

Report on Rock Skills weekend 10-12 June 2022 by Daniel Albert

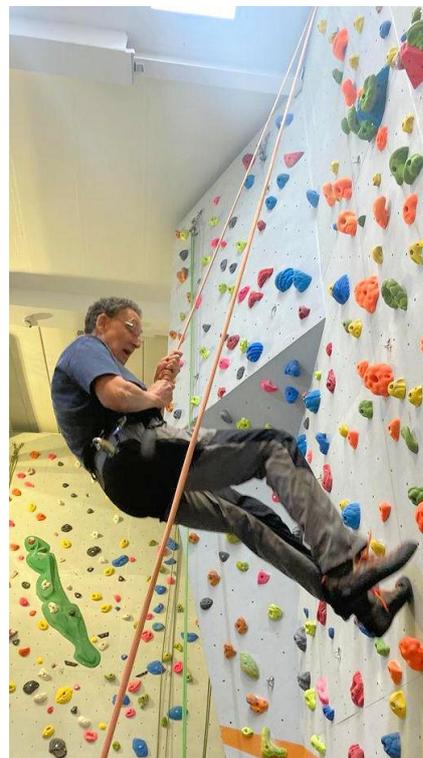
With support from an educational grant from ABMSAC, I attended a weekend of instruction organised by the Exped Adventure Company from Staveley, near my home in Kendal. Exped run guided tours in mountainous areas around the world, often going to places off the major tourist “bucket lists”. The instruction weekends are mainly for tour participants, for whom the price is included. The Rock Skills weekend is an opportunity to visit/ revisit skills for moving over rocky terrain using ropes for security and for descents.



There were three participants on our course. Two booked to go on a rock traverse of the High Atlas Mountains and me. We met with Ian, a mountaineering instructor on the Friday night at the Kendal climbing wall.

There we reviewed roped climbing, starting from the very basics of tying in to a harness. All the while, we were able to discuss how the techniques might translate into bigger projects.

As is often the case, I was better at knots and the others were better at climbing.



Saturday was very blustery. It was the day that the Great North Swim was cancelled. We met up at Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale and walked up to Stickle Barn Crag. Here we consolidated our learning by climbing a short rock route (Diff or V Diff, depending who you ask). We spent a lot of time discussing



gear placements and the formation of safe anchors. We then practiced abseiling, first on a single pitch and then with a double pitch where we learn to make ourselves secure on a small ledge, before pulling the rope through and roping down to the bottom. A lot of time was spent working on safety aspects of abseiling: from anchor security to considerations of what will happen if you “let go of the rope”.





Sunday was spent under the guidance of a different instructor. Mark is one of the owners of Exped Adventure. We took the skills from the previous two days and broadened them out onto mixed climbing and scrambling terrain on Raven Crag Yewdale (Hodge Close). Now we added taking coils of rope and moving together. All the while practising our clove hitches (one-handed now) and Italian hitches.

Overall there were a lot of useful individual tips to pick up during the weekend. But the real gain was learning to put it together into a safe efficient way of moving over varied rock terrain. It built on the skills from the club skills meet in April very well. Many thanks to the club for financial support.

Daniel Albert, June 2022