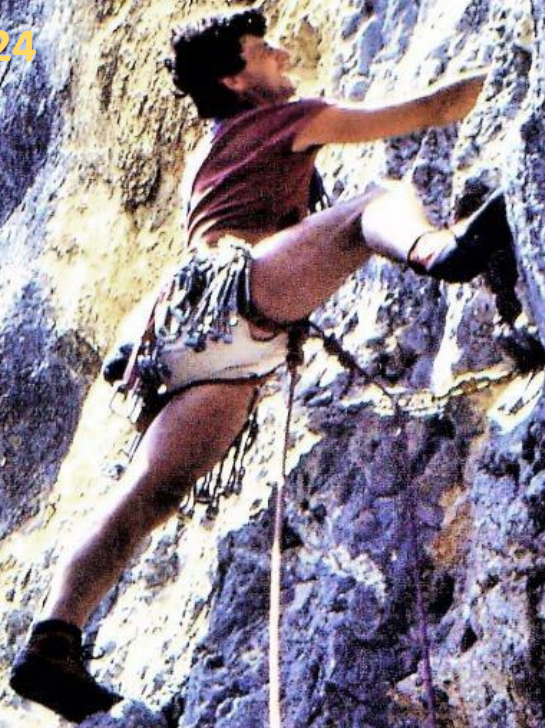


FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB ADVENTURES...AND MORE

Autumn 2024



Time travel

Huge falling block

Hard snow and scrambling

Howling wind and rain

Steep narrow and very exposed





In my last message I mentioned it would be good to enjoy some spring sunshine, we are still waiting.

Unfortunately, some meets were cancelled due to the weather, but we have managed to make the most of good conditions when they arrived.

Chester hut swap, Wild swim meet and the hut to hut were well attended.

Other meets required a change in plans or just became a weekend social event (great company though).

There's still plenty of time to get involved in future club meets especially the club dinner. It'll be great to see you all.

Thanks to Iggi and Craig for encouraging a steady flow of interest from potential new members down at the wall.

Tony

Cover photo-Martin Bennett. Photo by Mick Tolley
Insert photo-Demo Route Sennen Cornwall. Photo Peter Wilson

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Hi all,

Well, we haven't had a great Summer have we and some meets have had to be cancelled as you know because of the rain! Never the less you have managed to write me some articles-some from adventures abroad amongst others and remembering old ones too, so nice to read.

As some of you know I have had an unpredictable bad back and shoulder this year so I haven't been able to get out very much which has been frustrating, but I did manage to get to a couple of the hut meets which is always great.

Let's hope we have some nice weather going into Autumn so we can get out again and continue our adventures!

I hope you enjoy your read, and many thanks as always to those who have contributed to this magazine.

Christine

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ONE OF THE FINEST AND MOST MEMORABLE DAYS IN MY CLIMBING LIFE

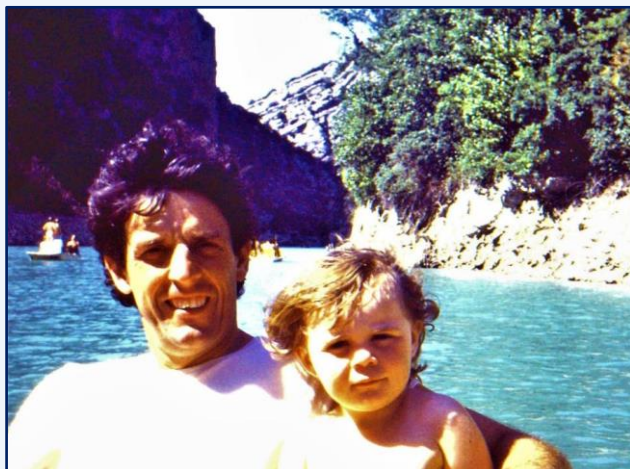
LA VOIE DE LA DEMANDE VERDON GORGE PROVENCE

Notes from Martin Bennett's Diary-Best climbing days

On my 40th birthday in August 1985 I had one of the best days of my climbing life. I was holidaying in the South of France with my wife Magi and our then 2 year old daughter Laura, and had arranged that part of it would be meeting with our friends Mike and Jennie Tolley and their kids (well, they were then) Lisa and Danny, at a campsite beside Le Lac de Saint Croix beneath the fabled Grand Canyon de Verdon. After a gentle

few days by the lake sunbathing, swimming, pedal boat cruising and failing to learn to windsurf (Mike had to swim out to rescue me!) plus a relatively easy but full canyon height climb, Mike and I felt it was time to get serious and that, for me at least, at The Verdon Gorge, meant only one climb, La Voie de le Demande which had been on my list for years. At **400m** long and graded **UIAA 6** it was even at that time far from being a hard route

by Verdon standards, but the length, the sustained nature and the trad protection meant that for us it was by no means a sure thing, so we approached it with an air of seriousness and



ahead of them. They became even more disappointed when they'd shot up the first pitch and got close enough to realise that in their terms, me as a 40-year-old and Mike nearer 50, were

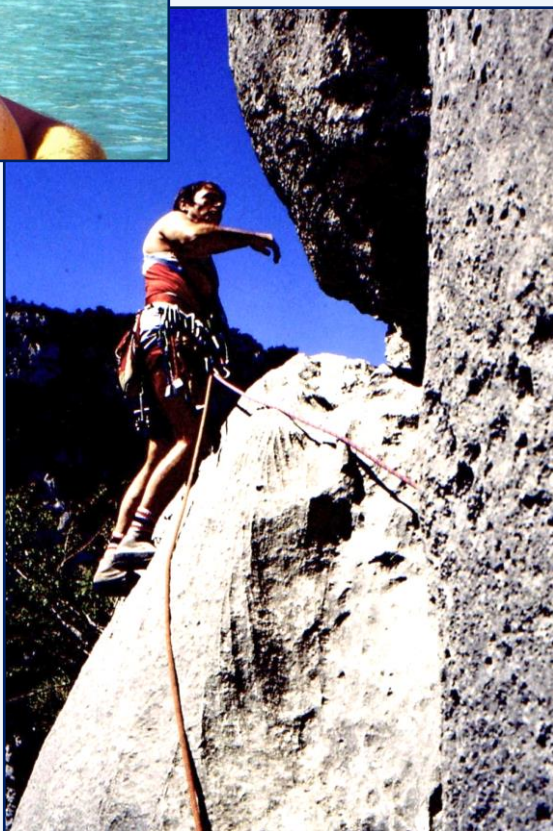
"old guys", their assumption being we'd be slow. We assured them we were relaxed enough to let them past if and when it proved possible, for which they

trepidation. The occasion was made more meaningful by the fact that the day chosen was

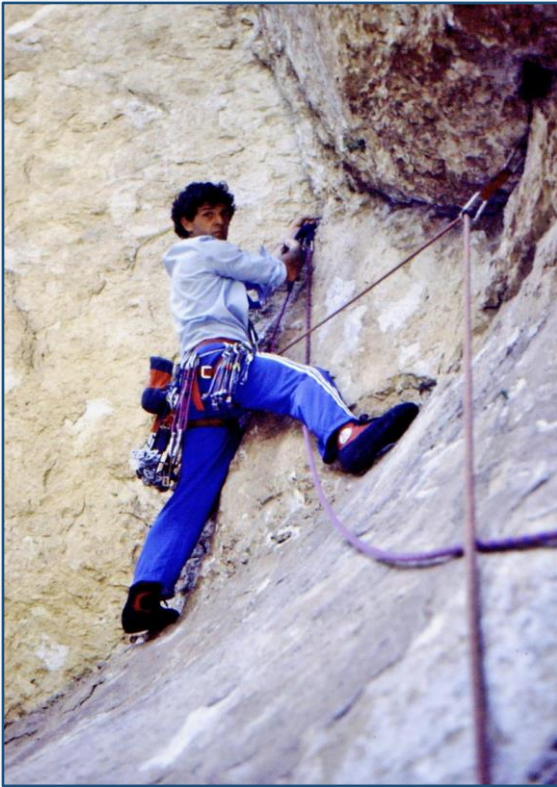
11th August - my 40th birthday.

"old guys"

With an early start enabling us to get on it first, from the top of the first easy pitch we saw the crestfallen faces of the next team, two young Brits, as they came along the bed of the gorge and around the corner and saw there was a team



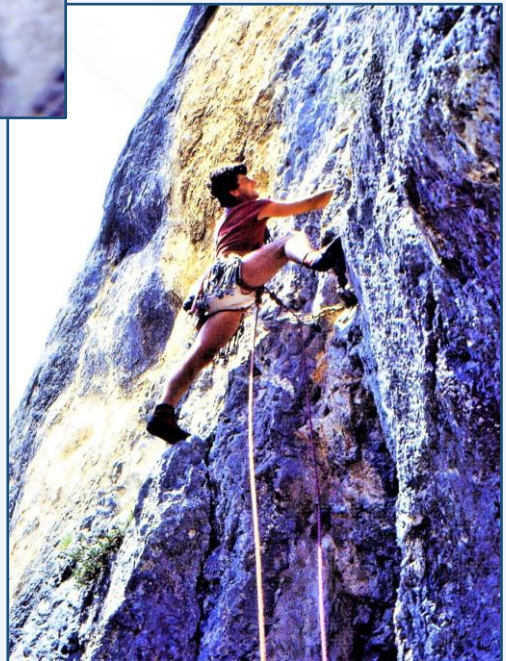
were naturally thankful. It proved not to be immediately



branches without much fiddling of nuts. Somewhere above what we deemed to be half height we stopped at a comfy ledge for lunch - an enormous tin of mercifully moist salmon and a baguette between us. We heard them yell up from 2 or 3 pitches below: "How far is it now?" It was clear that while they might well have been hotshots on Derbyshire limestone, they'd insufficient experience to realise what it takes to get up a **1350 foot** sustained climb of this type

convenient and we gradually realised after 4 or 5 pitches they were no longer dogging our heels and were not keeping up.

We were enjoying the climbing far too much to give them a second thought anyway. We were getting the many many pitches under our belts at a fair old rate, as most of the pro was clipping pegs and wrapping slings around rock threads and tree



and had had enough. I imagine they weren't helped when Mike, ever up for a prank, shouted down that he thought we were "nearly half way"! Probably not fair to bait them like that, but he always was a cynic and by then, leaning out, we could see them



already preparing their abseil retreat.

"sting in the tail"

Now we had it to ourselves we began enjoying it more than ever but of course, like everyone who does the climb, especially back then, every pitch, every move, every small success was overshadowed in our minds by

the awareness that the crux, the notorious, unprotected "bomb bay" vee shaped chimney was still to come, two pitches from the top - the fabled "sting in the tail". Back then, pre-bolting, the only protection was a peg out to the left at about the height of

the second's shoulder with the vee chimney yawning above, and that's how we found it. If you lost your bottle here it was a long long

way to abseil down and already approaching 5 in the evening. I decided I wouldn't chimney but boldly bridge it, and this I managed for the first 25 feet or so but then, feeling very lonely and intimidated by the 1000 feet of exposure and thought of the length of the potential job, scuttled into the back for the illusion of safety and, choosing to

face right, back and foot chimneyed across the groove as if our lives depended on it!

BEE..L..OO..W!!!!

We'd bought a No 4 Friend specifically for this pitch but



nowhere was it big enough until I placed it, for form's sake, where the crack in the back of the groove narrowed, but this was well above the difficulties. I've not often felt as relieved to finish a pitch, and in this case effectively the climb, as I did as I crawled into that gnarly old yew tree to belay. There was a final note of drama still to come. Not being comfortable crouched in

the spiky tree, I stepped over a substantial bough and down to a rock ledge just to the right. I tied on again and just as I put my second on belay the ledge I was standing on fell off! Even as I dangled from the Yew bough belay I thought about the boys,

probably now more than 500 feet below us abseiling, and yelled the loudest "BEE . . L . .OOO . .W!!!!" that my parched mouth could

muster and waited for the crash of the huge block that had fallen. Eventually it came, shortly followed by a faint "OK" and I breathed again.

'Rule Britannia'

All that remained was to bring Mike up feeling, as well as relieved now the pressure was off, pretty pleased with myself

having led all but one pitch of a dream route I'd had my sights on for years, and on my 40th birthday. We got to the top, packed the sacks and made our way through the undergrowth to the road. Exactly at that moment one of those huge Volvo estates of that time came rumbling slowly along and we noticed it had British plates. In a moment of mad inspiration I stood to attention and saluted whilst singing "Rule Britannia" in a loud shout. The car stopped, the bloke got out asking had we climbed "the wall"? On learning we had he not only gave us a lift but insisted it would be not us but his two kids who got in the back whilst we took their seats behind the driver and his wife. Thus, was solved the problem of how to get back to our car.

We then had not one but two "Bieres Formidable" (litres) at a cliff top bar before I drove back down the canyon rim way too fast for safety and arrived at the camp site to find our tents bedecked with bunting and a "Happy 40th Birthday Martin" banner, more cold beer and a steak dinner prepared by our wives and families. It seemed the whole camp site had tuned into the preparations and I was wished Happy Birthday in several languages as well as receiving token gifts including a large ice cream which, though it didn't go too well with my fourth beer and as a starter to a four-course dinner I scoffed anyway.

What a way to end one of the finest and most memorable days in my climbing life.

Martin

Storms and blisters on Karen and Dave's Cumbrian adventure



The Cumbria way is a 78 mile walk; Ulverston to Carlisle, with the highest point being High Pike 658m (2,159 ft). The route cuts through Coniston, Langdale, Borrowdale, Derwent Water, Skiddaw Forest and Caldbeck.

What could possibly go wrong!!

The start at Ulverston

DAY 1

Ulverston to Coniston.

With packed rucksacks [we carried tents food cooking equipment etc] we ambled to Kirkham train station, arrived in Ulverston, and picked up our first trail at 10am

The path leading to Coniston was 15 ½ miles, it took us 9 hours. It was very boggy, had many stiles to haul our heavy sacks through, and was badly signposted. The scenery became better as we arrived at Beacon Tarn from where we could see the Lake district in the distance.

We arrived at Camping Hoathwaite Farm at 8pm very tired so Dave put the tent up, whilst I sorted tea, dirty rice and sausage with hot chocolate to finish. The site reception was closed, so the following morning we went to pay at 8am, nobody around, so we walked off to our next destination.



DAY 2

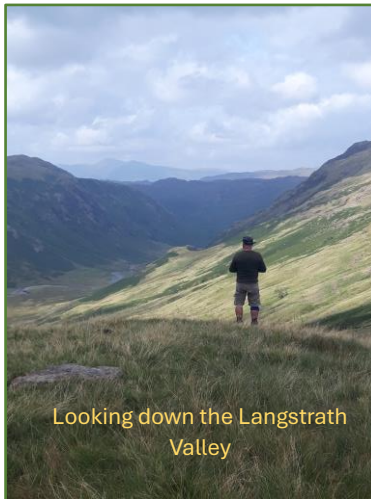
Little Langdale.

The views were great along the way, short day, I was mighty glad as I was starting with blisters on both feet. We gate crashed Tony's bolt clipping weekend, and had a super time chatting, drinking etc. We had left a stash of food at both huts, and looked forward to Fray Bentos pie, what a disappointment!!! There was much concern as to whether we should carry on as my blisters were really painful, Dave stuck compeeds on the offending blisters, and I was ready to go.

DAY 3

Little Langdale to Rosthwaite.

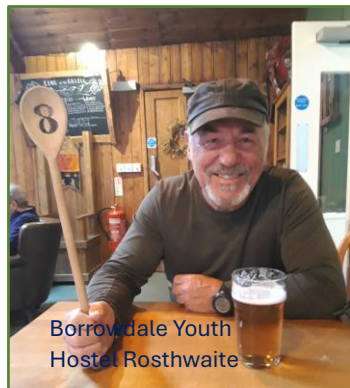
Scenery on the way to The Stickle Barn was fabulous, arriving there for breakfast, my feet were given a well earned rest. Breakfast was really good (definitely recommended) and



Looking down the Langstrath Valley

set us up for the next part of the

walk to Rosthwaite. We went over Stake pass into Langstrath (meaning long valley, lived up to its name too). Arrived at camping Rosthwaite. Dave put the tent up, tonight we would be eating out!!! At the Youth Hostel in Borrowdale, what a find, recommended by the site owner. It had a bar too, what's not to like? Great sleep then up early.



Borrowdale Youth Hostel Rosthwaite

rib-eye steak YES! Waited for the bus to take us to Cat Bells and then walked to Stair (in the rain), we were greeted by Kevan and his wife and we had lovely evening chewing the fat, drinking wine and enjoying our steak. Early to bed, ready for our next day's adventure.

DAY 5



Skiddaw House

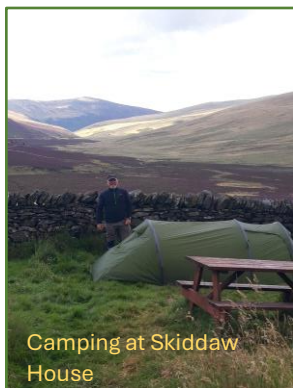
Keswick to Skiddaw.

Walked to Cat Bells for the bus to Keswick

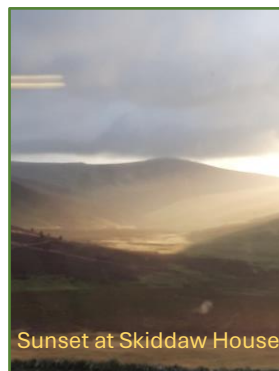
DAY 4

Rosthwaite to Keswick.

Breakfast at The Youth Hostel, and then walked to Keswick, bought more compeeds, and a pair of shorts for Dave, before his others completely disintegrated. Then Booths to buy our evening meal,



Camping at Skiddaw House



Sunset at Skiddaw House

where we were pounced upon by an excitable Mancunian who had stayed in a bus shelter all night after

pitching his tent for his wife and daughter. The weather had been particularly bad that night.

From Keswick the walk to Skiddaw House was challenging, mainly

due to the weather. We had brought ponchos in case of rain, and rain it did, along with howling wind, making our ponchos go up like a parachute! Thankfully the sun did shine now and then. We arrived at Skiddaw House early afternoon, it was open, so we made use of the facilities until the warden opened up at 5pm. The camping area left a lot to be desired and Dave pitched the tent on sloping uneven grass. Not much sleep that night.

Food that evening was 2 tins of curry with rice, the alternative was

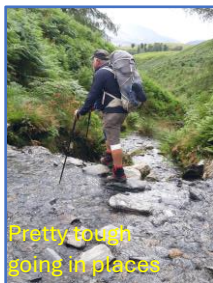
Fray
Bentos
Pies!!
Ummm.
We
washed
it down
with a

bottle of wine, bottle of beer and a nightcap for Dave. We met some lovely people and chatted till about 10pm and turned in for a restless night. That night there was a huge storm but the tent held up well, I slept pretty well, Dave didn't due to slope, wind and rain.

DAY 6

Skiddaw House to Caldbeck.

Woke up to wind and rain, packed our rucksacks in the House, early breakfast, and set off for Caldbeck.



Pretty tough going in places

Very challenging day, boggy, and difficult paths to navigate, passed an old mine, which was mined from early 1900 to the 1980s. German specialist

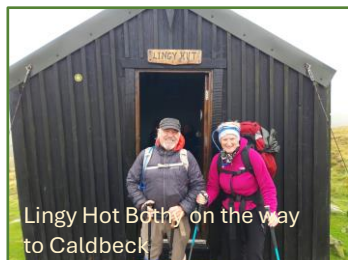
miners mined for tungsten-the Germans were fully aware that it was important for the munitions industry. The good side was that they were inspirational in creating the Cumberland sausage.

After a long soggy slog up Grainskill Beck we arrived at the Lingy Bothy where we were joined by another couple who were hiking that day. Had lunch there before setting off to Caldbeck where the landscape changed and became much flatter. Arrived in pouring rain, set up tent etc, and headed for tea at The Oddfellows arms where we had fantastic fish and chips and vino to wash it down. Slept well even through the storm.

DAY 7

Caldbeck to Carlisle.

Woke up to wind and pouring rain, ponchos weren't great, packed



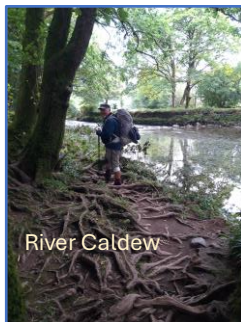
Lingy Hot Bothy on the way to Caldbeck

rucksacks best as possible, no breakfast or cup of tea. The path soon went unexpectedly uphill along muddy paths through woods and meadows before descending eventually to the river, then through farmers' fields, thickets, muck-

spread fields and eventually onto roads. An endless day, feet were wet, we were wet, and by this time I wasn't

walking very well. I was determined to reach our destination though. Not much of interest along the way, apart from Rose Castle, built in the 1200s for some Bishop.

We arrived in Dalston, I was completely done in, I couldn't walk as the pain was dreadful. Dave bought us a sandwich, we sat on a bench, the sign to Carlisle said 4 and bit miles, as I stuck my thumb out for a lift two people passing by saw us and took pity, and offered us a lift to Carlisle Station. We immediately accepted



River Caldew



Last leg by the River Caldew

and as our thank you we gave them the Cumbrian Way Guide for their daughter who was interested in doing it, what a lovely couple. Ten minutes later we were on the train and suddenly the

adventure was over, which felt a little sad because for seven days we had been in our own little world and now it was all over.

We arrived at Preston where Mum and Dad were there to collect us from the station to take us to their house and feed us up, ply us with drink and listen to our tales of derring-do.

We both said how proud of ourselves we were, we had interestingly hardly met anyone on our journey, we were very surprised at how little the trail appears to be walked, and certainly there was no-one of our age walking the Cumbrian Way, and no-one daft enough to carry all their gear. We had a fabulous time and would recommend it to all.

Next adventure – The Dales Way????? **Karen**

Food, fun and ferocious weather on Fryup's foodie meet

With Christine Fry

5-6th April

The Hungry hoard-Chris Campbell, Howard Shaw, Jill Hodge, Peter Wilson, Alec Peacock, Andy Dunhill, Geoff Brindle, Dave and Karen Hicks and Mein host Chris Fry



Here we are again-my foodie meet already-it seems to come round so quickly! Decisions decisions what nice meal to cook

for hungry folks. Somebody suggested a curry and although we have a Fell race and curry meet, I did decide on a 'Christine's Curry' in the

end as curries are always pretty popular.

Friday came and off I went to Stair, car full of food including cakes and nibbles. Most of the gang were there apart from Chris who was coming Saturday. As the Swinny was shut we satisfied ourselves with our own alcohol (as if...) and caught up with chat and laughter.

Saturday dawned with wet and windy weather, so most of us just walked into Keswick to have some retail therapy and possibly meet up for a drink or two. Peter and Alec went off to suss out the Goldscope lead mine in the Newlands Valley.

Some of us separated in Keswick to look round and arranged to meet up at the Keswick Brewery Pub-The Fox and Tap. A great time was had in the pub where Alec and Peter joined us having enjoyed a look at the mine.

Soon it was time to get back and prepare the meal. After pre-dinner drinks we all sat down to enjoy the meal. A good night was had with a catchup, laughter and plenty of wine!



Although the wind was strong on Sunday, the rain had stopped for a while so Andy, Chris and I decided on a short walk to Littletown and back, and the others did their own thing or travelled home.

Oh my goodness-who's idea was this! It was blowing a gale! We walked along the road and the wind was bad, but when we got a little higher to walk under Catbells we nearly got blown away! It blew me into the bank first so I linked arms with Andy, then further along I had to link arms with both Andy and Chris as the gusts were horrendous. We ventured on as best we could the three of us head into the wind nearly hitting the deck, and I did wonder if we were going to make it back alright or were they going to find us on the top of Catbells in a heap! Was I glad when we arrived back to the hut all in one piece! Enough walking for one day.

All that was left was to finish cleaning and head for home. Despite the weather a good time was had by all.



Christine

Cheers

F. M. C. SCOTLAND WINTER MEET 2024.

THE RED HOUSE, DORNIE, ROSS-SHIRE.

WITH PETER WILSON

The High Snow seekers were-Chris Bell, Richard McGuinness, Richard Duerden, Neil Baines, Graham Calander, Ryan McNamara, Fozzy Smith, Nick Smart, Peter Wilson.

Saturday 2 March. Nick, Ryan, Chris and Peter arrived, Ryan in his mobile home. Made contact with the locals at the Dornie Hotel bar and planned for the next morning.

Wintery and claggy weather

Sunday 3 March Ciste Dhubh 979m Kintail. Nick, Ryan, Chris and Peter.

We parked at the Cluanie Hotel layby and approached the mountain up the valley, Alit A' Chapach on a decent track, and then a rough path to the ridge An Chapach 877m up towards the summit of Ciste Dhubh 979m. The weather turned wintery and Claggy as we ascended. Chris was leading the day directing the



me bring up the rear. Conditions under foot were hard snow and scrambly. The weather cleared and we had good views, but very cold as we approached the summit. We celebrated with a sip

of Nick's malt whiskey and had a break for lunch before we descended back down the ridge. We took an alternative path down the Glen which was very rough and tedious. This was a hard first day.



youths Ryan and Nick up front,

Monday 4 March
Beinn Sgritheall
974m. Chris, Nick, Ryan, Richard McGuiness. Peter.

We approached by a steep path from the Arnisdale road, near Coille Mhialairigh to the small lochain, then followed the ridge to Beinn Sgritheall summit.

The weather was clear and sunny. We

days in the mountains. We all had a rest day doing our own



had outstanding views over to Knoydart, Skye, Rhum, Eigg, Barra & the Ben in the east. We again sipped Nick's Malt Whiskey to celebrate reaching the top. Richard Duerden arrived in the evening.

Tuesday 5 March. Chris Bell had to return home today; he had been the motivator of the first

thing. Ryan and Nick went to the Isle of Skye. Peter to Kyle of Lochalsh and Plockton village by Loch Carron. Richard Duerden to the Five Sisters of Kintail, he made a solo climb up to

the Bealach an Lapain then West to Sgurr nan Spainteach and returning back. Richard McGuinness cycle ride up the Glen Elchaig. Graham Calander finally arrived.

Wednesday 6 March. Richard Duerden went to Skye. Peter Wilson to the Falls of Glomach via Glen Elchaig. Nick Smart, fell

running on Isle of Raasay. Ryan the Fairy Glen, Skye. Richard McG and Graham to?

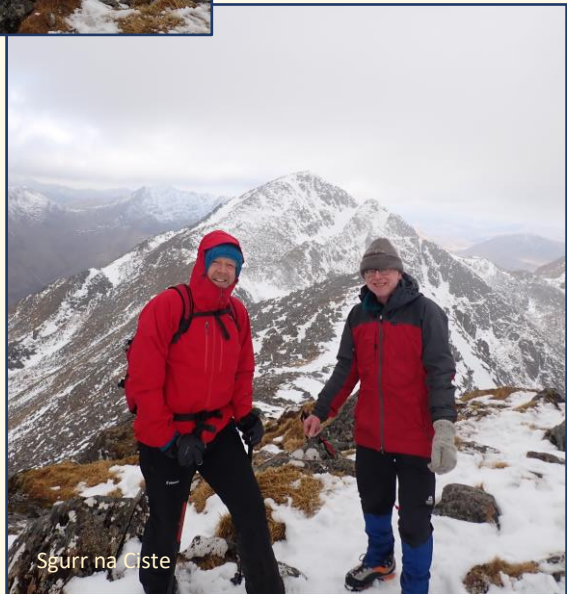
Thursday 7 March. Graham Callander, Nick Smart, Ryan McNamara, Richard Duerden, Peter Wilson to Five Sisters of Kintail. We parked up Nick's car

hard bit done, we continued West along the ridge to Sgurr nan Spainteach and on to Sgurr na Ciste Dhubh 1027m. (Sister No. 1) The weather was clear and sunny with a cold wind. We had a break for lunch and drinks. I decided to return back to the car. I watched Graham, Ryan and



Nick descend to the col head of Coire Domain. The remaining Sisters now in view, Sgurr na Carnach (Sister No.2), Sgurr na Fhuaran (Sister No.3), Sgurr na Saighead (Sister No.4), Sgurr na Moraich (Sister No. 5).

at the Ault A' Chruinn car park and continued up to the Glen Shiel car park in mine and Richard Duerden's cars. Richard Duerden returned to Dornie. My plan was to follow the ridge to the first sister and return back to the car. We took the steep climb up the hillside to the Bealach An Lapain. The



They completed the ridge, meeting Richard on their descent from Sgurr an t-Searraich. Another great day in the mountains.

Neil Baines and Fozzy Smith managed to find some snow and ice climbing in the Torridon area.

Strong gusty winds

Friday 8 March. Richard Duerden, Peter Wilson plan to have a look at The Saddle Mountain group. Richard

suggested a route by the ridge to Faochag 909m. The weather was fine and cold but with strong gusty

winds. We ascended to the summit of Faochag in strong cross winds and hard patchy snow conditions. We decided to conclude our walk here not having brought our crampons. We had our lunch and enjoyed

the scenery, another great day in the mountains.

Fozzy Smith and Neil Baines had a very early start for the Nevis Range ski cable car, to try to get some ice climbing done. High wind conditions closed the cable car. They made the return journey. They decided to try the Saddle Mountain and climb the Forcan ridge. Fozzy made it in difficult conditions but Neil bottled out and did a low level traverse.



Richard and Graham return home. Nick and Ryan spend a night in a Bothy on Skye.

Saturday 9 March. End of the week holiday. Another F.M.C. Great Scottish Winter meet. Thanks to Chris Bell and Mark Bowden for organizing the trip.

PETER

And then there were 2!

Ladies Meet: Little Langdale

Friday 28th June – Sunday 30th June

With Pat Bennett

The Dynamic Duo-Pat Bennett and
Liz Rawcliffe



It was all feet to the fells for the summer Ladies Meet – until it wasn't. Ladies succumbed one by one to illness and family duties until only two remained, fit and available ("fit" being a slight exaggeration).

We travelled up on Friday evening, arriving in a wild, wet, windy

Ambleside. It didn't feel very appealing. So, as you do, we decided to go in for a bit of time travel and escapism.

We bought our tickets to the American Mid-West, and the colonisation of the Prairies by settlers in 1859. It was heady stuff. Wagon trains and real

trains, the very earliest beginnings of the railroads heading east, and the battle for land between the indigenous peoples and the settlers. (No surprise how that ended). We were treated to stunning photography, insight into an incredibly tough way of life and hardships endured. Horizon, an American saga, Chapter 1 of 4, film directed, co-written and produced by Kevin Costner, didn't hold back on the moral dilemma, hypocrisies, acts of kindness and acts of savagery by both Settlers and Indians. Exhausted by our time travel, we eschewed hard tack and beans for 21st century pizzas on our joint film and meal deal at Zeffs.

Saturday dawned, cold and damp.

THE FANTASY: We bounded early out of our bunks, and found to our amazement that the old time machine was still working. Instead of being 83 and 73, we were 38 and 37 again. Winged feet propelled us over Wetherlam and Coniston Old Man before skipping back full of energy for a few raucous pints in the Three Shires.

AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT!

THE REALITY: We dragged our stiff, arthritic, creaking aged bones out of the bunks at a disgracefully late hour and lounged about supping copious amounts of tea and putting the world to rights until the rain stopped. Tried and tested is best and we settled on a familiar walk to Skelwith Bridge (lunch),

Elterwater (afternoon beers), and back via the Quarry Road to the hut.

Strangely, the management of the Three Shires were unimpressed by our valiant achievement. They were fully booked, Nada. Zilch. No room at the inn. Not even a crust in the stable. So we returned to Elterwater and finished up in a restaurant/take-away opposite the Brit called Slates - homemade lasagne highly recommended - friendly service from 3 young lads who clearly regarded us as museum pieces who had to be looked after.. Alas, trying to navigate around a Tesco delivery van parked on the single track road on the lane did result in slight vehicle modification, which will make the weekend slightly more expensive than anticipated, but hey ho....

An evening stroll to make sure that Slaters Bridge was still there completed the day and so to bed after a creditable 20,000 steps.

Sunday morning dawned and we paid homage in the Cathedral and quarries, then to Lakeland and home. A pleasant weekend was had, in spite of the weather.

Pat Bennett FMC film and restaurant critic (as if...) & Liz Rawcliffe

Dave and Karen's amazing Balkan adventure





We had planned to visit Montenegro around 5 years ago after Karen's dad came back from a visit and told how spectacular the mountains are. We were just about ready to go when good old Covid hit. Anyway, earlier this year I dusted off my bits of paper and maps, loosely planned a route and some timings, and on May 7th we set off in Beastie intending to wend our way there (and back) over the next 2 months.

It was an amazing adventure where we drove through 8 countries, visiting 6 of them, met lots of interesting people, experienced "interesting" driving habits and saw many amazing sites. As is our usual way the plan was to cook all our meals in the

van and stay on as many free parking/camping places as possible in order to keep the costs down. We did 4878 miles in the 8 weeks (54 nights) and stayed on campsites 36 nights, Stellplatz (Germany) for 2 nights, and enjoyed 16 camping wild for free in places such as olive groves, monastery car parks and the mountains of Montenegro.

We did
4,878
miles

It would be impossible to capture everything in a magazine article, so I will just include a few of the highlights and photos, and if any readers wish for more, we can bore you with the rest in a visit to the pub.

We packed all our gear including walking, climbing, via ferrata kit,

swimming gear, gravel bikes and even the paddleboard and guitar. On May 7th we set off for Dover, overnighting at the park and ride in Canterbury, which means just a 20 minute drive in the morning to the ferry and arriving in France at noon, their time, fresh for the journey.

The drive through Belgium is always trying as their roads are shocking with constant road works, but once in Germany things ease up. We met with my sister who was on her way home from their summer road trip and stopped an extra night in Bavaria with them. By day 5 we were at Lake Bled in Slovenia where we spent 3 nights and enjoyed chilling out swimming and

paddleboarding. From there it should have been a day's drive to



Croatia, but Beastie decided to throw a wobbler and overheat on the motorway. The good old AA and a very accommodating motor mechanic and his family had us on the road again less than 24 hours later (a story for the pub!). A point worth noting is that drivers must

purchase a vignette to use the motorways in Slovenia (and Austria). We didn't find out until much later on in the trip and were lucky not to be caught and fined. We got one on the way back -32 Euros!

We drove through Croatia fairly quickly just stopping at Dubrovnik for 2 nights



so that we could visit the city which is well worth a visit, and really stunning.



These are pretty small countries and we were soon in Montenegro (by day 12), the literal translation of Montenegro is Black Mountains and it really is mountainous, smaller than Wales but more mountainous with those in the Durmitor National Park being the highest at over 8000 feet.



Hairpin bends

Our main interest was always the Durmitor mountains but the journey there was amazing. One of the notable sights is the bay of

“I had to reverse Beastie back down”

Kotor which is stunning in itself, and the drive up to the old capital of Cetinje is all of the tourist literature. The are 25

hairpin bends up the steep narrow road. On multiple occasions I had

to reverse Beastie back down for significant distances as huge tour busses go up and down all day long (another story for the pub). We spent the next couple of nights parking wild in great locations as

we travelled north. One night was below the Ostrog Monastery where we took the pilgrim trail up



to have a look (another pub story though!).

*“the road was steep,
narrow and very exposed”*

The drive up to the Durmitor mountains was quite surreal as we almost missed the turn which takes you through the most unlikely tunnel looking like something out of an Indiana Jones film with cobwebs and fallen rocks. This is a tale Karen will tell for the rest of her life as the road was steep, narrow and very exposed and went on for a few miles. As the road reached the high point the scenery became absolutely breath taking. We had to drive the full length of the mountains and back down the other side in order to buy our permit to visit the national park, and then drive back again (poor navigation from me).

We stayed that night in a gorgeous wild parking place, cooking our evening meal with the door open looking at the majestic scenery. The next 3 days were spent walking in the mountains with amazing ridges and peaks all around, and even a few snow plods

to spice thing up. We even had a skinny dip with another couple in a small glacial lake at about 7000 feet, a magical moment.

On the 4th day the weather turned for the worst, so we decided to head for the coast and had fantastic experiences on the way. The roads were just outrageous and the people we met were amazing. We were a little disappointed when we got to the coast, as the beach resorts were nothing like as pretty as we had been led to believe. After 2 weeks in Montenegro, we decided to move on as the weather in the mountains was unstable and the driving was too demanding on me and Beastie to justify another trip back there.

There was plenty to do in Croatia, so we spent the next 2 weeks moving around and enjoying a mix of a few days in a couple of remote island beach settings swimming, supping and cycling before



seeking out the rock climbing in Omis and Paklenica. Omis was too hard core for me but we enjoyed a couple of days sport climbing in the Paklenica National Park. I would recommend Croatia to anyone as there is so much to do and it is stunning.

We had previously arranged to meet Tony and Becky in the Dolomites in mid-June so we headed up there and met them in Predazzo. They had just done a ridiculous (in my opinion) ride that went uphill for 15 miles, it may be 15 miles down but really? Much booze that evening which got to be a theme of the next few days. We cycled (up), did a via ferrata route up Col Rodella and some climbing in the city of rocks below the Sasslungo. Massive thunderstorm

that night with a really

unsettled weather forecast forced us to move on to some sunshine. The Mosel valley was looking good, so we moved on and spent a few days cycling and drinking wine before we said our farewells, and Karen and I headed for Belgium to spend a couple of days with her daughter before heading home.

We had a fantastic time, met lots of interesting people, saw amazing scenery and had some wonderful experiences. Life on the road is what Karen and I really enjoy, and once we're in the van and away from it all there is nothing better. Beastie has had to go into intensive care once we returned, (she worked a bit too hard) but she is on the road to recovery waiting for her next adventure.



Dave

REMEMBERING A MUCH-VALUED FRIEND—DERRICK SMITH

Memories from Doug Brown



The trouble with getting old is that your friends also age, and you soon realise that they are gradually disappearing into the great blue yonder, never to be seen again. This can lead to a general feeling of sadness, even loneliness. However, it need not be like that if you retain a positive view of life. When I lose a friend, I tend now to look back on our

friendship with pleasure, the great times we shared together, and how much they enhanced my own life. However, when I recall all my climbing friends, I soon realise that the list of those still present has become quite short, and that I myself, have crept uncomfortably close to the top of that list. Last year was particularly painful as I lost my most valued climbing friend, Derrick Smith. I first encountered Derrick in the early 1960's when he rolled up at Little Langdale with his old friend and workmate Fred Wilson. He rapidly made an impression, taking to climbing and fell-walking with great enthusiasm. Being an electrical engineer, his work skills were regularly employed in maintenance at the Little Langdale cottage. Derrick gave a lot of his time to the FMC. He was the very essence of a loyal member. Like so many in the club he found his partner and wife, Ida. If nothing else the FMC has a good record on matrimony. My own wife Dorothy has often remarked that she retains her membership after all these years, not just for the memories of the hills, but also because she acquired two half decent husbands from the Club!

Derrick continued to be fairly active in the Club in spite of the demands of family life, and we were able to meet up in the Lakes and Scotland to climb



and walk. Derrick developed an interest in skiing long before I did, and travelled abroad to indulge his passion. Later, however, we both started to go to the Cairngorms for weeks in winter. We usually went in my old caravanette and took my children Karen and David. The system was quite simple. I bought the cheapest lift pass for the kids to ski in the morning whilst Derrick and I volunteered with the ski patrol for casual work on the lifts. This usually involved giving particular lift attendants a break in the morning and also a lunch break. For this work we each received a free lift pass for the day. At lunchtime we put bums on Poma tows and collected a lot of single ride tickets from the punters and instead of ripping the tickets up we stuffed them in our gloves and afterwards gave them to Karen and David so they could ski for the afternoon. Thus, I taught myself to ski at a time in life when I had no money for such luxuries. Derrick also always carried a small flask of whisky to lubricate the lift men in case we ran out of tickets. I remember our annual ski trips with great affection, as do my children.

There is so much to write about my times with Derrick and our activities that it is difficult to know where to start and where to end. One thing I must mention is the way Derrick demonstrated his loyalty to both his friends and workmates. If ever anyone was in trouble Derrick would always be the first person to knock on the door offering sympathy or assistance. I recall when my first marriage ran onto the rocks, Derrick typically stood by me and helped me through one of the most difficult periods of my life. Such was the value of his friendship. Later in life

when we both entered our 60's we decided to attempt to complete the Munros and succeeded in doing this. Derrick had already done far more than I had, so we finished his round well ahead of mine. I shall always remember reaching the summit of Seana Bhraigh with him and experiencing the joy with which he stood on his final peak. I had been climbing a lot of Munros with Dorothy to keep up with Derrick, and was later in the same year able to complete my round.

My only regret with Derrick was that he never developed an interest in Nordic skiing which became a particular passion with me. I would so much have loved to share the pleasures of crossing the Hardangervida in Norway with him, however, it was not to be but you cannot have everything in life.

After the Munros we both continued to climb in Scotland and managed a large number of Corbetts together. Derrick did not manage to complete them all but, nevertheless, his total was very respectable.

I suppose Derrick had something of a reputation as an iron man but inside that tough image there was a heart of gold and a deep sense of loyalty to family and friends. Dorothy and I feel proud to have known him and I in particular, realise and appreciate that most of my best days on the hills have been with him. Thank you, Derrick, for what seems like a lifetime of good company, and for sharing so many spectacular days in the mountains. I shall always remember them.



DOUG BROWN

This year's Annual Club Dinner.

This year on the 9th November the Annual Dinner will take place at the Village Hotel, Stanley Park, Blackpool.

Sorry for the confusion folks, the syllabus shows it at the end of November.

Being back on the Fylde it gives members who aren't normally able to get to the Lakes the opportunity to attend. This year there'll be a slightly less formal buffet style meal. The rest of the evening will remain the same, with the usual presentations followed by the chance to catch up with friends, some of whom we may not have seen since the last Dinner.

I will email all members in September with further details, but in the mean time please could you send me your nominations for the presentations.

Greatest Personal achievement, Biggest contribution to the club and of course Mug of the year.

Tony Hulme

Don't forget the FMC are members of Friends of the Lake District and The Snowdonia Society so why not check them out: -

www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk

www.snowdonia-society.org.uk



Goldscope lead mine-Newlands Valley
Photo-Peter Wilson

Fylde Mountaineering Club

is affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council

www.fyldemc.org

