev, (now a John Le Carre aficionado) the rest of us were in our late 70's and even early 80's. It was a beautiful evening and we progressed up gentle slopes to Ogden Clough and continued, eventually turning right on the excellent flagged path and progressed to the summit at 558m! The path has been in place for several years now and wearing has made the flags attractively sculptured.

## *Struggle to descend in the dark*

It was nice to have Peter Scholefield amongst us, and since our wonderful Treasurer was not able to be with us, brief comments about football were allowed although Clive complained. I was able to point out the lights of Burnley, home of legendary Burnley FC, way below us, to Peter, a lifelong MUFC supporter. Due to short daylight remaining it was decided to return the same way, and we were rewarded with a fine sunset. Some of us did struggle to descend in the dark above the Mexican restaurant, but we all reached the road safely, nobody fancying a tequila. Pity most of us hadn't brought head torches but young Kev had and guided us down the road to the cars.

Everybody enjoyed it, particularly the tense dark ending. Nobody wanted to call in The Swan with Two Necks, a good job since this was Tuesday and they don't open until Wednesday!

***Barrie***

# On yer bike

## Scottish Gravel Loop.

Bike geared up and ready to go!



Bike geared up and ready

Riding high were Tony Hulme and Becky Hicks

**A**t the start of this year we booked an Easter trip to Glencoe, hoping travel restrictions would be lifted in time.

Easter came and went but finally on the 26<sup>th</sup> April Scotland opened its doors to us Sassenachs, so we headed north before they changed their minds.

After a couple of days of easy walks and bike rides we decide it was time to get on with what we had come here to do.

### *15 miles on gravel*

The morning started a bit fresh with temperatures of around 10 degrees and light winds but the sun was shining. We headed off to the Corran ferry which took us and our bikes over Loch Linnhe



to Ardgour on the Ardnamurchan Peninsular. We then set off south along quite roads. Despite the tyres on our Gravel bikes being wide they rolled as easily as skinny road bike tyres along the smooth surface. Just as well as we had 45 miles to cover on tarmac plus 15miles on Gravel. This sort of mixed terrain being perfect for a gravel bike (the road sections too long and energy sapping on a mountain bike plus the gravel section too rough for a road bike).

After a few miles riding down the side of the loch we turned inland through a gap in the hills



and pedalled slowly uphill to a col which eventually gave way to a long decent all the way into the village of Strontian. After this first 15 miles we had

encountered no more than half a dozen cars on the road.

Strontian gave its name to the element Strontium which was first discovered in the local lead mines back in the 18th century.

### *Gradients of up to 25%*

From Strontian the hard work started. A 3 mile slog over The Pollach Hill and with gradients of up to 25% it was very similar to pedalling up Wrynose.

This Loop of the Ardnamurchan peninsular can be made in either direction but I think we got it right as we got the big hill out of the way pretty early on. Also this way climbs the Pollach hill in the open air, then descends into a forest.



Travelling down we did encounter clouds of midges but not sure if they were biting as we were going at a fair speed.

The road took us alongside the remote Loch Doilet and on to the start of the 15 miles of gravel which follows loch Shiel.

This rough road was put in to give access to trucks carrying timber and also to Salmon farms in the loch. These being 2 of the

largest industries in the highlands.

### *Overrun with wizards*

The gravel riding ended with pedalling over a boardwalk into Glenfinnan where we took a break to have a look at the Jacobite memorial. This doesn't attract as many tourists since the Glenfinnan Viaduct (less than ½ mile away) featured in the Harry Potter films. Sadly this attracts most attention. As we pedalled by we noticed the place was

overrun with wizards





Ben Nevis and Loch Eil

(fortunately they weren't waving their wands about.)

The ride then took us briefly onto the main road, which gives access from the Glencoe to Malaig. This 5 mile section is the only part of the Ardnamurchan peninsular that is connected to the mainland (everywhere else surrounded by water). Following the ice age this area was underwater making it an island. It was only then as the land bounced back from the reducing weight of the melting ice that the

island became a peninsular. (It's called Isostatic Rebound).

We left the main road and followed the south side of Loch Eil on narrow quite roads.

The views of Ben Nevis got better until we turned the corner and headed south along the edge of Loch Linnhe all the way back to Ardgor and the Corran ferry.

4 Lochs, 60 miles and 3600 feet of ascent. Great Day

***Tony***

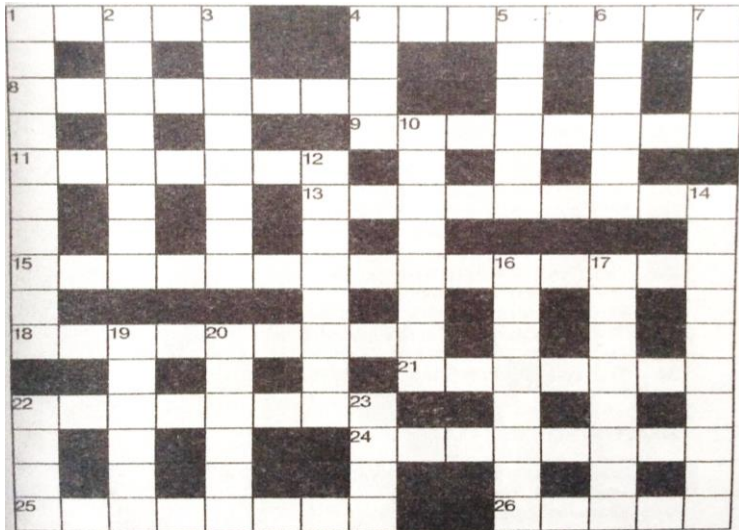


# Crossword clue:-

Fun, Membership, Companionship, angry response. (1, 1, 1, 9)

Answer:-

## FMC Crossword.



### Across

1. They go from point to point. (5)
4. Bold users free climb on these. (8)
8. The hearth weighs heavily in Yorkshire. (8)
9. A mineral of Marmolada. (8)
11. He can make his own climbing wall. (7)
13. Arthur's climbing wall, is cutting edge. (9)
15. Skier reaching the top. (5, 2, 5, 3)
18. A snow covered mountain in Norway? (5, 4)
21. Irritating pupil, must distract when climbing. (3, 4)



- 22. They aim for the top. (8)
- 24. A welcome to new members. (4, 2, 2)
- 25. Reach the top of the Pap of Glencoe. (6, 2)
- 26. The state of magic climbing. (5)

**Down.**

- 1. Bank holiday transport taken by walkers. (10)
- 2. Sell gin and tonic if promoting knee exercises. (3, 5)
- 3. Hey, they can be big in climbing shops. (8)
- 4. The line of a dotty climb. (4)
- 5. Could be a resting place for the French camper. (2, 4)
- 6. High rise. (1, 5)
- 7. Secure info on a climb. (4)
- 10. Head torch at the ready. (2, 6)
- 12. Resident in the Cairngorms makes a flying visit. (8)
- 14. Deviations on a climb. (10)
- 16. Sounds like a good French caving magazine? (2, 6)
- 17. Centenarian radio operator, nearly one over the eight in a climbing mecca. (8)
- 19. A good sign for winter climbing. (6)
- 20. Some members rejected bbq remains. (7)
- 22. Members join it. (4)
- 23. Hamish MacInnes was one of Highland's greatest climbers, he was a.... (4)

Thank you Peter and Gillian Llewellyn for the crossword.

\*\*\*\*\*



## ANNUAL DINNER 2021

Please contact Tony Hulme as soon as possible to confirm if you're coming to the dinner this year. Menus will be sent out shortly but we need numbers **BEFORE THE END OF OCTOBER.** Contact Tony Via phone 01253 824797 or email [tonyhulme1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tonyhulme1@hotmail.co.uk)



Members on Hadrians Wall at the Northumberland meet 2018 Photo-Chris Fry

## Fylde Mountaineering Club

Is associated to The British Mountaineering Council

[www.fyldemc.org](http://www.fyldemc.org)

