



2026

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB



Journal

MEETS PROGRAMME 2026

January 13	North/South day walk	North/South teams
February 6 - 8	AGM and Annual Dinner, Glenridding	Julie Freemantle
March 10	North/South day walk	North/South teams
April 16	North/South day walk	North/South teams
May 1 -4	Ed Bramley Memorial Meet, Grinton Lodge YHA	Andy Burton
May 13 - 19	Scottish Spring Meet, Lochranza SYHA, Isle of Arran	Judy Renshaw
June 5 - 7	Rhyd Ddu Meet, Oread Hut, Snowdonia	Andy Burton
June 20 - July 11	Summer Camping Meet, Val Ferret, Italy	Alpine Cub
July 2 - 9	Hotel Meet, Piz Buin, Klosters, Switzerland	A Burton/P Harris
July 31 - August 3	Dartmoor Meet, Plume of Feathers, Princetown	Andy Burton
August 18 - 23	GSH Maintenance Meet	Marian Parsons
September 4 - 7	Swanage Meet	A Burton/S Creasey
October 13	North/South day walk	North/South teams
October 16 - 18	Brecons Meet, Star Bunkhouse, Bwlch	Paul Stock
Oct 30 - Nov 1	Presidents Meet, GSH, Patterdale	Daniel Albert
November 12	North/South day walk	North/South teams
November 18 - 25	Costa Blanca Mountains, Spain	Philip Hands
December 8	North/South day walk	North/South teams
Dec 29 - Jan 2	Twixmas Meet, GSH, Patterdale	Judy Renshaw

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Cover Photo: *The Obelisk, Boredale above Ullswater, Twixmas Meet by Simon Palmer*

Editorial

Welcome to the journal recording another year of activities in the hills and dales of the UK and mountains of Switzerland and Italy. Many thanks to all the Meet Organisers and the many members who have contributed to meet reports with photos and/or personal views of the meets. Thanks also to the members who send me stories of personal visits.

We offer a broad programme of hill/mountain activities but the strength of the ABM is the members who bring different elements to the meet. No repeat visit to a venue is ever the same. Over the past year I haven't been on as many meets as normal so compiling the reports has an added dimension for me as I see familiar haunts in a different light and an insight into new places. It has also been great to see some new faces writing up reports.

The ABM continues to offer training; last year it was in Via Ferrata techniques at a well attended weekend course in the Lakes. This led to a successful visit to the climbs in the Cortina area later in the year, where members put their newly acquired skills into use.

The summer meet in Lenk was well attended with many members contributing to the meet report. It is lovely to see many members enjoying one of my favourite parts of Switzerland, the Bernese Oberland.

The London Lecture series continues to be a success. The lectures cover a wide range of mountain activities and the organisers from both our club and the Austrian AC do a great job. We are looking for presenters for the coming years lectures, so if you are off to an interesting place this year why not let members know about it. In addition, we like to see members attending either in London or on Zoom.

The autumn was overshadowed by the untimely death of Ed Bramley, a long standing member. I thank the Bramley family for allowing us to use their eulogy of Ed in the journal. In addition, Ed was an essential person in the running of the ABM as both Treasurer and a Director of the George Starkey Hut. The Committee has worked together and co opted members to keep the administration of the ABM going. On the next page Daniel, our President, highlights some of the challenges we face in the next few years.

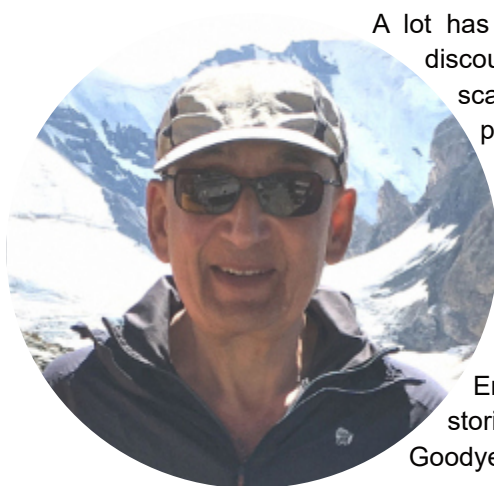
Finally, I would like to thank everybody who over the year has sent me news and reports and photos of meets, which I add to the website and/or Facebook. Don't forget that you can post your own activities on the group Facebook page, let me know if you want to join. The journal uses the reports and a selection of photos from the website to record the year's activities.

I hope you enjoy the journal.

Mike Goodyer, Hon. Editor.

June 2026

President's Thoughts



A lot has happened in the world during the past 12 months. Much of it quite discouraging. The planet continues to heat up and people's tempers at a global scale have followed that trend. Old prejudices, that our new connectedness promised to soften, have instead become more entrenched and heavily weaponised. Those of us that choose to spend our leisure time in less accessible places are lucky for the respite. As I write this, I am sitting in the northernmost part of the British Isles: the island of Unst.

No surprise then that our meets were very well attended this last year. Many members have their favourites that they return to each year.

Enjoy the following reports. Many thanks to all the organisers who collected stories and photos to create the reports. And thanks particularly to Mike Goodyer who put the whole thing together as expertly as always.

It is clear from the reports that the club continues to be very active in its mountain walking activities. We still manage to get to Scotland regularly and to the Alps each summer. A few people still climb, but most don't. Nonetheless, the character of the club is very different from a rambling club or similar – if our feet are not on the high ridges anymore, our heads remain in lofty places. Currently, the membership remains stable, around 150.

Unfortunately, while there remains great interest in our activities, and in using the hut that we share with the Alpine Club, we are running out of volunteers to keep the show on the road. My term as president ends next February and no successor has yet been found. It is not the only role that is going to be tricky to fill. The sudden and very sad loss of Ed Bramley, our treasurer, last year shook us all and reminded us of our mortality. It is time to start honestly thinking ahead.

Alongside plans for the George Starkey hut, I am starting to have discussions about future arrangements for the club itself. Discussions both within the club, and more widely. We do have something to offer a wider group of mountain lovers, but maybe in a slightly different format. We also could do with others, from outside, helping us with our administration. These are early days, but none of us has unlimited days. Please do contribute by bringing ideas at any time.

Enjoy the journal. Leave it where others can see it and ask about it. And please contribute to the next one.

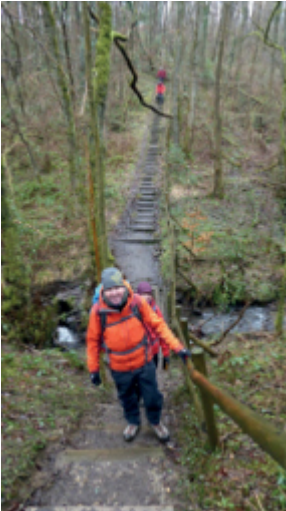
Daniel Albert

June 2026

Meet Reports

North Day Walk Peak District, February - Andy Burton

Seven of us gathered at the Outside café in Hathersage for breakfast, followed by some retail therapy of the outdoor gear kind. Eventually, we all returned to our cars and donned full waterproofs before setting off out of Hathersage and down to the Derwent River. We managed to avoid going into the David Mellors stainless steel cutlery design studio, factory, and museum, which is always a great wet weather bolthole.



At Leadmill Bridge, we hung a right and continued alongside the river before cutting up over the natural river bluffs to Callow Farm where we joined the little back lane for a short while as we walked around the very well-maintained Offerton Hall estate and back onto the above riverside path just a little west of the stepping stones and continued onto Shatton.

Here, we crossed the busy A625 and made our way around the back of the garden centre and across the playing fields into Bamford. Much to our disappointment, the combined pub and Post Office, the Anglers Rest, is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. However, a friendly passerby let us know that there was a covered seating area at the back of the pub that was open to the car park, which we could use.

With bait boxes and flask contents enjoyed and shared around by those who remembered to bring theirs (some left theirs in the fridge at home), we left the welcome shelter and continued out of the village on the opposite side of the valley.

Marcus en route

We skirted around the Bamford Filters land and crossed a couple of valleys to Thorpe Farm where the café was also shut. Crossing over the farm lane, we continued slipping and sliding our way across the fields, popping out on the lane which took us straight back to our cars in Hathersage.

We finished the day off with a cake and a cuppa back at Outside.

Attending this 8-mile epic walk in spite of the forecast were Ed Bramley, Michele and Marcus Tierney, Steve Caulton, Heather Eddowes, David Matthews, and Andy Burton.



Steatley round, February - Margaret Moore

It was good to resume our day walks, as our last two walks had been cancelled due to unavailability.

We met at Lardon Chase car park on a cold day. Our walk began through the woods, turning down to reach the river at Steatley.

We then walked along the Thames path to Moultsford. Some of the path had been restored with gravel, which was welcome, but much remained muddy.



River Thames



View from the Ridgeway



At Moultsford we left the river, walking up a bridleway towards Moultsford Down. The underlying rock was chalk, with plenty of mud. We climbed up to the Ridgeway. On a clear day there are great views from here, but we had low cloud. We walked along the Ridgeway until we reached the golf course, from where we had a steep climb across the course back to the car park.

From there we drove across the river to Goring and had a late lunch in the excellent Pierreponts café. stop!

A good day, with a variety of terrain.

A total of just over 9 miles and around 870 foot of ascent.

Attendees- Mike Goodyer, Mike O'Dwyer, Margaret Moore, Paul Stock

South Day Walk Chilterns, March



The ABMSAC Southern day walk on 11 March began at the West end of Amersham, which was accessible for car drivers from the West and for London-based people from the station on the hill above. The weather was better than forecast, dry and with reasonable periods of sunshine, though still with a cold northerly wind.

We took a circuit across open land, woods and fields, passing through the villages of Penn Street, Winchmore Hill and Coleshill. A circuit of Hodgemoor Woods, and northwards to Bottom House Farm, brought us back over the hill to the picturesque Amersham old town.

There we were lucky to find a good tea shop with home-made cakes to complete the day.

At one point we saw a group of 7 roe deer feeding in a field, before they saw us and leapt elegantly into the nearby wood. There were also red kites, now common in this area, wheeling above some of the fields.

Present: Margaret Moore, Max Peacock, Mike Goodyer, Judy Renshaw

Report by Judy Renshaw.

Northish Day Walk Southwell, March

March's Tuesday Northish day walk saw the four of us park up at Southwell Leisure Centre.

From here we walked past the Minster School along the Potswell Dyke to the Archbishops Palace. Part ruin and gardens, part flexible resource space in the restored Great Hall, which is sat right at the side of Southwell Minster (the County Cathedral), known locally as the 'Pepperpots'. The view of the church from across the fields illustrates why?

At the Refectory café we tarried over breakfast before exiting the Minster grounds and making our way across the road and onto the footpath that leads around the backs and across the A612 to Easthorpe.



Here we cut across the fields to walk the other side of the hedge from the Racecourse access road before joining the meandering River Greet as it wends its way through the fields and through Upton Mill, literally.

Clearing the southern end of the Racecourse we crossed the Nottingham to Newark railway line and entered Rolleston village briefly. Cutting across the extensively leveed fields we joined the Trent Valley Way close to the confluence of the Greet and the Trent.

Walking alongside the River Trent we were able to cast an informed glance across the fast-flowing waters towards East Stoke with its Hall and Church clearly visible at the foot of the bluffs on the southern side of the Vale.

At the Bromley Arms, and its adjacent former wharf, now a private residence, they run a passenger ferry service on request, which enables people to visit the Red Gutter and walk the site of the Battle of Stoke Field (16th June 1487).

The last battle of the infamous War of the Roses, and Nottinghamshire's only registered battlefield.

As the pub did not inspire us, we carried on through Fiskerton village and followed the field path to Morton. Here we found the Full Moon to be open and serving great beer from the Clarkson/Cotswold Brew Co.



Here we met a team who were busy planting several acres with dry-rooted saplings of native trees as part of an initiative to encourage landowners to convert some of their land back to woodland.

The large poster photo of Jeremy plonked outside was a bit over the top, but clearly not putting off the steady flow of lunchtime clientele. Whilst the sun shone, we sat outside and enjoyed a pint. As soon as it disappeared and the nithering breeze made its presence felt we were off.

A quick photo stop at the Pinfold then back across the railway line along the little lane past Poplar Farm and across the gently rising land towards Brinkley Farm.



At the back of the garden centre and allotments we used the back lanes to rejoin the Robin Hood Way near Park Hill, all of 50 metres above sea level, which unerringly led us back to the Refectory café for afternoon tea.

As the café closed, we made our way back through Southwell to our cars, rounding off a very enjoyable 10-mile early Spring Walk through the fertile land that gave us the Bramley apple.

A great home for a few thousand deciduous trees to thrive in over the years to come for all to enjoy.

Those present were Michele and Marcus Tierney, Steve Caulton and Andy Burton.

Report by Andy.

South-West Day walk, Thursday 20th March

On the first day of Spring, six of us met in the car park at Stourhead for the inaugural South-West day walk.



On the summit!

We walked East out of the estate, with the house in the background, crossed the busy B3092 until we reached the 18th century Drove track. We followed this track, lined with beech trees, up towards Whitesheet Hill. From there we did a circuit round the hill fort, with magnificent views of Wiltshire and Somerset.



We descended along White Sheet lane, before crossing the road again to walk along the ancient Long Lane track.

There was then a short road section before we joined a footpath towards Alfred's Tower. This tower, a 49m high folly, commemorates the accession of George 111 to the throne on 1760. It is believed to mark the site where King Alfred rallied his troops in 878.

Here we stopped for lunch, enjoying the spring sunshine, supplementing our packed lunches with purchases from a mobile van



St Alfreds Tower



Instead of taking the planned route through the forest, we returned to the estate via St Peters pump at Six Wells Bottom



Then we were able to walk along the path round the garden lake before returning to the visitors centre to enjoy excellent refreshments



The walk was just under 10 miles and around 850 ft of ascent.

Attendees: Steve Butterfield, Mike Goodyer, Alison Henry, Margaret Moore, Rick Snell and Paul Stock.

Report by Margaret Moore

South West Day Walk Avebury, April

Three members arrived at Avebury on a glorious sunny spring morning, with a remarkably cool easterly breeze which made for a chilly start.

We set off to Fyfield Down via the stone circle and up the worn chalky farm track up to the Ridgeway. Crossing the national trail we entered Fyfield Down, the source of the stones in the circle at Avebury. These are sarsen stones, made from silicified sandstone, also known as 'grey wethers' as from a distance they resemble sheep.



We walked on the main Marlborough track to the gallops and then turned off down a small valley on the Downs to the 'Devils Den'. This is the remains of a neolithic burial chamber, originally about 270 foot long before being ploughed out over time. All that remains is a dolmen like burial chamber of dubious origin.

view of Fyfield Down

Crossing the Down and the A4 we entered the village of Lockeridge to visit the 'valley of stones' at Lockeridge Dene. The oddly named pub- 'Who'd A Thought It' - was shut but a picnic bench on the nearby playing fields was an ideal lunch stop. The sun was now fully out and we enjoyed our spring picnic!

We continued going through small villages, often alongside the River Kennet, until we came to the West Kennet barrow. This is a more complete burial mound with a few chambers open to visitors.



Devils Den

Leaving the barrow we returned to Avebury, passing Silbury Hill, completing a 12 mile walk in spring sunshine. The day was rounded off with afternoon tea at the National Trust cafe.

Attendees: Margaret Moore, Paul Stock, Mike Goodyer

Report by Mike Goodyer

Skills Meet - Buttermere, April

Once the rocking and rolling of nonadministrative mishaps and hut commitments settled down, the actual meet itself was a delightful three day sandwich, combining a great day out climbing up onto Helvellyn via the discreet path up Nethermost Pike, with a days training on the Via Ferrata bolted to the side of Fleetwith Pike above the slate mine at Honister Pass, followed by a third days walking in the fells accessible from the Birkness Fell and Rock Hut situated at Buttermere.

Tony Howard and I travelled up on Wednesday evening to our Hut in Patterdale in order to liaise with the builders on Thursday morning as they commenced work on the drying room improvements. Whilst the work did not quite go to plan, good progress was made because Tony was able to discuss various important changes with Alan as the day evolved and further problems were discovered.

David Clear joined us in time for elevenses and strode off up St. Sunday for the afternoon.

Once the builder left for the day Tony and I walked up to Glenridding and sat in the walled garden area at the Travellers Rest and enjoyed a pint in the glorious early evening sunshine overlooking Ullswater. Here we were joined by Ed and eventually David who received my text message too late to avoid the Lanty's Tarn up and over to join us. I suspect his pint of orange and soda never tasted any better.

Thursday evening the four of us wandered down to the White Lion for dinner. Here we were joined by Steve Creasey and Paul Stock who had cruised their way up from Southampton in time to order food and a pint. As usual possible routes for Fridays Walk were discussed and plans were made.

In the morning with another fine day on the fells beckoning through the windows of the Hut five of us left Tony hoping that the builder would come and finish the work later that day.

As Ed had unfinished business from a walk he did with Celine on the Dinner Meet, and some of our group had not done the route before, we set off up Grisedale taking the path towards Eagle Crag. This time we found the grassy path off up into where the Nethermost Cove Beck comes down via some waterfalls as it cuts its way through the underlying rock band.

At the summit windbreak a quick decision where to descend was made with David and Paul electing to go down to Raise and use the zigzags. Steve, Ed and I went down Swirral Edge and up onto Catstye Cam. With a quick look into Keppel Cove and the old dam we set off down the very dry grassy fell side to join the path that Red Tarn Beck runs at the side of and past the old HEP pipeline.

From the opposite side of the valley words of encouragement were shouted across by Paul as we approached the footbridge above the Greenside weir. Ed and Steve went across and made their way down the concrete road to Glenridding to join them.

By this time my new boots were reminding me that the only breaking in I had done before today was up and down my carpeted stairs, so I stayed on the path that runs under the disused leat under Birkhouse Moor making my way into Glenridding via the campsite lane at Gillside. A welcome bottle of chilled Lucozade sat on the wall outside the

corner shop saw the others come by and I followed them back to the Hut.

Here we saw Tony and over a cuppa and cake it was decided that we would all go over to Buttermere, leaving just Ed's car in the car park. The journey over was in of itself a real treat as the evening spring light lit up the fells on our journey across.

Taking the left off the A66 at Portinscale the three cars regrouped at the Swinside Inn where a table was not available till after 8pm. Carrying on to the FRCC Hut Birkness just above Buttermere via Stair and through Derwent Fells over Newlands Hause into Buttermere.

With a quick hello to the remainder of the group and off-loading our stuff, Ed and I made our way down into Buttermere for a meal at the Bridge Inn (formerly the Buttermere Hotel). Here we were very well looked after by the staff despite our late arrival. Back at the Hut a final chat with everyone about the timings for the morning before I climbed into my pit to read what was written under my eyelids.

Heather's perspective of the Skills weekend:- Thoroughly enjoyed it.

Saturday - We had the perfect weather with clear conditions, great views but not too hot. F&R Club hut was a great venue next to Buttermere, very handy to get to Honister Pass. Chris, our instructor took us to The Shed to get the Via Ferrata kit which once on meant we were ready to walk up to the beginning of the route.





The first descent of the Via Ferrata down a ladder to a gentle overhang was a good starter for us all, requiring focus and 'hanging on' ability in order to unclip and then clip on to the next cable whilst being unbalanced. We all passed. Then metal staples, a ladder or three and even real rock led us round into a deep chimney with a breeze blowing gently

The major test of the cable bridge was spectacular. It was a strenuous walk across with even just a moment to two to take in the side of the rock face shearing down to the valley bottom. "Push your arms OUT" will always remind me of it.

Relief to reach the other side with the gentle scrambling route leading us up through the old mine tramways and tunnels.



We were rewarded with great views from the summit from Fleetwith Pike (648m).

at the Kirkstile Inn which was very tasty and with convivial lively company.

A winding drive to our evening meal

Sunday - Four of us walked up to Scarth Gap. Steve C. went east up Haystacks whilst Celine, Andy & I went west to ascend High Crag (744m), High Stile (807m) then Red Pike (755m). More fantastic views over the western fells greeted us despite the relatively short hail/rain shower and low cloud - just to give some atmospheric views. The descent from Red Pike was initially steep with an over worn 'path' - worse to descend than ascend I think. Then a man-made stone path took us down to the lake side - eventually. Long and slow for me, but I did it!! A relief to get down to the flat lakeside walk back to the hut.



My takeaway memories are the drive over Newlands Pass, sun shining on the lake with the lovely shadows and reflections in the water, honking geese, the peaceful picturesque situation of the F&RC hut and being able to walk down to the lakeside path, plus having one of the Ladies dorms to myself - a real treat.

I was left with the sense of accomplishment of having completed the VF and then the ridge walk to Red Pike.

Paul was first up on Saturday and out the door before anyone else, and this is the account of his Saturday walk.

I left the hut at 7:30 to walk along the road towards Honister Pass and turned southwest to cross the stream entering Buttermere at Peggy's Bridge and pick up the path to Scarth Gap Pass. I passed through the gap at 0820. Once I reached the bottom of Ennerdale I turned west on the forest road until I joined the path up Pillar. Pillar Rock buttress was very imposing as I got closer to it. I picked up the rising traverse past the Robinson Cairn to reach the ridge path from Pillar to Kirk Fell just before Black Sail Pass. I followed the path up Kirk Fell where it splits in two and took the northern path which led me to a very wet chossy gully with a very loose rock chimney exit which raised my pulse rate somewhat.

On reaching the summit of Kirk Fell I had my first break in the very welcome windbreak. The views towards Scafell and Wasdale were superb. I followed the path down to meet the path coming up from Wasdale and followed the procession of walkers heading for the very busy summit of Great Gable. As it was busy I didn't stay long on the summit and made my way down the path to Windy Gap for a lunch stop at 12:00.

I watched as many people were making their way across Moses Trod towards Great Gable. After lunch I ascended Green Gable and then on to much easier ground across Brandreth and Grey Knott's before turning northwest to Fleetwith Pike. From that summit there were fabulous views towards Buttermere.

I then dropped down the steep descending path to join the shores of Buttermere and back to the Fell and Rock Club hut arriving at 14:30.

From the positive feedback I have received a future club meet at another hut in the Lake District each year would not go amiss.

This Skills meet was mainly aimed at people who had expressed an interest in attending the Dolomites Via Ferrata meet in mid-September.

Attendees: Heather Eddowes, Celine Gagnon, Tony Howard, Paul Stock, David Clear, Steve Creasey, Steve McCain, Ed Bramley and Andy Burton.

Report by Andy Burton

Peak District - Ilam Hall, early May

The 2025 Peak District Meet was another great melange, with attendees enjoying many of the delights this beautiful hilly area has to offer for those that decide to venture out here.

Céline, Ed and I met at the Robin Hood car park (Free to both National Trust and RSPB members) shortly before 11am on Friday. Lugging our climbing sacks up the path through the trees to Birchen Edge in spring sunshine was certainly no hardship.



We warmed up on Gangplank, a one star moderate, on the isolated slab to the left hand of the edge. With pleasant balance climbing on polished holds in sheltered sunshine it was the perfect choice for the three of us.

We then moved over to the first part of the main edge known as Emma's Slab, where we climbed Emma's Dilemma, a 4a Severe. After refs we moved onto Emma's Temptation, a HVD 4c, with an awkward start, something Birchen has in abundance, but where climbers who persevere are often rewarded with great slightly easier climbing above. I think it was on this route where Céline found the hidden undercut hold that Ed missed and I never reached, which for some reason she seemed doubly pleased with herself about?

All too soon it was time to return to the cars and make our way over to Ilam Hall YHA to meet and greet this year's attendees, who all duly arrived as planned, always a bit of a relief for the meet organiser. Hats off to Elsbeth for making the three-train journey from Hull with her bike to Matlock and then cycling the 16 miles over to Ilam.

Your Editor Mike G. also enjoyed a Friday outing, which he recounts for you all below:

Setting off from Wiltshire before 9am saw me arrive at Ilam Hall car park before midday, so I was able to do a full afternoon walk. The sun was out, the sky blue and no wind – a great, if warm day.



Thorpe Cloud

I headed off across the fields to Dovedale, finding only a few people around. Crossing the stepping stones, I headed up Thorpe Cloud. The path loops around the back of the hill and then quickly takes you up to the ridge and summit – there were extensive clear views from the top. I returned to Dovedale and walked the length of the dale to Milldale, leaving the majority of the visitors in the stepping stone area.

I had a late lunch at Milldale – a lovely quiet spot with a bench next to the river.

My return involved a short walk up the road towards Hope before turning steeply up a green lane to Stanshope. The trees offered welcome shelter from the sun. From here I dropped back into Dovedale at Ilam Rock via the dry Hall Dale. There wasn't another soul in the narrow valley.

Returning to the stepping stones there was now a number of families picnicking on the grassy area, complete with rugs, or tables and chairs – there was even a pop-up tent. It was great to see so many folks enjoying the late spring sunshine.

I walked back to Ilam Hall and met up with Ed, who shared a couple of beers with me. A perfect end to the afternoon.

Various plans for Saturday were discussed and made after dinner in the hostel. Here are the accounts of what the various groups enjoyed.

Paul, Mike G. and Céline set off first for a walk that Paul had found near Matlock. Here is Paul's report of the Saturday Giddy Edge Walk:

Celine, Mike and I set off by car to Matlock early on Saturday morning. On arrival we parked by the River Derwent in Matlock centre and set off along the river side road to the footbridge and crossed to immediately start walking uphill. Once we reached the ridge top of High Tor, we had many scenic stops to view Matlock from above. On reaching the summit of High Tor we found the half-hidden path towards the cliff face and Giddy Edge. The obligatory safety warning signs were given due diligence and then we made our way to the path which cuts across the cliff face for approximately 80m. Giddy Edge is a little-known footpath with a bit of exposure but also some rails embedded in the cliff for those that feel the need.



After our little bit of excitement, we descended High Tor to pick up a path to Wards End and Riber Castle. The castle is no longer in use which is a real shame for such an imposing building.

One way system!

Celine and Mike on Giddy Edge



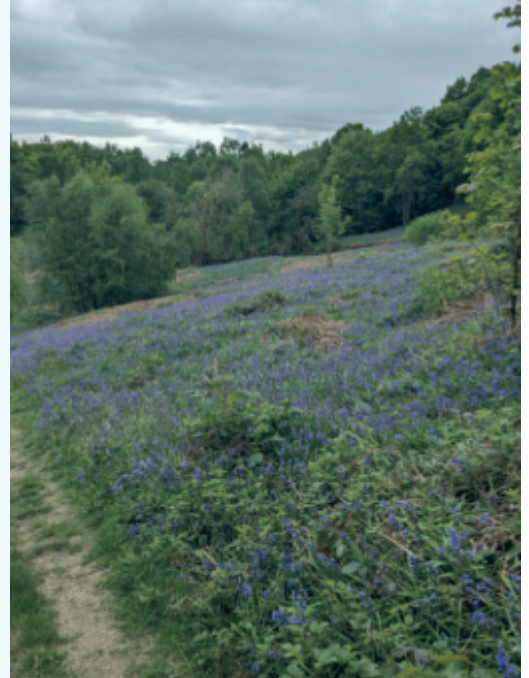


Looking towards Riber Castle with Giddy Edge below left.

From Riber Castle we passed through Hearthstone and entered Coombe Wood. We were completely blown away by the fields of bluebells as we passed through the woods. Shortly after exiting the woods, we arrived at the Pump House on the Cromford canal and walked along the towpath to reach our lunch stop at the cafe at the end of the High Peak Trail.

After lunch we walked up the long ramp on the High Peak Trail and then down to Cromford where the path crosses the road to climb up to the Heights of Abraham. After passing through a field containing a bull which luckily seemed too interested in attacking the fence. The path from the Heights of Abraham lead us directly back to the car park. After a quick change of footwear, we walked down to Matlock Bath for a cream tea before making the journey back to Ilam Hall.

Bluebells



Ed set off next, closely followed by Margaret Moore who went to hire a bike at the Ashbourne end of the Tissington Trail as she did last year.

Here is Ed's recounting of his first 50 miles plus ride as he trains up for his LeJog epic ride in June.

Around the Dove and Manifold watersheds (and a bit more, to boot)

I was up and on the road before 9am to beat the expected Dovedale crowds, which meant I had a quiet climb up the steep hill to Thorpe. Then it was uneventful back lanes for the most part to Parwich, where the locals are installing two spitfire silhouettes in readiness for VE day. There are then a great series of minor roads up limestone Dales, including Long Dale, which goes from just east of Hartington right the way up to Earl Sterndale.

Almost immediately, it's obvious which way the wind is blowing, as I'm having to pedal hard, even on the flat, and I'll be in the same direction all the way to the Cat & Fiddle Inn. At one point, I meet a peloton of cyclists coming the other way, the swish of their pedals and their maroon livery making it look and sound like a living express Pullman. I take a quick break at Earl Sterndale and observe that the Quiet Woman pub has now been converted into housing, and I reflect on the times that we've enjoyed a pint and a pork pie in there. Further on, I pass what was RAF Harpur Hill, the typical fencing posts and other features giving a clue to its past. Now the site is home to the HSE flame and explosion labs, hence the warning flag poles and CCTV cameras.

As I cross the top of Axe Edge moor, which marks the divide of water flowing east or west, there's now no shelter from the wind as I edge ever closer to my lunch stop at the Teapot café, just beyond the pub. As a reminder of the dry conditions, I can see and smell patches of heather burning on the moorland nearby, and there are still a pair of fire appliances in attendance.

Refreshed from a soup and coffee, my ride then drops steeply into the valley of the Clough Brook, a tributary of the river Dane. Now I hardly need to pedal as I follow the valley downhill, with woodland providing shade from the afternoon sun. Unfortunately, I need to turn off the continuation of this road before it reaches Wincle and its brewery – maybe another day. Passing through Allgreave, I'm ascending again, following the undulations of the Dane valley upstream. Gradbach seems to be one of those out of the way places that attracts tourists, partly because of the river, and because of its proximity to the feature known as Lud's church.

From there, it's the second big climb of the day, back up onto the ridge about a mile north of Ramshaw rocks. They look impressive back lit in the afternoon light, but for some reason I'm not in a photography mood today. Despite having a bike computer, I miss my turning for Warslow at the top of Mooridge, so end up following the ridge road down all the way to Waterhouses. A few learning points for me there.

Then it's the last pull of the day up to Calton and down the hill through Throwley, with its farm astride the road and remains of the old hall just beyond. From here, it's a joy to follow the final winding descents back to the Manifold and Ilam Hall, although the loose gravel on parts of the road is a constant reminder to remain vigilant.

As I'm packing my bike away, others in our group are arriving back from their own ride and Margaret kindly treats me to an ice cream before the café shuts. A perfect end to a great, but tiring ride!

Elsbeth and Judy went off walking on their own, and once Michele and Marcus arrived from home, the remaining six of us assembled our trusty steeds and set off from the front of the hostel through the lovely, tied estate village of Ilam and up the steep hill to Thorpe with views into Dovedale whenever we stopped to catch our breath, and push.



Crossing over the A515 into the Tissington Hall Estate we joined the trail where coming towards us as if planned was Margaret on her electric bike. From here we followed the Tissington Trail along the trackbed of this former LNWR branch line which opened in 1899 and closed in 1963, all the way to the Royal Oak at Hurdlow.

We all made good time keeping up with Margaret and Don on their electric bikes, stopping at Hartington Station to use the conveniences before carrying on up to Parsley Hay where the High Peak Trail connects in. At this point the trail is over 1,000 feet (305m) above sea level, and whilst we were afforded long views, the cool and freshening cross wind meant we were very glad of a hot drink here. Carrying onto the Royal Oak where Ben found us all seats in the snug for a pint and a warm.

Then came the return. With its favourable railway gradient going southwards we all cruised back to Tissington where at the Hall café a cream tea was enjoyed, before the slight up and down back to Thorpe and the steep sweeping downhill back to the hostel completed a great 30-mile round.

Sunday morning, we were joined by Steve Caulton for breakfast. With everyone suitably replete we set off from the hostel through the grounds of Ilam Park and along the Lower Manifold Valley.

As Elsbeth had walked the first part of this walk the day before she led us all out and up past the impressive pile of Castern Hall, still a massive work in progress, but all quality work in keeping and respecting the original construction. We suspect it will become a hotel and wedding venue. Time and deep pockets will tell.

Above the old mine workings, the group halted at the obvious viewpoint to look at the Manifold valley from its eastern rampart. Great view of Beeston Tor and down to Weags Bridge, and across the valley to Throwley Hall Farm, which we would walk through later.



Elsbeth led us unerringly through the little ups and downs across the chequered field pattern to the edge of Wetton Village, where there were toilets and a popup trailer café directly by the car park. This is the main access parking for Thor's Cave, and the field parking extension was rapidly filling up as we enjoyed a quick cuppa.



Following the roads that skirt the western end of the village we joined the unmade lane all the way down to the Thor's Cave complex. When approached from this direction there is so much more to the place. I remember Michele and I coming to this area for the first time with Mum and Dad some 60 years ago via this same route.

It was busy then and still is now. A lot of work has been done recently to improve the footpath, control the erosion and direct visitors safely to the main attraction. Underneath the main cave mouth, we descended to the dry riverbed and walking along the Manifold Way to Weags Bridge.

Following the unmade road that parallels the trail we walked left through the permanent campsite at Weags Barn and picked a spot by Beeston Tor Farm to have lunch in the sun. With the added entertainment of the farm owner accessing his roof with an extendable ladder wedged in the base of a digger bucket raised and lowered by

his mate as required and Marcus regaling us with routes he had done on the impressive Beeston Tor above us, the time fair flew by.

Now following the Manifold Trail, not the Way, which is on the adjacent old trackbed which follows the River Hamps, we walk up and over to Throwley Hall Farm.

Stopping to see the remains of the old hall and read the info board history of this ancient landscape and its long since vanished settlements, we carry on down the road to Rushley. Here you can either follow the trail along the road back over the Manifold (no longer dry at this point) or take the footpath right, up and over to the footbridge that leads directly back into Ilam Park. With a surfeit of ransoms (wild garlic flowers), other unusual plants and the magnificent estate managed trees this ten-mile walk ended as it began.



Looking towards Thor's Cave

Throw in a Manifold café finish, what's not to like.

Sunday evening saw some attendees take advantage of the easier evening drive home. Others relaxed with dinner and a beer and planned the Bank Holiday Monday walk.

Saying goodbye to Elsbeth as she began her cycle ride back to Matlock, we set off across the fields to Dovedale where people were already beginning to arrive.

Crossing the River Dove via the now repaired and raised stepping stones we made our way through this lovely valley with its many limestone pinnacles, often part hidden now among the trees, along with many caves that nestle in the steep slopes on our side waiting to be explored by each successive generation that wander by.



Crossing the little packhorse bridge at Milldale we took advantage of the facilities before disappearing at the end of the cottages up Sunny Bank to Alstonefield. Having established that the George was still there and due to open at noon we walked out of the village towards Hope and down to Dale Bottom. Following the lane right we found ourselves unerringly at the Watts Russell Arms nestled in the top end of Hopedale.

On seeing the Thornbridge Brewery supply truck parked at the pub I relaxed in the knowledge that the pub was open and likely to have plenty of good beer. The six of us enjoyed a convivial Bank Holiday quaff here before setting off on the return leg.



Walking up to Stanshope via the lane of the same name we joined the footpath down to Hall Dale. Just through the gate into the Dale proper we took the path right up the bank. This allowed us to follow the ridge until we reached an unmade lane that took us down to the road at Beechenhill. On the map this area is dotted with tumuli and ancient low markers, the highest one at 336 metres is Ilamtops Low.

Ilam village below

Leaving the road just below Beechenhill we traversed along the slopes of Bunster Hill and at the obvious nick in the ridge we walked along this limestone reef remnant that affords such a great view from above of Ilam village and the Hall itself.

I remembered last walking this little ridge with my brother Michael and my German penfriend Eckehart when I was fifteen, on our very first camping venture into the Peak District on our own.

Happy Days to be able to enjoy this area with friends and family in my 70th year.

Postscript: - Don and Judy like to pull in a visit to a National Trust pile on their journey home. This year they stopped off at Hardwick Hall, where they bumped into Suzanne Strawther, another ABMSAC and Alpine Club member, who volunteers as a guide there.

This year's attendees were Margaret Moore, Elsbeth Robson, Céline Gagnon, Heather Eddowes and Dave Matthews, Don Hodge and Judy Renshaw, Mike Goodyer, Paul Stock, Ed Bramley, and Andy Burton.

Michèle and Marcus Tierney joined us from the Izaak Walton Hotel (a shadow of its former self) each day, and Steve Caulton joined us as a day visitor.

Report by Andy Burton

Scotland - Aviemore, late May

There were just two people on the meet this year, due to many changes of plans by other possible attendees. But we had an excellent time, doing some great walking and scrambling in mainly good weather. The others certainly missed out!

We stayed at the SYHA hostel which had good facilities, helpful and friendly staff as well as shops, pubs and restaurants nearby. It also had public transport and easy access to the Cairn Gorm mountain/ski area and some local paths close to the hostel. We managed to catch the last two days of the sunny weather that the whole of the UK had had for many weeks, before it changed to low pressure and some rain. However, the amount of rain we actually had while out was minimal.

With sunshine in the morning and a good forecast on the first day we decided to do a scramble on the Fiacaille Coire ridge, near the ski area of Cairn Gorm. Max had done this before, so he knew what to expect. We drove up to the ski centre and set out on a major path to the south, before heading up a steep, bouldery ridge to the start of the scramble. It looked more forbidding than in the guidebook, but was all possible once we were onto it. The rock was excellent, granite with good friction and mainly solid, though often quite exposed. There was one section where I had to hesitate and look, with Max's advice, to find a way around a tricky section. Although the scramble was only given Grade 1 in the Scottish guidebook, we agreed that in England it would have merited at least Grade 2 or even 3.

We reached the top of the scramble in time to continue along the ridge of Cairn Lochan (1216m) for a lunch stop with some slight shelter from the wind. We saw a snow bunting near the top and later a herd of reindeer grazing on the slopes. We continued west in order to look down into the Lairig Ghru, a long, narrow valley running south into the centre of the Cairngorms. Then we continued along the top of Lurcher's Crag before cutting back down to the main path. The dry Spring meant that almost all the bog areas were dry, which made most of the 'off piste' routes much



Judy on top of Cairn Lochan



Reindeer herd on Cairn Lochan

easier than usual. As we had finished quite early, we stopped to look at Loch Morlich on the way back, which has a surprisingly large sandy beach with water-sports and cafes – most unlike the Scottish Highlands!

In the evenings we usually ate at pubs and restaurants within walking distance of the hostel as there are plenty to choose from, with a variety of style, atmosphere and cuisine. One evening we cooked in the hostel kitchen, with food bought locally.



On the second day the weather was also fine so we went round to the west to do a Munro, Sgurr Gaoith, from near Feshiebridge. There was a good clear path all the way to the top, passing through some forest and along a wide valley to A Chailleach before reaching the top at 1118m. The view from the rocky ridge above Loch Einich was spectacular. The descent was much more challenging than the ascent; we followed a ridge North West over 3 further tops but went slightly too far, finding ourselves with several boulder fields to cross. Then it was a matter of plunging through heather slopes to reach a path which eventually met our ascent route. We still had quite an early finish, so there was time to relax after having to move room in the hostel (due to the change of booking arrangements) and finding an interesting Asian/international restaurant for dinner.

The forecast for the following day was for strong wind and possibly low cloud so we decided to do the ridge to the north of Loch Morlich, which is slightly lower. We parked at a bridge near to Glenmore Lodge and followed the slightly complicated guidebook directions through the forest to pick up a path to a rather smart, recently renovated bothy. After a short break there, we took a fairly steep path up to the top of Meall a Buachaille at 810m. The



wind along the top ridge was strong enough to make progress quite difficult, but we managed to get over another 2 tops and shelter behind a huge boulder for lunch. After the final top there was a good path down to the forest and through the grounds of Badaguish outdoor centre which seemed to have cabin accommodation and activities. We took a minor diversion around the end of Loch Morlich and heard cuckoos in the forest. This year I heard fewer cuckoos than usual in Scotland at this time of year but, however, I did see a beautiful bullfinch just outside the hostel window at breakfast time that day.

Judy on top of M. a Buachaille

The following two days had forecasts for even stronger winds and considerably more rain, so we did lower walks. On the Sunday we followed a guidebook route from Loch Insh around the Speyside area. From the start at Kinraig we took a short detour to the loch, which had a notice indicating that ospreys were nesting in the area. Max had binoculars and was able to identify a nest, high in the trees on an island. No birds were visible at the time so we continued round, alongside much of the River Feshie and into forest to the south. The path went around several picturesque lochans and up to a viewpoint (Creg Far-leitire) which made a suitable lunch stop. After returning through forest along the Badenoch Way, followed by a short rain shower, we had a further look at the osprey nest, and were lucky to see an adult bird rise up from the nest, fly around and return to it. When we had looked earlier, it had probably been sheltering its chicks from the rain. That made a suitably satisfying finish to the walk. In the evening we ate at 'Macdui's bar' which provided good, typically Scottish fare.

Although we had not actually had much rainfall while out, the last day's forecast was similarly windy and wet, so we opted for a local walk from the hostel. This took well made paths to the south which were indicated on one map as 'East Highland Way', although there were no signs to indicate this. We had around half an hour of serious rain at the start but very little for the rest of the day. The route went to Loch an Eilein, a very pretty loch with a castle on an island. In the morning there were very few people to be seen but later on there were families and other groups, as the loch has car access and parking. We took a route further south to a small bothy (Drake's Bothy) partly hidden in the woods. This one had some people staying and others camping outside, so we moved on to Loch Gamhna for a lunch stop. Before returning we felt obliged to take in the top of Ord Ban (428m), the highest point in this area, up a steep rocky path way from the crowds but with a trig point on top.



In the evening we ate at one of the few older restaurants in a hotel which had been around before the ski centre was built. It had chandeliers with deer antlers and traditional food such as haggis on the menu. Then it was time to pack up and leave in the morning. I was lucky to get a lift into Inverness, as Max was meeting his wife Vivien and sister-in-law Janet at the airport, so I visited the very nice museum in town before getting my plane later on. I heard that the others managed to see the ospreys as well, later in the week.

Aviemore was a very good centre for a range of interesting walks and was reasonably easy to reach. I felt sorry for the others who missed this meet!

Present: Judy Renshaw, Max Peacock

Report by Judy Renshaw

Wales - Rhyd Ddu, June

For those opting for an additional day, the signs on the Thursday night were not good – heavy rain, which had led to several Oread club members, who were out camping, to also make use of the hut overnight. When Friday came however, the weather was much better than forecast with only a couple of very short showers.

Judy headed up Yr Aran which was fun and a little bit scrambly, then traversed around via the quarry workings along the level and down the steep incline, then took a path to the NT place, Craflwyn Hall, and into Beddgelert on the path from the Copper mines, rounded off by a short bus trip back to the hut. Marcus, Michele, Mike and Maggie headed round to Capel Curig. At the back of Joe Brown's shop, they found a very nice circular walk towards Lyn Grafnant. On Saturday, there were several excursions which centred on Beddgelert and the Aberglaslyn gorge. A large contingent started their walk at the NT car park at Craflwyn Hall, initially heading north east up the valley to the Sygun



copper mine and Llyn Dinas. From there, the route turns south west, towards the flank of Grib Ddu.

On the tops there is evidence of several old levels, and as we head down Cwm Bychan, there is the remains of an aerial ropeway that once served the workings. After a picnic



lunch at Nantmoor, by further old workings, we head north up the Aberglaslyn gorge. Always a delight with the water cascading over the various falls. A quick refresh in Beddgelert, before the final mile back to Craflwyn Hall.

Meanwhile, another party had started at Nantmoor and headed up the gorge to Beddgelert. returning via a track on the west side of the river. Don had a solo walk starting in Rhyd Ddu, along a path through Beddgelert Forest, below Mynydd Mawr. His return route was by a lower path above Llyn Cwellyn which goes to the campsite close by the A4085. It's worth noting that work has now begun on an official footpath in this area, up to the path through Beddgelert Forest, which ultimately will remove the need to walk back along the road.



Saturday night was the usual communal fare, with the menu consisting of a tricolore starter, vegetarian chilli mains and a range of desserts, accompanied by a variety of wines.

Sunday was a further assortment of activities, including a visit Powis castle at Welshpool, with its wonderful gardens and terraces, a there and back into Beddgelert (with an obligatory stop at the ice cream shop – was that twice in the weekend for some?), and an ascent of Snowdon via Bwlch Main, returning along the Snowdon Ranger path and then cutting across the familiar quarry track.

A great weekend as ever, which showed that even the less energetic routes can hold a lot of interest.

Attendees: David Blackett, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, David Clear, Mike Goodyer, Don Hodge, Maggie O'Dwyer, Mike O'Dwyer, Judy Renshaw, Elsbeth Robson, Suzanne Strawther, Marcus & Michele Tierney
Report by Ed Bramley

Lenk im Simmental - Switzerland, July

Lenk proved to be an excellent centre for hikes of all abilities, and with the good weather, everyone was out in the hills every day. The Hotel Wilstrubel was the base for the week.

The group of 27 members split into smaller walking groups and covered many kilometres of hiking trails during the week.

The report has also been broken down into smaller segments, reflecting the different experiences.

Pamela and Katherine

We stayed with the slower group for all our walks, and the highlights for us were the flowers and the numerous waterfalls pouring out of the mountain walls at the southern end of the valley, coming from the melt water of the Plaine Morte glacier below the Wildstrubel. The group consisted on most days of Katherine, Pamela, Alan, Carol, Geoff & Pauline, joined sometimes by Richard, Rick, Paul & Pat, Mike & Marian.

On the first day we caught the Betelberg gondola lift to Leiterli, just under 2000 metres, and set off on the "Flower Trail". This lived up to its name for the profusion of alpine plants, mostly with small labels to identify them. We came across the usual favourites of alpenrose and spring gentians, but a first for many were the numerous tall yellow gentians, which have no resemblance to the smaller blue ones. Tiny fairy's thimble bellflowers clung to the rocks, along with mountain avens and alpine gypsophila. There were several varieties of orchids to be found, mostly common spotted but with the occasional delicate fragrant, bright pink round-headed, small white, and even a few black vanilla, usually found at higher altitudes.

Below are yellow gentian, martagon lily, alpenrose and fairy thimble bellflowers.



One of our lower walks was the contouring path from the bus stop at Laubbärgli to Bühlberg, where the flowers were more of a meadow variety. Here we walked through fields of tall white false helleborines, bearded bellflowers, dark blue rampions, and a profusion of pale pink bistort.

The objectives on our other walks were the spectacular waterfalls for which the valley is famed. Perhaps the most dramatic was the 100-metre high Iffigbach Falls which thundered noisily down to the roadside. We walked to these from Iffigenalp on a narrow track beside the small river, after walking higher to the Groppi farm, the midway point on the trail to the lake of Iffigensee.



The walk was more dangerous than anticipated, for Alan sat on a wooden bench at the side of the trail which immediately collapsed, sending him backwards over the top.

Luckily Rick and Carol came to the rescue to get him up and to administer first aid, though the resulting pain in his back meant that we left the Meet a day early.



On another day we caught the bus to Simmefälle and walked a short distance up to where the falls cascaded down. From there we continued further up the valley to Siebenbrünnen, the Seven Springs, where seven separate streams pour out from the hillside in a wide 30-metre arc, the source of the River Simme which flows for 55 km into Lake Thun.



Simmefälle



Siebenbrünnen

Siebenbrünnen is so important to Lenk that the upper part of the town's coat of arms shows its seven streams flowing down a green background, to represent the seven sources of the river.

The last day dawned bright and sunny, and many of us returned to Leiterli for the geological circuit towards Gryden, a lunar landscape pitted with craters, with dramatic views. The flowers were even better here, with clumps of bright pink martagon lilies, the first that we'd seen in Lenk, white St. Bruno lilies and willow-leaved gentians. We had a 15-minute stop looking at a group of about 8 marmots playing, feeding, and just basking in the sunshine, with one on guard in a hollow near the path. During lunch on the high point of the ridge we were entertained by 2 persistent swallowtail butterflies, a splendid conclusion to our week.

Heather

For 3 of us the trip began with a couple of nights in the town of Thun. Our arrival coincided with the first football match of the Women's Euro competition - Finland v Iceland but neither country's supporters staying in the hotel gave away who had actually won!

Exploring the old town, a very interesting castle and the river with its old wooden bridges/weirs were a delight to see.

A boat trip to Spiez gave us an opportunity to explore that town too.



Friday found us on the train to Lenk ready to meet up with the rest of the ABMSAC group at the hotel Wildstrubel. A lovely valley with sneaky peaks to the higher ranges behind. A short visit to the Tourist Office decided the first excursion.

Saturday. Six of us - Margaret Moore, Jay Turner, Margaret O'Dwyer, Phil Hands, Roger James and myself ascended the lift from Betelberg 1090m to Leiterli 1946m and followed the traversing path to and around the Stübli 2109m an area of very unusual limestone rock formations.

The flowers along the route were in their prime. Beautiful. Pam's group also did a similar walk on the last day (see above).

Sunday. Sunday saw a group of 10 going up to Iffigen falls (1319m) where a delightful path meandered its way alongside the rushing water from the peaks above. The group split, with Andy's group taking one path (see below) and Heather's group went a little further up the valley before turning off and up to the Ritzmad (1856m) and on to the Oberlaubhore. More alpine in nature the route summited at 1999m giving clear views up and down the Lenk valley and surrounding peaks. They had the cheese opportunity at the alpine farm.



Separately both groups made the steep descent began back to the café at Simmenfälle and the bus. An excellent day.

Monday. Margaret Moore organised a walk on Monday up to the Lauenensee, making the most of the Simmental Pass - a free train ride up to Gstaad and bus to Louwenensee (1370m). The large group wandered around the lake admiring the flowers and views, with coffee at the cafe before the pleasant descent to Lauenen village and the return

journey. Jay and Heather took time out at Zweissimmen to find some of the intricate, old chalets along with a great display of old farming implements. The forecast afternoon rain had set in.

Tuesday - was the wet day. People lingered over breakfast before donning our waterproofs and setting off for the day. The intrepid six agreed a traversing walk through the cloud & heavy drizzle would be just perfect! Starting from Laubbärgli Jay navigated the intricacies of the multiple-choice footpaths. Light drizzle and swirling cloud gave a mystique to the route. Cow bells sounding, flowers swaying and then a hut, the Ruedis Laveyhutte - well maintained, locked and charming.



Descending, the noise of some machinery became louder, until something in disguise appeared wheeling a ferocious strimmer!! He was hardly distinguishable from the foliage he had just cut. The rest of the path maintenance team (in training) were a few metres behind with rakes and tools for the job. Well done them.

Continuing we slid & slipped downhill but managed to maintain our balances on the now muddy path which had been in-filled with stone & soil and water draining channels had been cut to the downward side of the path. Reaching a track junction Phil, Jay, Roger and Heather opted to



walk the 'short' distance up to the Hahnenmoos Pass and were rewarded with views of the Regenbolshorn, 2196m, and behind it, through the clearing cloud, the new snow on the Wildstrubel 3243m. The wheeling model gliders being flown from this pass were fascinating too. Apparently it is one of the best places to fly these aircraft. The route back down took us to Bühlberg and the bus.

Wednesday. Heather and her intrepid group, taking Paul's recommendation, took the train towards Gstaad alighting (do foreigners understand this term?) at Schöllster. Quite clearly a busy ski area. They declined the chairlift and meandered under the lift through the shadowy trees and alpine meadows.

Fortunately, they were in the right place - the messages for the students of Le Rosey School told us so! Finally arrived at the Horeneggli ridge 1770m. Phil, Roger and Heather elected to go over Horeflue 1949m - a short, greasy, alpine ridge whilst Jay and the Margarets viewed the alpine flowers below enroute to the rendezvous point - Uf de Chessle restaurant. The views were tremendous. Louwenehore 2477m, Wildhorn 3247m. Tuesday's weather gave all the higher peaks a beautiful covering of snow from our point of view, but not for those in SAC huts!

They walked along the ever-narrowing ridge, with very clear views down both sides, reaching Rinderberg, 2078m. A short took them lift back to Zweissimmen.

Thursday. Initially undecided Heather's group felt they should make use of the Metschstand lift and went up to clear views across to the Wildstrubel 3243m and its neighbours. Having discovered that their tickets enabled 'free' use of the lift from Geils 1706m on the Adelboden side they began the east flank traversing path from Metschstand to Hahnenmoos, 1949m cable car station. Another lovely traversing path took them towards Sillerebuel but they turned southwards and descended to Geils. A 6-seater from the old chairlift was the perfect stop for lunch! Back up to Hahnenmoos and after a delightful path through a lush flower meadow they slogged up the gravel road to the Metschstand in full, very hot sunshine. Rivella, beer and lemon sodas were very welcome as we took in our final views of the glorious mountains of the Bernese Oberland.

Andy/Paul

Also on the first day Paul, Mike, Marcus and Michelle caught the early bus to Laubbärgli. After a steep ascent by switchback roads to the Laubbärgli cafe (1848m) they started the trek on a zigzag path through the last of the trees which opened up to open pasture just below the ridge. The path made its way up along to the ridge for a short way before contouring around the hillside to the main ridge up to Tierberg. After a bit of a steep path they arrived at Tierberg (2371m), then followed a ridge up a very steep ascent to the next peak called Seewlehore (2468m). After an early lunch on the top they retraced the route back to Tierberg where they met Andy and continued along the descending ridge path to Laveygrat (2248m) and stopped for second lunch at the closed lift station.

Andy's first full day began in the same way as the last time he walked out of town with your editor towards Adelboden in 1973. He arrived at the Laubbärgli cafe just as the owner was putting out his open signs and cake offers. The smell of wood smoke from his stove already permeated the air. This little place also sits at the start of two footpaths on either side of the road, he took one across the road, zigzagging through the trees to the first viewpoint at Schatthore (2070m), before continuing up to the ridge at Tierberg. The view across the valley and down to Zweissimmen was

relatively clear. Andy heard a familiar voice, he had met up with Paul in company with Michele and Marcus and Mike who were just returning from having been up to the Seewlehore.



They were entertained during lunch by an acrobatic display from both model gliders and hanggliders. After lunch they continued along the ridge to Hahnenmoos Pass (1982m), passing a dewpond with tadpoles and newts swimming around, and on down to the Restaurant at Bühlberg (1660m). After a couple of refreshments, they were returned to the hotel by bus.

Sunday saw a group of 10 going up to Iffigen falls (1319m) where a delightful path meandered its way alongside the rushing water from the peaks above. The group split, with Heather's group taking one path (see above) and Andy's group taking the zigzagging path mountain bike and forest road path making their way up to the viewpoint at

Oberlaubhore (1995m). Michele and Andy spotted a young chick scurrying about among the bilberry bushes close to the top which we identified later as a young Ptarmigan.

A light lunch was taken at the beautifully renovated cheese making farm at Langermatte (1856m) with its collection of different cowbells on display under the eaves. They continued on steeply down to Rezlberg, where they saw the unusual water feature - Siebenbrünnen, a karstic waterfall. The water flows directly out of the mountain over a width of 30 metres. The water has its origin in the Rezgligletscher/Glacier de la Plaine Morte at an altitude of 2700 metres.



Michelle and Marcus near Langermatte farm with the Wildhornhuetten and the Schnidejoch on the centre skyline

In recent years the summer glacial lake has managed to melt its way through and drain away suddenly at much higher flow rates on occasion. This has given the locals some serious concerns as how best to protect the villages within the valley. However this meant that all the falls were very dramatic in their displaying of the power of water.

Separately both groups made the steep descent began back to the café at Simmenfälle and the bus. An excellent day.

Paul writes: On Monday Paul and Mike the train from Lenk to Schoenried via Zweisimmen. Here they walked past the lift station and continued on a zigzag path through trees and open pasture until they reached the peak of Horeflue (1949m). After a quick refreshment stop, they set off around the ridge walk towards Rinderberg. There were absolutely amazing views on both sides of the ridge. Passing the beautiful Berghotel Hornfluh with balconies over both valleys, their path contoured around to Parwenge (1939m) where they left the ridge and followed a path towards St Stephan, going through the Parwegesattel to Undere Switzeregg (1707m). Here they met a Swiss lady with her son who was separated from her husband and other children and lost on the wrong side of the mountain. They assisted her to find the path down to St Stephan where she met her husband with the other children. After this they passed through the Transhubel Pass (1723m) and followed a well-marked path through forests down to St Stephan.

On Tuesday Andy's group went up the Betelberg gondola and walked along the Alpenblumen weg all the way to the crater like landscape at Gryden. This unique geological feature is attributed



to some layers of rock very similar to the chalk found on our south coast being washed away over time leaving the harder surrounding rocks as narrow prominent ridges between and around a series of mini dolines.

Each of these contains a separate ecosystem like that found among our limestone pavements but on a bigger scale. One or two still had a plug of the winter snow in the bottom.

At the end of this area, they found the well-maintained mountain Schutzhutte Gryden, held down by a cable to a corner of the ridge at 2048m. They were still in the mizzling cloud and were glad of a few minutes in the dry to enjoy a snack and a drink before carrying on along the footpath to the Truetlisbergpass where the others indulged Andy by taking a photo by the marker post right where Mike Goodyer and he had stood some 52 years earlier having climbed up from Lauenen.

From here with the weather steadily improved and retraced their steps through Gryden and up to the high point at Stubleni, 2109m. A collection of little pinnacles standing on top of this unusual landscape which now afforded some good 360-degree views. Michele and Marcus posed for a photo at the mini trig point on top.

Making their way back to the gondola in the sunshine taking in the information on placards along the mountain bike track of how the ancient farming practices have developed and continue to work well in this area was almost information overload for one day.

They all stopped at the restaurant in the gondola station and enjoyed the specials on offer, each to suit their own needs before returning down to the village where the rain returned in earnest.



Wednesday saw Paul and Mike catching an early bus to Simmenfälle (1105m). Paul writes: *We followed the path alongside the falls to where the path split towards the Ammerten Pass. On reaching an old footpath sign they took the alternative path to the Ammerten Hutte. This very thin path passed through forest and pasture crisscrossing the river until it rejoined the main path again at 1635m. The path steepened up the valley headwall next to the spectacular waterfall until reaching the Ammerten Hutte (1832m) where a party of four were decamping to return to the valley.*

Once past the Hutte the path climbed steadily through pasture turning eventually to scree and rock. The next 3-400m of ascent was on steep and very loose rock to the Ammerten Pass (2443m). At this point Paul, who had been feeling unwell for a while, decided to go down rather than carry on to the summit of the Ammertenspitz (2613m), he was 'gutted'. They returned to the falls on the main path.

Michele, Marcus and Andy decided to walk from the top of the same gondola over to the Wildhornhuetten SAC and return by bus from Iffigenalp. With the overnight rain having fallen above 2000 metres as snow and the cloud clearing away before dawn, they were treated to a bluebird day, in July.

At the gondola station they met Bill and Rosie with Don, Richard and Rick, who soon left them behind as they walked



under Stubleni and onto the Tungelpass, 2084m. The alpine flowers in this area after the rain and with the full sun on them were a real treat. The views right out past the Aemmertenspitz at 2612m all along the visible extent of the Bernese Oberland chain in both directions from Les Diablerets to the Eiger, Moench and Jungfrau, fair popped out at us.

On the way to the Tungelpass

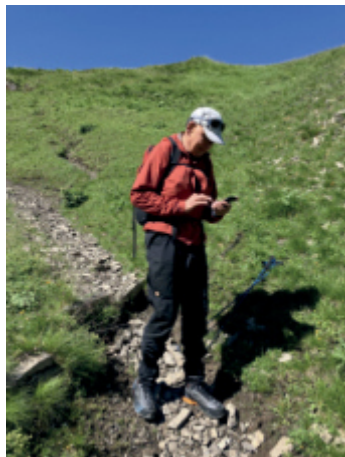
Iffigensee

Eventually they crested a lump at 2381m, with views down to the Iffigsee, and the traversing path around to the Wildhornhuetten, SAC, 255m on the path up to the Schnidejoch, one of the routes through to the Rhone valley side. As they approached the hut Bill and Rosie with Don and Rick were setting off on their way down.

After a light late lunch, Andy's group set off down past the Iffigsee with its classic glacial blue-green waters and arrived at Iffigenalp ten minutes after the last bus departed. Oops! After a cold beer and some discussion with the staff at the mountain lodge it transpired that the chef was driving down into Lenk for his evening swim and he kindly gave us a much-appreciated lift, ensuring that we were not late for dinner.



Thursday, the last full day in the Simmental arrived all too soon. Andy's gang of five caught the bus back up to Iffigenalp. With the guide from the Lenk Tourist Office giving us his well-practised talk on all things Simmental Andy found that on this third listening he was able to understand a lot more of the Swiss German?!



They set off from the bus terminus and headed up the well-made and marked ancient path up to the Rawilpass with Bill and Rosie and Don soon overtaking them as they negotiated the rock band cliff that the path works its way up.

Just below the Blattihuette Andy saw a familiar figure ahead descending towards them. It was Daniel with his German guide Christoph making their way down from the Wildstrubelhuette.

Andy took a photo for the record; exchanged pleasantries and continued our separate ways. At the Rawilpass, 2429m they stopped for the obligatory photo before turning round and making their way back down.

Lunch was enjoyed at the first vantage point with good views back out over the wider upper Simmental landscape, before completing the descent back to Iffigenalp. With a couple of beers and some homemade cakes to finish our days out in the Swiss hills for another year in good time to get a seat on the bus back down, there was absolutely nothing not to like.

Special mention goes to Don Hardy for making it up to both the Wildhorn and Wildstrubel huts and the Schnidejoch at 2755m. during the week. Thanks to Pam and Alan for their excellent research in finding the Sporthotel Wildstrubel, negotiating an excellent deal with both cooked breakfast on offer and a three-course evening meal that kept us all walking well through the week. The reasonably priced wine pairings were another 'Brucey bonus'.

Simon and the hotel team looked after us very well from the introductory wine and nibbles on Friday evening right through till our final breakfast a week later.

My thanks also go to Miriam for making it all work for us and everyone from our group who stepped up with real enthusiasm during the week making the meet organisers role an easy one.



Attendees: Pamela Harris and Alan Norton, Katherine and Richard Heery, Pat and Paul Goodlad, Pauline and Geoff Causey, Marian and Mike Parsons, Carol and Rick Saynor, Rosie and Bill Westermeyer, Margaret and Mike O'Dwyer, Michele and Marcus Tierney, Heather Eddowes, Margaret Moore, Jay Turner, Phil Hands, Roger James, Niels Doble, Paul Stock, Andy Burton.

Reports from Pamela, Katherine, Heather, Paul and Andy. Edited by Mike Goodyer

Ten Tors (or more) and two cream teas - Princetown, August

A welcome return to Dartmoor after last year's successful meet. Once again we were based at Princetown -only a month earlier and in the school holidays. We were surprised how quiet Princetown and the nearby moors and Tors were. When Andy and I arrived late afternoon on Friday the town was so quiet it could have been half day closing - the cafe shuts at 4pm and even the chip shop shuts at 5pm! Even the Plume of Feathers, where we were staying in their bunkhouse, was subdued with no chef for the entire weekend and the camp site had very few takers. As before the prison remains shut and the outdoor shop is up for sale. Only the local brewery, Dartmoor Brewery, looks on the up, with Jail Ale a personal favourite. The future doesn't bode well for this small town. However this quietness had a certain charm and all the local people we met were very friendly and welcoming - pleased for our custom I guess. Luckily the Prince of Wales were able to accommodate us for Friday and Sunday evening meals.



On the Friday morning Andy and I set off promptly, missing the M4/M5 traffic issues and arrived at Dunnabridge for lunch. We set off for a short leg stretch to Bellever Tor, passing several ponies grazing on the moors. The Tor was a great vantage spot and at 443m its one of the highest points around. It was windy on the top. The paths were springy and dry. Enjoying the good weather we detoured to Laughter Tor.

Bellever Tor

Descending back to the return path we met a young photographer, Hugo, at the standing stone. He had a project to capture in photos the spirit of the moors. He was using the poem Dart by Alice Oswald as his inspiration – we wished 'all the best' for his venture and returned to the car.

We then hot-footed to Princetown to check into the bunkhouse. There was one more Tor to visit and we arrived just after 3:30pm at the Fox Toe Café for our first cream tea of the weekend.

Everybody else arrived by 6pm, in time to check in and prepare for dinner at the PofW. We were well fed and watered and returned to the Plume for a nightcap.

Saturday saw the day break to fine weather. Steve, who was travelling up from the New Forest, arrived in good time for us to set off from Princetown by 9am. The walk was mainly on Walkhampton Common and we hoped to visit 7/8 Tors. For a large part of the walk we followed the bed of the dismantled railway. This allowed for a good pace and we



detoured off the railway to head up to the Tors along the line. The TV mast on North Hessary Tor, near Princetown, was visible almost the whole walk.



The Princetown Railway was a 10¼ mile single track branch railway line that ran from Yelverton on the Plymouth to Tavistock line, to Princetown via four intermediate stations, Dousland, Burrator and Sheepstor Halt, Ingra Tor Halt and King Tor Halt. The line was initially built to transport granite and supplies, including coal and materials for the prison.



Ponies at Kings Tor



Sweltor Quarry

We passed the disused quarries of Foggintor and Sweltor on the way to Kings Tor, where we could see the Great Mis Tor – a route from last year.

After exploring the quarry cliffs and scrambling about on the Tor we returned to the railway bed and passed under a substantial bridge (ancient packhorse route?) on the way to Ingra Tor. Here we said farewell to the railway as it headed off to Burrator Reservoir into Dousland and then to Yelverton.



Inga Tor

From Ingra Tor we traversed the moor to Leeden Tor and then on to Sharpitor, a breezy lunch stop, onto the scrambling Leather Tor and then dropping down through the woods to the eastern end of Burrator Reservoir.

Here we split into two groups – one continuing through the woods to join the Abbots Way and back to Princetown via South Hessary Tor. The other group headed south through the woods and up to Sheeps Tor, very distinctive but not the highest Tor. There were a number of ‘wild’ camps up here with good views of the reservoir. We retraced our steps and after an ice cream refreshment headed north to Black Tor before returning to Princetown. The walk was around 14 miles with 2000’ of ascent.

Atop Sheeps Tor



Afternoon tea and biscuits were taken back at the bunkhouse before going to for dinner at the Dartmoor Inn in Merivale. This didn't disappoint with Steve, Paul and Mike sharing a 'spare steak' that was cooked in error!

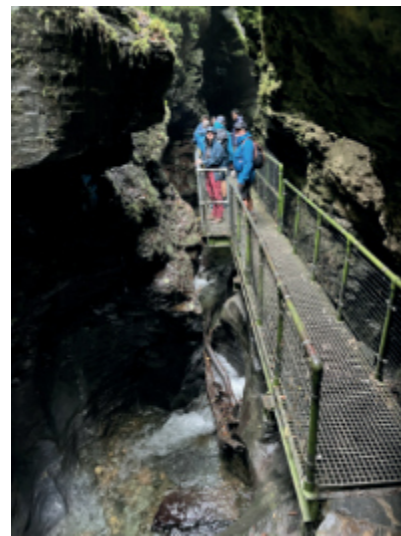
Sunday we woke to thick mist and light drizzle so we planned a trip to Lydford Gorge. On the way to the gorge we stopped off at the Bronze Age settlement of Merivale, just above the Inn, to see the stone avenue and round houses. Last year Andy and I visited this area in clear weather. However the mist gave the area a special magical ambience and we pondered who laid these stones and why. Steve returned home after his cultural visit!



The day stayed a day of mist and drizzle, so the gorge being partly covered by trees was an ideal venue. In contrast to yesterday the gorge was understandably very busy. After a quick morning cuppa we set off exploring the 'temperate rainforest' of the gorge – it lived up to its main characteristics of very wet and high humidity. We visited the White Lady Waterfall before carrying on to the Devils Cauldron, both were spectacular.

We all managed to squeeze around a picnic table at the small café for lunch – and for some a second cream tea (only one scone this time!)

Paul and Celine left to go home while the rest of us returned to the bunkhouse. We enjoyed another evening in the PofW.



Unfortunately Monday was very misty with heavy showers. We all decided to pack and return home. An enjoyable meet in a unique landscape, Dartmoor certainly has a lot to offer.

Attendees: Andy Burton, Steve Creasey, Heather Eddowes, Celine Gagnon, Mike Goodyer & Paul Stock.

Report by Mike Goodyer

Via Feratta Meet Cortina d'Ampezzo 12 - 19 September

In April 2025 a group of members gathered to attend the Honister Slate mines to complete some club sponsored training on the Via Feratta there. It's safe to say that from what I heard that everyone was richer for the experience. The group learnt new skills or brushed up on old ones. Some of those members who were able to make it to Cortina were able to put that training to good use in September proving the value of the club investing in the training meets.

Michele and I set off long before the meet and enjoyed a leisurely drive down through various countries and were also able to pull in a good number of walks and new Via Ferratas in particular around Seefeld, Maurach and Canazei where we were also able to fill in several climbs missed on previous trips. We eventually made our way

through the Dolomites arriving in Cortina on the same Friday as everyone else. Sadly, Cortina was not looking at its best as there was a huge amount of building ongoing in preparation for the Winter Olympics starting in February. It was hard to believe that the work will be completed on time. A countdown clock was displayed on the Main Street if

they had any doubt as to the time available to complete the work. It is easy to see how the area will benefit from the improved infrastructure that the Olympics will leave.



Our first evening saw us visiting the Hacker Pschorr Haus a typically German bar with German food, German beer and German staff. In particular the lady who served us who left us in no doubt that we were not to give her any trouble. Don't try and speak German to me, don't try and be funny, and if you want to arm wrestle, I will beat you! Probably not a good time for Steve C to mix up the words polenta and placenta when ordering?

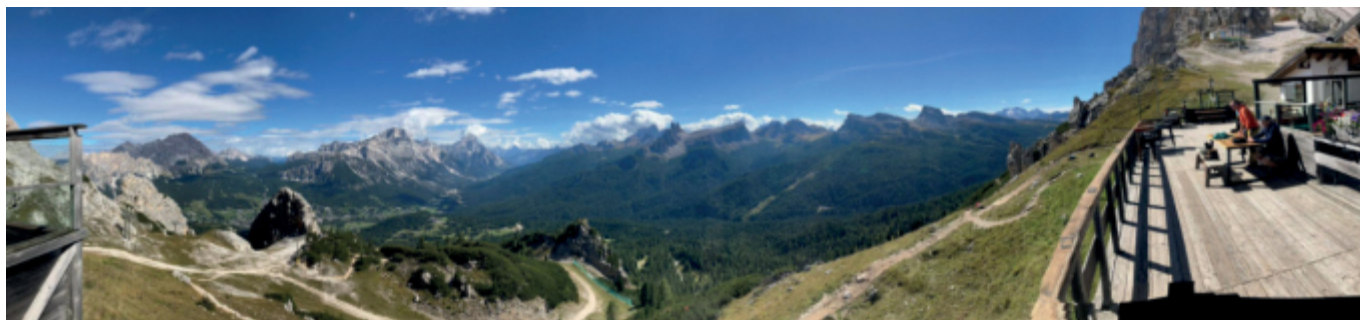
The beer and Schnitzels were simple food and just what we needed. This evening thank goodness did not set the bar for the level of drinking for the rest of the holiday or we might have been a sorry looking bunch by the end of the week. We raised a glass (several actually) to our greatly missed friend Ed Bramley who should have been with us. We would as the week progressed share many of our happy memories of our times together with our inimitable former president and great mountaineering pal. I for one left a small written tribute to Ed in the summit book of the Hochiss in Austria as I know we all felt throughout our break that Ed was with us in spirit.

Our first full day together as a group saw us heading up the valley by bus to visit a couple of Via Ferratas that some participants would remember from the last Cortina meet in 2014. As we traveled past Fiammes I pressed the button for the next stop, we sailed past the turn for the path up the Val di Fanes and continued up the hill eventually stopping half a mile further on at a random spot below the Bosco De Castel. A short walk down led us back to the intended path 10 and on to the start of the VF Giovanni Barberi and VF Lucio Dalaiti.

The wires on these ferrattas traverse exposed ledges and pass behind the Fanes waterfalls before climbing back out of the Fanes Gorge over a bridge which had been replaced since our last visit. On that occasion we had to ford the river. The return was through woodland to Fiammes where a little bus conveniently took us back to Cortina. Later that evening we had an enjoyable meal at a Pizza style restaurant in the town centre before returning to the hotel to pack for the following day.



Sunday was our transit day where we headed up hill, Michele and I in our car and the others by taxi to the Pie Tofana car park. A chair lift saw us rise swiftly to the Rifugio Duca d'Aosta. From here we had hoped to continue to the hut on the next chairlift, but we had already been warned that this lift was closed. There followed a steep and hot walk with heavy rucksacks to the Rifugio Pomedes situated at 2303m overlooking Cortina. The Rifugio was originally built in readiness for the 1956 Winter Olympics and was sited at the start of the men's downhill at that time. The Rifugio overlooks two smaller peaks below, the Ra Pegna and Ra Bujela. The two peaks are split by the Schuss, a steep scree slope that was the first section of the previous Olympic men's downhill held in Cortina and will become the first section of the women's downhill in February.



After leaving some of our gear at the hut we all descended back down to the base of Ra Pegna via the Schuss. It was a difficult enough descent on foot and the thought that anyone would be mad enough to ski down it was unthinkable!



From the base we all then ascended the Via Ferrata to the top of Ra Pegna before descending via a short ladder to the end of the route. We were followed on the route by a young couple who were trying VF for the first time, and they were glad to have the company. We moved onward to the base of the Ra Bujela, again via the Schuss.

At this point the group looked up at the very steep start to the VF Maria E Andrea Ferrari.

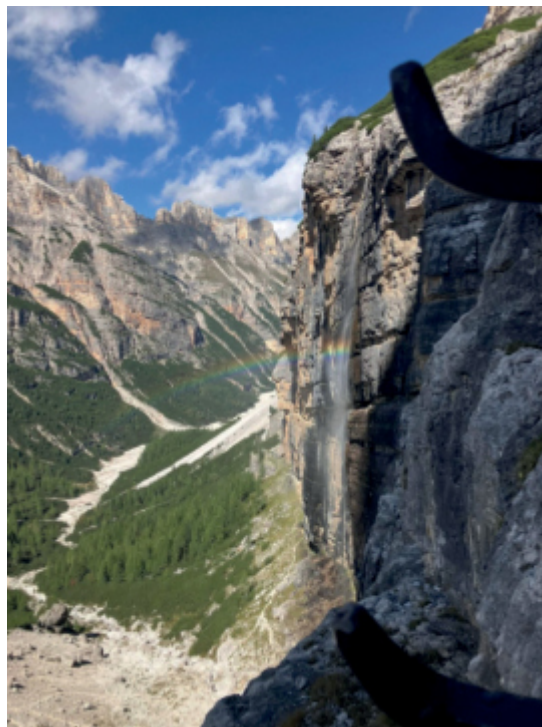
Michele and I have previously done this climb and we were aware that the grade of C, medium difficulty, did not necessarily reflect the strenuous nature of the first 50 metres.

I inadvertently may have forgotten the length of the initial strenuous section when describing it to the others, but I hope I was forgiven afterwards. A decision was made to go for it. Go for it we did and after a truly superb effort especially from those new (or a little rusty) to via ferratas, we completed the steep wires and exposed bridges to the small summit in view of the Rifugio Pomedes to which we returned. A really satisfying day considering it was our transit day. Whilst both climbs are relatively short, when combined they make a really good half day and a perfect introduction to the longer climbs in the area.

The weather continued to be kind and there were requests for a bit of a walk with maybe a bit of via feratta also involved. To this end we donned our VF gear at the Rifugio before descending path 421 leading down towards the Rifugio Dibona. After only a few minutes the path leads off to the right onto the VF Sentiero Astaldi, which is an exposed narrow path with a little climbing that leads across some very unusual brightly coloured strata. We continued after the VF onto path 404 under the huge face of the Tofana Di Rozes. We passed the entrances to the Grotta Tofanna and the entrance to the tunnels that mark the start of the VF Giovanni Lipella, before continuing onward to the Forcella Col Dei Bos at 2331m.

From this location we looked up at the Il Castelletto, one of several mountains in the area which saw the detonation of huge amounts of explosives in an attempt to remove the entrenched soldiers on the summit. An effort doomed to failure on this mountain as when the soldiers could hear that the tunnelling below them had stopped, they hot footed it off the mountain in time for the huge explosion to detonate and harm no one on the summit. I believe there may have been casualties as a result of the gas in the tunnels caused by the dynamite.

Our route descended the Rio Travanezes valley past old wartime fortifications including trenches, which historically saw fierce fighting and onwards and downwards down the valley which would eventually join the Val de Fanes where the Fanes waterfalls were and where we had been a couple of days earlier. A signposted path eventually leads off to the right to the base of the VF Scala Del Minighel. This VF takes an improbable line up a steep rock face called the Souto del Majarie with a pretty waterfall nearby which displayed a subtle rainbow. Several of us tried to photograph the ethereal rainbow effect, not easy when you are hanging by your arms on the steep face. This VF was the first VF to be built in the Cortina area, and I believe also the first to be built in the whole of the Dolomites. I know of no other VF like this one as it climbs metal rungs set into the rock from bottom to top. Whilst the climbing is relatively straightforward the precarious nature of the open-ended ladder, the uneven spread of the rungs and the huge exposure, all challenged the senses.



Upon arriving at the top, a steady but arduous climb up the Majarie valley through many jumbled giant boulders via the path 403 leads on to the Rifugio Giussani. Various forms of refreshment were taken. Our return journey descended from the Rifugio and back again along the VF Astaldi to the Rifugio Pomedes. A walk with a bit of Via Feratta? Brief accomplished I would say, and then some.

The next day with a changeable forecast we decided to stay low below the clouds. In fact, as we geared up the rain started and delayed us leaving the Rifugio. Once the rain stopped, we again descended on foot to the Rifugio Duca D'Aosta. We then took the path 405 which is known as the Sentiero Dei Camosci (the path of the chamois). This path crossed the scree/ski runs traversing under the rock faces below the Dos de Tofanas before reaching the Pie Tofana



car park. From here we ascended path 407 to the Col Druscie for lunch. There is an observatory at Col Druscie and the 407 path has a series of notice boards with interesting (if your Italian is good) facts about the planets of our solar system, and the wider cosmos.



After lunch our group split and found various routes back to the Rifugio Pomedes. Andy, Michele and I caught the chairlift back to the Rifugio Duca D' Aosta, and headed to the VF Maria E Andrea Ferrari which we again ascended as the clouds began to threaten. An interesting day because as we stayed low, we had generally good views and weather. All day when looking upwards all that could be seen were clouds, so our decision making had been sound.

Our final day at the Rifugio Pomedes promised good weather so we headed off up the Sentiero Giuseppe Oliveri intending to lunch at the Rifugio Ra Valles. This route crosses well above the Sentiero Dei Camosci, up ladders and occasional steep wires. There were interesting structures that support the devices to start controlled avalanches. These devices looked a little like an Apollo Command Module. There was a short descent to the Ra Valles lift station. At this point there was much work going on at the high scree/ski slopes where new runs were being prepared for the winter. Upon arrival at Ra Valles, we were met by a

large group of Chinese tourists enjoying the amazing views over Cortina. The group had just arrived on the lift giving the whole area a sudden Bank Holiday Monday like atmosphere for the short time they were there. We all descended by the same route apart from David who decided to take the scenic route by cable car to Col Druscie, where he then walked back up the steep path from the Duca d' Aosta.

Our final day saw us all descend to Cortina. After lightening a few loads by dumping some stuff in our car, everyone except Michele and I walked down to Cortina. Michele and I drove to Cortina and left the car at the hotel. We had a walk up to Fiammes and then back down the opposite side of the valley. A really nice day. Our last evening together was spent in Cortina having a meal in a restaurant which was part of a hotel in which I stayed on my first visit to Cortina with Ian Mateer in 2010.

As I write this report Michele and I are travelling home by car, again stopping at various places on route. In fact, we are sat in an apartment in Saarburg and it hasn't stopped raining all day. As well as starting the report we are already thinking about next year's Via Feratta holiday!

The rest of the group travelled home via Venice, and I will leave that part of the journey to be told by Andy. Thanks to all for a really great meet, it was so nice for Michele and I to share our love of the area and VF climbing with good company. Thanks especially to Andy for arranging the meet.



From Steve Creasey:

The VF meet was an introduction to this type of mountain experience some of which came with a slight anxiety which needed to be overcome! I would say that most of it was 100% enjoyable apart from the ladder from hell, (I am sure Steve is referring to the VF Scala del Minighel), which given the option a nice valley walk could have been taken as an enjoyable alternative, as demonstrated by a young couple who reached the Giussani hut at the same time as us minus the brown pants !!! A great experience hopefully to be repeated in a future trek so thanks to all concerned.

From David Clear:

Regarding the Via Feratta. I did have some trepidation but the first VF you and Michele took us on put me at ease. After completing the second VF on the Sunday I felt a lot more relaxed and confident. The adrenaline/buzz I got was amazing.

The help and advice you and Michele gave us newbies (Steve and I) on the climbs was brilliant. I was hooked and loved all the amazing climbs we did. I'm definitely up for any future VF meets. Officially an OAP in December, I am not only an alpinist but an old git taking up via ferattaring! You and Michele were amazing throughout the week and chose some tremendous routes. I thought the crack was fantastic from day one in Cortina. A huge thank you to Andy for organising the meet, accommodation and travel arrangements. Speaking to the converted, no dull coloured clothes, dress loud in the mountains. (A reference to dressing brightly in memory of Ed, and also to give Marcus some foreground interest in his photos).



Andy's footnote from Venice :

In 2014 Ed, Mike (your Editor), and I enjoyed exploring some of the islands of this unique lagoon city, particularly the glass island of Murano, which Ed knew was hosting an exhibition within its canal and walkway network of courtyards and glass-making factories, furnaces and galleries.



As luck would have it eleven years on, the four of us were able to enjoy the 45-minute waterbus journey around the inner archipelago to visit the ninth rendition of the Venice Glass Week.

One of our party did buy some glass Christmas tree decorations for his good lady, but not before some astute bargaining took place to seal the deal.

We nearly spoilt the day on our return by getting off at the Arsenale and joining the hordes of tourists that so far, we had avoided. With a brisk walk among the crowds taking photos of some of the iconic sights on offer, we found our way through the back streets to the Rialto Bridge showing off in the early evening sun.

Up and over to take some more photos and back on the other side to see the gondoliers plying their trade with gusto, we quickly found the right waterbus service to get us back to our island hostel home.

Another superb pizza washed down with some Venetian beer whilst looking across the water to the main island as the sun set, plus an early morning escape to the airport rounded off my fourth visit to the city sat on the edge of the Adriatic Sea.

The two days in Venice staying at the Generator Hostel on Giudecca Island were planned to celebrate with Ed, he having also reached seventy. He did reach seventy, having completed his inspiring epic LeJog journey, but on the 22nd August Ed's time on this earth suddenly ran out.

All those who ever knew Ed know exactly what we have lost.

Thanks to all who attended for your enthusiasm and effort in completing whatever Marcus and Michele threw us into each day, and for the way you all in your own way honored the memory of our absent friend.

Participants.

Steve Creasey, David Clear, Steve McCain, Michele and Marcus Tierney, Andy Burton.

Report by Marcus and Michele

Roving Meet - Hadrian's Wall, Sill YHA, October

As predicted storm Amy hit the North East just after 1pm on Friday and any walking was out of the question. We spent our time getting to know the modern Youth Hostel and exploring the exhibitions at the adjoining National Landscape Discovery Centre. Andy and Steve spent the afternoon at the Roman auxiliary fort/museum at Vindolanda located just south of Hadrian's Wall a five-minute drive from the Sill YHA (see Steve's Report later).



Evening Meal was at the Twice Brewed Inn a two-minute walk from the hostel. Here we were joined by Alison Henry and Rick Snell who were touring the North East in their campervan.

We rose Saturday morning to find storm Amy had passed through the night. The forecast for the day was blustery winds, scattered showers with good visibility.

After a hearty breakfast we kitted up in waterproofs ready for a walk along Hadrian's Wall.

After saying our farewells to Alison and Rick who were returning home, we set off on our walk. Ten minutes and we were on Hadrian's wall and it was not long before we reached the landmark site of the Sycamore Gap Tree. It was here two idiots illegally cut down the tree in September 2023 and were convicted of two counts of criminal damage in May 2025. Both received custodial sentences of 4 years and 3 months.



Sprouting stump

Steve at Hadrian's Wall



Moving on we reach the Roman fort of Housteads and sit down for lunch. Housteads is Britain's most complete Roman Fort sitting on the dramatic Whin Sill escarpment. After lunch Andy & Steve decided to explore the site and make their own way back.



Shortly after resuming the walk, we came to an abrupt stop. The way ahead was completely flooded. We had no choice but to back track to the junction where the Pennine Way crosses the wall.

Along the way we came across a small group dressed in Roman clothing, apparently it's an annual event walking sections of the wall.

The Romans are coming



Lough Crag sitting at the foot of Whin Sill and Hadrian's Wall.

We returned to the Hostel via Steel Rigg and Windshields Craggs. The latter being the highest point on Hadrian's Wall (345 metres)

Evening meal was again at Twice Brewed Inn.

Sunday – Sunny and clear skies we set off South through beautiful countryside and reach Bardon Mill. We walk through Errington Reay & Co Pottery works. Established over 145 years ago it's the last remaining salt glazed pottery of its kind in Britain.

We cross the bridge over the River South Tyne and 1 mile South East we reach the village of Beltingham and the lovely St Cuthbert Church.



looking down at the river



walking back to Bardon Mill

Moving on we have lunch at Allen Banks run by the National Trust. It features an ancient woodland, a deep Gorge and the River Allen.

Leaving Allen Banks via Briarwood Banks we head North passing Shaws, Bardon Mill, Vindolanda Roman Fort/ Museum until we reach East Twice Brewed on the Military Road. A short walk along the road takes us back to the Hostel.

Evening Meal, yes again at the Twice Brewed Inn. Fabulous Sunday Dinners and desserts served until 9pm.

In the morning after breakfast, we said our farewells. On the way home Andy and Steve visited the Roman Army Museum in Greenhead and Steve and Roger visited the Vindolanda Museum.

An enjoyable time was had by all on the meet. I, IT WAS VERY CANNY.

Participants David Blackett, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, David Clear, Philip Hands, Alison Henry, Roger James, Judy Renshaw and Rick Snell.

Report by David Clear

Steve's review of the historical side of the weekend, aided and abetted by Andy.

Andy and I had been looking forward to our weekend at The Sill, and for me personally, the opportunity to scratch my itch for all things historical. (Well, I was a lonely child).

But it was a forbiddingly cold and blustery Friday afternoon when we arrived at the car park to the well preserved Vindolanda Roman Fort, just around the corner from the weekend's accommodation.



Vindolanda in the rain

A lowering grey sky and sharp showers seemed oddly in keeping with the impressive expanse of grey masonry, outlining still, every building and wall, every street and gateway, each stone placed there by a man long dead by some 1800 years. Wandering in and about what would have been comfortable and decorated military buildings and the abodes of the great and mighty, it was a stretch to imagine their ancient grandeur when the rain felt as if somebody was throwing gravel in your face.

Northern Britain's weather must have been a shock to those Gauls, Belgians and Spanish lads, clad in cold armour, wearing sandals and dressed in a skirt, with just a thick cloak, if you were lucky, to keep out what we were having - that day and worse. Must have been made of sterner stuff then. Still, not to be less stoic than any of those, we did the lot, finishing up with a look at where Vindolanda's lower ranks lived in less salubrious quarters.

Long barracks were home to probably a hundred men. Living in conditions described as dirty, badly lit and crawling with parasites, disease and infection was rife and tolerated. Fortunately, there were no inside facilities, and it was quite a walk to the camp latrine on a dark night.

Sharing cramped and unsanitary accommodation, sullied by unwashed bodies and clothes well ready for the washtub, is never a healthy way to live but we could both relate to the conditions, having spent many a holiday in YHA's long ago.

If you were a cavalryman, it was even worse. They shared their room with a horse. Unsurprisingly, horses living with their riders was a smelly experience, but it seems the horses soon got used to it. There was an upside though

in that the warmth of the beasts made the barracks warmer. Not a bad excuse for anyone who prefers to sleep with a mare.

When permitted, they would venture outside the walls for a bath and a night out in the Vicus, a civilian settlement which lay adjacent to any fort. Pubs, shops, eateries and places of 'adult entertainment' were to be found aplenty. So, perhaps it wasn't all bad.



On Left: The experimental research model of part of the wall incorporating a mile fort within the Vindolanda Trust site itself.



On right: Steve on the full size model ramparts with the imagined tower that would have sat above each of the mile fort gates, i.e. surrounding an arch, as in photo below.

The inclement weather persuaded us that a visit to the splendid museum and café would be well worthwhile. It's full of artefacts dug up from the site over many decades. Hundreds of shoes of different sizes, thrown away over three centuries, testify that soldiers in hobnail sandals shared the camp and Vicus with civilian men, women and children. The variety of design and workmanship is surprising and far beyond the rough simplicity of a bygone age one might expect. The absence of oxygen in the soil apparently preserves organic matter and the astonishing state of being in one piece proves it. This phenomenon even protected a skull discovered with a massive wound hole in it. Inside is evidence of it having once been stuck on a pole before the flesh was lost and it was tossed into the same ditch as some of the shoes. Perhaps a truculent British tribesman, or maybe someone who couldn't be bothered to take that walk to the latrines during the night.

The most sobering find was a child's skeleton, discovered under the floor of a barrack room. About 7 years of age, with hands in a position suggesting having been bound, the child's gender cannot be determined due to the normal

indicators not being present, but it was not of native origin. Little remains of the skull, a possible cause of death but murder is undoubtedly the reason for its demise. Tied up, hidden under flooring in a room occupied by any number of men, and buried contrary to Roman law, which forbade a corpse being interred within the confines of camp walls. Rough men living above a child's corpse and nobody talked. That's camaraderie for you.

Such things happen to children today. Proof there is nothing new under the sun.

An excellent place to visit for all that. Full of information and a great little refreshment stop.

It's been 22 years since I walked that marvel of antiquity we call 'Hadrian's Wall'. So, it was with warm nostalgia I found myself included in Dave Clear's dauntless company of explorers, braving the remnants of Storm Amy, on a walk eastwards from the YHA along the fiercely windswept, undulating wall path to Housesteads Roman Fort. It's impossible not to wonder at the sheer scale of what was then, an unbelievable example of Roman engineering and capability. Striking from the Newcastle end, it was first built of earth and timber and later replaced with a stone wall. Nobody really knows just how high it was or if any sentry could actually walk along the top. Fanciful speculation and imaginative drawings have given us perhaps a false impression of its appearance, but it would have been a formidable barrier nonetheless at 73 miles long.

Why is it only a few feet tall now? A perennial question asked by many visitors. A look at any farmhouse and its accompanying outbuildings, anywhere close to the wall, will show you exactly where the stone went.



Steve at the North gate arch at of one of the mile forts on Hadrian's Wall

Hotbanks Farm, close to Housesteads Fort is a large and substantial farmhouse with barns and adjacent structures, constructed of uniformly dressed stone. It would have cost a fortune to build with bought stone but must have been temptingly affordable when ample stone lay ready for the taking only a cart ride away.

The mystery is that there's any of it left anywhere.

Andy and I parted from Dave's group so we could partake in a mug of tea and a look around the small museum and souvenir shop. How we came out in one piece I can't fathom. Our attempt at a cup of tea required a degree in mechanical engineering and computer programming. The rise of the machine is already with us because we fought and lost with a glorified Teasmade that refused all instruction and actually spat milk at us. The curator had to come to our aid and show it who was boss (I bet he's good with dogs too).

We found a seat and realised we were too close to the children's play area where they are allowed to dress in helmets and cloaks and do very excitable things with swords and shields and spears. Trying to hang onto your tea when swords and spears are swirling about your head isn't easy and I nearly lost an eyeball. Some of these children were very tall indeed and Andy ascertained that they were all teenagers from the Czech Republic who'd only been in the country for two hours! Following in the footsteps of some ancestors I think. Again a small but equally interesting little museum with enough information about the fort before we had a look around.

On a much smaller scale than Vindolanda, this Housesteads fort is right on the frontier wall of the Roman Empire. Nothing beyond but wild tribesman and a land even Hadrian didn't want. (They had their independence then all that time ago and keep asking for it still. Must be in the genes).

All the usual buildings were there, built to a pattern, the commanders house, the headquarters building, hospital, granaries and storerooms. All protected by the outer wall and with the soldier's latrine right at the bottom of the southern slope to let waste and water exit the wall and disappear into a sewer which emerged a good hundred yards from the fort. The latrine itself is worth a look. Very well preserved and requiring no explanation of why it was made that way, and perhaps the best example anywhere on the wall. It shows how sanitation and cleanliness were regarded as essential to camp health and hygiene. Very popular with young visitors who can always be relied upon to ask the obvious questions.

Just below the south wall was the Vicus and among the remnants of dwellings there stands the outline, in stone, of a house named 'the murder house'. It was a two-room property with a shop at the front and living room at the back. When digging up the clay floor in 1932, archaeologists found the skeletons of a man and a woman.

As at Vindolanda, it was murder. The broken sword blade embedded in the man's ribs was a significant clue to that conclusion and again, the forbidden and concealed burial within the settlement of the fort, was all the killers could do with their victims.

No doubt a wealthy shopkeeper and his woman robbed and killed for the oldest of all motives. Nothing changes.

With our ruin running over, we descended to ground level at the foot of the crags on which the wall sits in this area. A parallel walk back to Steel Rigg along flat terrain was an effort as we had Storm Amy again making her presence felt full in the face. It did however, allow for the view of the wall those aggressive tribesmen would have had nearly two millennia ago. Hard to climb now, it would have been impossible to attack then, in its glory days, when it stood unassailable, silhouetted against a southern sky. But fall it did. As did Vindolanda and all the others. As the power and influence of Rome decayed and splintered, as the legions became weaker and ill-disciplined and no longer the most formidable fighting machine the world had seen thus far, the warring tribesmen of the North sensed their time

had come and overran the wall. When Rome itself was threatened by barbarian hordes sweeping across lands closer to home, the Roman army, such as it was, was recalled to defend the homeland and Britain was abandoned, no longer part of a diminishing empire. Left to the wild peoples of Britain as a whole, the country was plunged into chaotic and uncivilised times we now know as the dark ages.

The weekend over, we said our goodbyes and replete with an excellent breakfast, we ventured five miles down the road to the superb Roman Army Museum close by Haltwhistle. We were close to an overdose of all things Roman by now but the exhibits, film shows and artefacts on display were not to be missed. Excellent and realistic figures on horseback and foot, armoured and armed as they would have been, were spookily alarming. Big lads all of them. We entered a recruitment tent and sat through a very intimidating lecture by a rough looking centurion with obligatory scars and a broken nose, who convinced Andy and me why we should become a Roman Legionary. When he asked us if we had any reason why we shouldn't join, we didn't have one. So, it looks as if we're in, like it or not. We'll be alright with the fighting and pushing the natives about but we're a bit worried about being the two oldest recruits, always marching at the back, always way behind everybody else and disappearing into the trees with annoying regularity. (Sadly Andy, I don't think they let you buy yourself out).

Another great look at our wonderful history with my very good mate Andy. Always a pleasure. Many thanks to him and to Dave in particular for an excellent weekend and the chance to remember better times with an old friend no longer able to share in the fun.

Northish day walk - Calver, Peak District, October

Our group met up for the first Northish walk of the season at Cafe 19 located at the crossroads at Calver in Derbyshire. One or two couldn't make it so reduced numbers for the first walk. Breakfast was pretty good and the coffee was nice too.

We intended to start the walk at this location but a member of staff came out and asked us if we could move our car as they were expecting a delivery that day. As a result of this we jumped in the car and drove a short way up the road towards Stoney Middleton and parked by the playing fields. Setting off up the track behind the playing field we soon broke off to the right and headed up the hillside continuing to the village of Stoney Middleton.

At one time Stoney Middleton (usually just referred to as Stoney) was considered the epicentre of rock climbing in Britain, if not indeed the entire the universe, spending time having a pint of tea in Eric's cafe or a pint in the Moon as a young climber I can remember spotting the big names of the moment. People like Tom Proctor, Geoff Birtles, Pete Livesey and many others who would meet there.

Our walk continued under the crags of Stoney passing Pendulum buttress and Windover buttress which has two of the best rock climbing traverse lines in England in Pendulum and Alcasan the latter of which I did in 1978 and rate it



up there with Dream of White Horses in terms of quality.

Continuing under the crags we passed the entrance to the pothole of Carlswork Cavern under the Padme wall before taking a precipitous path heading towards Eyam. I did warn the others at this point that a fall would result in them being 'killed to death' as there was a seventy foot drop at the edge of the path.

As we reached the B6521 at Eyam Dale we paused to look at the exit to the Carlswork Cavern at its other end opposite what was known as the power house. This is an electrical building that climbers used to use to train their fingers on by climbing on the brick edges which I can tell you wrecked your finger ends.

We continued by the side of the church and up the steep hillside, somewhere we passed close to Mompessons Well a local landmark but missed it somehow as we slogged up the Misty hillside.

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Upon reaching our high point at Sir William Hill Road we followed the rugged green lane onward towards Nether Bretton, a very small hamlet. The lane then cut back to the Barrel at Bretton which claims to be the highest pub in Derbyshire. We would on any other day have enjoyed very extensive views along this section but the low clouds reduced our view on the day. We did however enjoy having a drink in the Barrel and have made a note to return to try the food which looked good.

Our descent towards Eyam passed an unpleasant scruffy factory at Black Hole Mine before following the road back to the village. The walk finished by descending a hill known locally as The Cliff. We passed a large block of Gritstone, unusual as the area is predominantly limestone. This hole had large holes drilled into it. During the plague villagers would place coins in the holes which were filled with vinegar to cleanse the money. Food would be left there for the Eyam residents and the money taken as payment.

Our walk ended back at our cars and despite the very dull weather and the limited views the walk was very enjoyable and fortunately the limestone ground was not as slippery as it might have been if it had been wetter.

Participants Andy Burton, Heather Eddowes, Michele and Marcus Tierney

Report by Marcus



Southern day walk - Shearwater and the West Downs, Wiltshire, October

It was a grey overcast day for our autumn walk down South on Tuesday. A mild day but with a chilly wind on the tops. Unfortunately Paul was irretrievably stuck in traffic and couldn't make the start, so Margaret and I enjoyed the 13 mile walk.

The start was from Shearwater Lake, near Crockerton, a man made freshwater lake fed by a tributary of the river Wylfe. It is now a popular place for fishing, sailing and herons.

Walking through woodland on the Longleat Estate we passed the outskirts of a Center Parcs to arrive at Heavens Gate. The viewpoint on Prospect Hill features stone sculptures by Paul Norris, a Millennium project and gives great views of the Longleat Estate.



We continued down narrow country lanes, through the hamlet of Newbury before crossing a road and heading to the Downs. We climbed Brimsdown Hill to Bidcombe and Whitehill Downs. This area can be hard going when wet, but today the ground was dry! We traversed the hillside, crossing Cold Kitchen Hill with its trig point. (In pre-Roman times it was called Col Cruachan, the 'wizard's hill', maybe a nod to the Neolithic long barrow that lies up on the down.)

There is a great view from Cold Kitchen Hill of undulating downs. The dull day didn't do justice to the vista. We were followed across the downs by the squawking and flapping of wings of dozens of pheasants - luckily we were not on a hunting trip. Heading to Brims Down we dropped down to an old green lane from Brixton Deveril, which took us back to the woods around Shearwater.

Participants: Margaret Moore, Mike Goodyer and Paul (in spirit!)

Report by Mike

Brecons Meet, Bwlch, October

It didn't feel like a year since Andy and I were last in Crickhowell but here we were again, meeting up for a planned, Friday afternoon stroll with Steve Creasey. The weather wasn't exactly on our side from the off, but nevertheless, the opportunity to stretch our legs after our long drives from home was a welcome one.

After the obligatory rummage through the village outdoor shop, we ventured up onto Table Mountain to take a look at the Iron Age fort of Crug Hywel, which obviously gave name to Crickhowell below. The ditch and stone ramparts are still clearly discernible in the earth and belie the notion that its Iron Age inhabitants were the primitive barbarians their eventual Roman conquerors would have us believe. We had some rain and it was blowing a lot, but there was a break when the clouds parted to reveal blue sky, some sunshine and even a rainbow. Andy even has a photograph to prove it. Now we could see all around us. To the West lay the lovely Usk Valley, leading right into the Brecon Beacons. Behind us, the Black Mountains. Below, was pretty little Crickhowell and a glimpse of its famous bridge. The views were stunning and well worth our wet and slippery climb, both up and down.



Looking across to the Sugarloaf above Abergavenny



The two Steve's taking shelter under the Iron Age fort

Walk done, we drove to The Star Bunkhouse at Bwlch and soon ensconced ourselves in the welcoming confines of that warm and cosy lodging.

If you haven't stayed there yet, we can highly recommend the place as an excellent location from which to explore the area. Comfortable beds, duvets provided, cubicle showers and lashings of hot water all the time. Self-catering facilities are excellent and if you can't be bothered to cook, just book a table over the road at The New Inn. Neil and Sarah never disappoint and are deserving of their reputation for fine food and good beers.

Andy and I took our own advice and with Steve, had a very enjoyable evening there, made even more pleasant in being joined by Charlie and her husband Simon. They were treating the weekend as preparation for their forthcoming expedition to Kathmandu. (I can tell you; they will have no trouble).

Saturday morning was sunny and not threatening of any immediate inclemency. We were joined by Mary and Johnnie and little Taro. He's 15 months of age now and already used to the outdoor life. Toddling about, he's inquisitive and adventurous and clearly destined for a walker, if his instinctive affinity with walking poles is anything to go by. We wouldn't hear much from Taro all weekend. He obviously enjoyed his rides and was content to see the world from the comfort of his carrier. A grand little chap.

We set off for the little village of Llangynidr and had crossed over the impressive 18th Century bridge spanning the Usk, when I immediately felt compelled to introduce everyone to the delights of The Walnut Tree Café. Well known to Andy and myself, you'll not be surprised to learn, everyone enjoyed a beverage and some, even a piece of cake. Taro was down and off like a ten bob rocket, walking pole in hand, to befriend a puppy Alsatian, suitably supervised by its lady owner.



A lovely walk westwards, along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, was a picture of waning, autumnal foliage and mirrored trees in the slow-moving water. Always nice to see a narrowboat chugging by and exchange a word or two with the captain. An enviable pastime and a pace of life a lot of people would benefit from these days. If I wasn't almost horizontal already, I'd give it a go.

Soon, we were at Coombes Lock, a collection of old canal buildings and a stone road bridge. The lock gates here allow a safe crossing across the canal to pick up a clear footpath heading southwest towards our destination, Tor y Foel mountain. (Well, a big hill really). It was still a lovely day and no sign of rain. Now it was just a sunny walk across sheep pasture to a roadway and the start of our walk to the 551 metre summit.



Following an unmissable and well-trodden path, we climbed the steep, but easy



three false summits before reaching the top but you are rewarded with a marvellous panorama of the valley of the River Usk, a distant view of the Black Mountains and the closer still, Brecon Beacons. Below lies the Talybont Reservoir, that day reflecting the sky and clouds and the multi-coloured foliage of trees and grasses along its length, right to its dammed extremity at the village of Talybont-on-Usk.

A steady descent to reservoir level didn't take us out of the wind. Too blowy to enjoy the picnic stones, shelter was found behind a wall and lunch taken after a fashion.

An easy stroll along the roadway beside the water took us as far as the reservoir dam near Talybont village and the signpost for the Usk valley Walk, eastwards back to Llangynidr. Not an unpleasant

walk across open fields and through pockets of woodland, we were afforded some interesting views of what lay across the other side of the Usk. Amongst them, the splendid Llanddettty Hall.

A 17th Century pile, owned by a puritan, Colonel Jenkins Jones, who angrily put a bullet through the door of Llanddettty Church because he heard Charles 11 was returning to claim the throne. There is a bullet hole. Andy and I visited the church on last years' walk. Soon we were crossing the bridge over the canal and turning right, past Coombes Lock and retracing our steps back to Bwlch and tea and cake. A lovely day in the sunshine. Approximately 11 miles without mishap and no rain.

Another convivial evening was spent in the New Inn, which seemed to put everyone in good spirits for Sundays' perambulations. Steve decided to do a high walk on his own, so he could get off as soon as he was down. So, we wished him all the best and off he went.

As people had to drive home at differing times, it was decided to do the easy walk around Langorse Lake. The largest natural lake in South Wales, it's the size of 400 football pitches. Famous for its water sports, pike fishing and the 'Afanc', a mythical monster said to prey on the unwary, and those lagging behind on walks.



It was a morning of hedge lined country lanes and impressive old buildings like 'Tall John's House'. A lovely Manor House, originally built to celebrate the victory over The Spanish Armada and later remodelled by one of Nelson's friends, Admiral Hamilton. History around every corner in these isles.

Our waterside walk found us at the lakeside café, closed for half term. Nobody could understand that. So, we pressed on to the Community Centre Shop in Langorse village and enjoyed a hot drink.

I had a chat there with an old lad from 'up North'. Not sure what he was telling me. It was quite a stitherum. All very confusing and I came away none the wiser. There, we said goodbye to Mary and Johnnie and little Taro and wished them a safe journey home. Then we bade farewell to Charlie and Simon and hoped their holiday would be all they expected it to be.

That left just Andy and I to make our way back across country to Bwlch. We'd done it previously, sort of, with Mike and Ed, but we decided to make it more of an adventure and avoid any road walking.



With a combination of old-fashioned paper map reading and OS phone mapping, we succeeded in finding a very adventurous route across, up and down, some familiar, and some not so familiar, terrain.

A leisurely walk, taking in the picturesque scenery of the lake and where we'd been earlier, the surprises of crossing new territory and enjoying a delightful conversation with an elderly and wonderfully well-spoken and erudite gentleman of the old school.

He put us on the right path and told us we'd pass his home en route. The smoking chimney of his somewhat ramshackle cottage pointed our way and we soon spliced into the path of the Beacons Way and a longish descent, right to the back door of The Star Bunkhouse.

De-booted and having said goodbye to our hostess, the lovely Emma, we made our way to Monmouth and a civilised, overnight stay at the recommended Riverside Hotel, with free parking at the rear! A visit to the High Street and La Piccola Italia restaurant, finished off our day magnificently and a good night's sleep set us up for a very impressive, full monty breakfast.

A thoroughly successful weekend in every way. The very good company of nice people and the weather was kind to us. Thanks to everyone who made it so enjoyable.

It would have been even better, had we had the pleasurable company of our much-missed old friend, Ed.

Truth be told, he was with us, every step of the way.

Report by Steve Caulton with thanks to Andy Burton.

Presidents Meet, October

So, what is a President's meet? I was asked. I had to think about that a bit. It's kind-of like any other meet, only the president gets to do the work – was the best I could come up with. Kind-of, but that misses all the fun of meeting with friends and having a really good time. It also misses the huge contribution that Andy Hayes brings with his amazing catering. Who knew about Chai Masala Cream to add to the pudding? Apparently no-one as Andy invented it especially for us.

Andy B writes: Thursday – Daniel's second Presidents Meet began with me collecting Celine from Nottingham Station on Thursday afternoon and pointing the Skoda north, hanging a left at Scotch Corner, with a slight detour through Penrith, as we waited to hear from Elsbeth about her travel arrangements, before entering the Ullswater valley and wending our way along lakeside to Patterdale.

Following the time-honoured routine of first ones in the Hut getting the fire going, whilst my pre-prepared spag bol was warming through, Celine and I were soon enjoying some hot grub with a glass of red.

We were joined by Daniel, the meet organiser, and plans for the next day were made, ably facilitated by a walk to the White Lion for a glass of the dark stuff.

Elsbeth arrived courtesy of the last bus from Penrith Station, and as we all had plans for the morning it was soon time for lights out.

Friday – The two Daves did a circular walk from the hut to Brothers water returning via Hartsop. Heavy showers and very blustery!

Andy B writes: On Friday morning Celine, Daniel and I travelled to the Aira Force car park and walked up through the falls to the Royal at Dockray. After morning coffee, we made our way up the new path that skirts the edge of Gowbarrow Park to Airy Crag, 481 metres, which duly lived up to its name.

Picking up part of the Ullswater Way we made our way under Great and Little Meldrum and onto where you look down onto the lovely little Watermillock Church situated under Priest Crag.

We turned left and walked a short way along the road up to the Hause, where the footpath goes right under Little Mell Fell. At Greenrow Great Barn we dropped down and across the boggy land to Brownrigg Farm.



Here we met up with Heather and Dave at the Kelso and Son's showroom. Martin Kelso was able to give us a guided tour of the stove and fireplace options available to us for the Hut, and answer any questions we might have, sufficient for us all to agree and give Martin the go ahead.

Dave and Heather managed to fit the three of us into Dave's car and drop us back at my car, saving us the seven mile walk back, in the rain. By the time we got back to the Hut several other people were there, and others steadily returned in various states of dampness to offload their wet gear into the drying room.

Friday night was soon upon us, and a core group found themselves ensconced at a table right by the log fire in the White Lion enjoying a dinner of choice and a bevvvy or two.

Returning to the Hut it was a relief to see that the Chef, Andy Hayes, had arrived and was already busying himself with food prep for Saturday's evening meal. With a glass of port and offers of help tomorrow I called it a day.

Thanks for sharing the port, Andy. It was very enjoyable as we sat in front of the fire that gave light but no heat. And then another night in two sleeping bags for me. Roll on the new stove.

Andy B writes: Saturday – *After a quick call to the Ullswater Steamers hotline to make sure they were running, the two Dave's, Heather and David M, Judy and John Vernon, a potential new member, and I made our way to Glenridding Pier for the first ferry of the day. Turned out it was only possible to sail to Howtown, as Pooley Bridge pier was now closed for extensive repairs and upgrading.*

Not to worry. From Watnook we skirted left around Hallin Fell and ascended just before the Hause up to the substantial rock obelisk built on its summit at 388m. Great autumnal views from here enhanced by the sun gracing us with its presence at this juncture. Some discussions took place as to where next and it was agreed that we would all stick together, not go up any higher, and make our way up Boredale to the Hause of the same name.



At the pump house and farm buildings at the road end we stopped for lunch in the lee of the buildings before continuing up the grassy sward path to where it narrows and steepens as it approaches the Hause at 399m. Here the path had become quite a little beck, just sufficient to clean our boots off.

With clear views up towards Brotherswater and down to Rooking and Patterdale our path home was clear for all to see and enjoy. As Ed would say, another great day out Grommit.



Meanwhile, Céline and I wandered up to Eagle Crag in Grisedale to try to work out why the new and old scrambling guides seemed to tell different stories. Scrambling itself was never intended as it was both wet and very cold. That said, we did enjoy an interesting half hour on some unstable scree. Turns out the new guide is just a bit overambitious – for our skills, at least

We were treated to Caramelised Onion Tart (Tarte à l'Oignon Alsacienne) to start proceedings, followed by an option of Rosti with butternut squash, cavolo nero, aubergine pickle and walnut or beef brisket slow cooked in Rioja finished in a rich Stilton gravy with saddleback potato and vegetables. This was rounded off with pears pouched in red wine, with a spiced chocolate almond, stollen bite and chai cream. Very yummy.



Dave C writes: Sunday – From Aira force, Two Dave's and John Vernon, walked up Gowbarrow Dodd and joined the Ullswater Way to Pooley Bridge. We had Soup and a pot of tea at Granny Dowbekin's before getting the bus back.

Mike P writes: Marian, myself and Don had a walk to Silver point, where several of Marian's former partners ashes have been scattered!

Andy B, Céline and I had a wander up Arnison Crag before we all had to go home. I had a navigation course booked and wanted to practice. We each had our weak points. So learning together helped us all.

Ullswater from Hallin Fell



All in all, a very enjoyable weekend. And, the president had very little work to do because everyone else did so much.

Attendees: Andy B, Andy H, Heather, Celine, John, Dave B, Dave C, Dave M, Marian, Mike, Elsbeth, Don, Judy and Daniel.

Report by Daniel

Peak District day walk, November



With Paul, your Meets Secretary asking if he could join us on the November Northish day walk as he was staying near Ironbridge, it was an easy switch to plan a walk on the western flank of the Peak District.

Parking our cars on Roach Road close to Rockhall Cottage, Heather, Paul and I met up, and together with Joss, Paul's trusty companion dog, we walked up past the cottage, now leased by the BMC and renamed Don Whillans Memorial Hut.

Picking the stepped ascent path that cuts between the lower tier of the crags that make up this part of the Roaches we entered the path that passes under the upper tier of these unique Staffordshire outcrops with Paul reminiscing about climbs like Valkyrie that he climbed when he was 16.



Soon we were out on top with extensive views out over Tittesworth reservoir and beyond. Walking past the inky waters of Doxey's pool to our right and the Five Clouds lower outcrops to the left we found ourselves at the trig point at 505 metres.

My phone alarm let me know when the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month was upon us and we stood and looked out from our lofty rampart acknowledging the debt our generation owes to all those who gave their lives so we could enjoy ours.

After the obligatory photo stop on we strode to Roach End where the road leads round onto the northern side and over to Back of the Rocks.

Crossing over we followed the clearly signposted path to Luds Church. Descending into Back Forest we used the modern platformed path through the trees until we came across the various drop-offs into the chasm itself. A careful descent of the green and greasy steps and we enjoyed the unique environment that lies within. As I write this report, I swear that I have just seen the same scene within tonight's Star Wars film.

Eventually we came out of this collection of river less ravines and turned right through Forest Wood. Here we used a mostly traversing path with occasional views out across the upper Dane valley to Gradbach and its Mill and onto Three Shires Head and Shutlingsloe, the Matterhorn of Cheshire, the top of which was now free of cloud.



Paul and Joss in Luds Church



Shutlingsloe in the background

At a suitable collection of felled tree trunks, we stopped to enjoy the contents of our various bait boxes, whilst Joss waited impatiently for us to finish. Continuing above Gradbach Wood we returned to the wall gate just below Bearstone Rock and walked back along the top of the Roaches enjoying the afternoons improved visibility.

Instead of returning down the way we had come up we continued along the top path till the land drops off at the end of the Roaches massif and leads to the gap between it and the impressive lump that is Hen Cloud. In short order we were back at the cars enjoying a Birds egg custard and cup of sweet coffee before taking off in different directions back home. Another one pinched literally from out of the clouds.

Report by Andy Burton

Monsal Trail, Derbyshire, December

Tuesday 9th December forecast rain and strong breezes came with Storm Bram as predicted, with your Editor making the trip up to join us on its wave front.

Plans were changed to allow everyone to gather in a café in Bakewell at 10am and enjoy a hot drink and a choice breakfast whilst the weather made up its mind.



With most of the fields adjacent to the River Derwent being flooded we decided to drive to Ashford in the Water, park up, and make our way onto the Monsal Trail from there.

With another café stop at Old Hassop Station and a return via the old chert mine back into Bakewell over the old packhorse bridge, this six-mile route was a good choice given the circumstances.

Four of us finished this day in the Peak District off with a visit to the Thornbridge Brewery Taproom where the aroma of freshly made and baked pizzas added to the ambience of this excellent watering hole hidden in the ultra-modern industrial estate behind Aldi.

It's true what they say, every cloud has a potential silver lining, you just have to go out and look for it.

Cheers from your December Northish Team, Michele and Marcus Tierney, Mike Goodyer, Heather Eddowes and David Matthews, and Andy Burton.

That's it for the Day Walks in 2025. Thanks to everyone, both North and South for keeping the momentum going for another year.

If you fancy a walk with us, just put the second Tuesday and now the occasional Thursday, as per the 2026 Meets Programme, in your diary and let us know.

You will always be made to feel welcome.

Report by Andy Burton

Twixmas Meet, Patterdale, New Year

This year's meet saw a good turnout from the 'younger' members of the club, most of whom know each other from elsewhere. The youngest, Taro, just less than 18 months old, was also included in this special meet. Some of the longstanding members joined the group for walks, games and other activities. Most people arrived on the 30th and stayed 2 or 3 nights though some came earlier. Since the meet was informal, people could choose to stay any time during the Twixmas period and leave whenever suited them.



Getting there was hindered by the closure of the southern approach to Kirkstone Pass, due to a landslip, so some people went from Ambleside up the Struggle and others took the northern route via Penrith. Getting up the Struggle not easy as there were many vehicles, including campervans, in both directions and the road is too narrow to pass except in limited sections. However, everyone did manage to get there satisfactorily.

On New Year's Eve most of the group went up St Sunday Crag. It was bright but very cold and icy, with a north wind making it even colder. We took the route over the top of Birks, to get the best of the views and to be nearer the sunshine. Mary, Jonny and Taro went down from Birks to Glenridding and later up to Lanty's Tarn. Judy took a cross-country route from St Sunday towards Gavel Pike then across the valley to Trough Head and down to the village, calling at the Glenridding shop on the way.



The rest of the party took the traverse path down to Grisedale Tarn for a lunch stop then back down Grisedale.

In the evening a great communal meal of several dishes and extras was enjoyed, having been carefully prepared by Will, almost single handedly. There were games for the group and Auld Lang Syne was played on a set of antique hand bells, with thanks to Simon's musical skills.



The next morning a few members braved it by joining in the New Year's Day dip in Ullswater, taking about an average of 15 seconds of contact time with the 6 degree water! The rest were recording the event on film. Anna, Timon, Nan, Eudald, Charlie, Simon are on the right in the foreground.

They all went back to the hut to warm up and change, then headed back to Glenridding to take the ferry to Howtown. From there they walked up Boredale, taking in the summit of Hallin Fell on the way, with a photo stop at the obelisk. They returned via Boredale Hause and back home to a dinner of pizzas and fun and games by the fire.

On the 2nd January, a brave few got up before dawn to climb Place Fell to catch the sunrise, before everyone said their goodbyes and made their way home.

Present: Andy Burton, Mary Eddowes, Jonny Taphouse, (Taro Tapedd), Charlie Rawson, Simon Whatley, Will Priestley, Nan Archer, Anna Kaszuba, Eudald Rossel Vivo, Simon Palmer, Marcus Allard, Alice Welland, Tymon Kiere, Marian Parsons, Mike Parsons, Don Hodge, Judy Renshaw, Daniel Albert, Pamela Holt (AC).

Report by Judy Renshaw

Annual Dinner & AGM, Glenridding, February 2026

There are essentially two types of club meets. Firstly, those with a plan of activity and everything goes to plan. These meets are easy to record: We all arrived; we all went here or there; we all... Then there are the other kind where everyone is really busy doing different things and it all becomes a bit of a whirlwind. I enjoy them both, but the second kind receive little justice from a brief report by someone who only experienced a very small part. So it was with the dinner meet this year.

The weather had been magnificent: cold, crisp with even a little snow. But that all changed in the days leading up to the meet. There was still a little white stuff on the tops but the weather had an Atlantic focus. It wasn't terribly wet but never really dry either. And the wind blew enthusiastically.

We had 36 members attend the dinner. Also two guests: our speaker, Dave Padgen and the president of the Alpine Club, Duncan Sperry. Eleven members stayed at the George Starkey Hut. The others were dispersed among hotels, bed & breakfasts and their own homes. This led to most of us only meeting up for the dinner itself on the Saturday night. We have decided to address this next year with a shared afternoon activity – probably tea and cake at the hut. It seemed such a waste of a rare opportunity to spend times with old friends.

The hut team started arriving on the Thursday night, allowing for walking time on the Friday without having to get back in time to make oneself respectable for the dinner. Once again, the White Lion Hotel provided excellent evening meals for those that preferred not to do their own cooking.



Various outings were undertaken on the Friday and Saturday, mostly on the lower hills due to the weather.

One more ambitious team braved the shops of Ambleside and returned with new alpine boots and fell shoes.

For me, the most fun is had by getting out on the hill with members that I have not walked with before. In this way, I enjoyed Friday and Saturday walks greatly, even though they went nowhere particularly special.

The George Starkey Hut provided the usual comfy environment for catching up with old friends, but with some new improvements. The upgraded drying room really does do what it says on the door. It is still waiting for a coat of paint but having dry clothes each morning was lovely. The main luxury item was however the new multi-fuel stove. For now, it is being used only for smokeless briquettes as this is what is provided by the hut company, and to avoid people burning unsuitable sub-standard wood. Compared with the previous built-in stove, this freestanding one gives off a lot of heat. Its warmth was greatly appreciated.

On the Saturday evening, we assembled at the Inn on the Lake Hotel for the AGM and dinner. It was a pleasure to meet old friends in the bar before the proceedings. The meeting itself went smoothly with very good attendance. The elephant in the room – that we are all getting older without successors in place – was briefly mentioned and then ignored.



The dinner was magnificent. Many thanks to the hotel staff who helped decorate the room with the Swiss Cantonal flags and other regalia and to our volunteers who arranged the seating plan with the care that only those who know our individual quirks could manage.

I heard only positive comments about the food and the service.

Many thanks to Don for compiling members memories of Ed Bramley and the annual pictorial account of 2025.



Our after dinner speaker was Dave Padgen. Dave is remarkable for the expeditions he has taken part in, in spite of finding things hard, on account of his cerebral palsy. He was both inspiring and very entertaining. His little speech impediment served to make us listen carefully and become more engaged in the talk than is normal for most of us. It was also an honour to have last year's speaker, our own Pamela Harris, join us – all the way from Switzerland.

Sunday dawned fine, as is the way. Most of us had to begin the trek home, but Judy managed a circuit taking in Bedafell and Angle Tarn.

Many thanks to all who contributed. Particularly to Julie Freemantle who has expertly organised the annual dinners for many years. This was her final year before passing the baton on.

Report by Daniel Albert

Member's Articles

WALKING on MALTA by Pamela Harris

Malta is not the obvious choice for a walking holiday, but the Cicerone guide to the island gave us plenty of ideas for walks and places to visit.



We planned a short trip in April last year, mainly for me to catch up on family history. My uncle Donald, the youngest of my father's nine siblings, had joined the RAF at the outbreak of the Second World War and was stationed here in 1941. Malta was then a British crown colony, the only Allied stronghold between Gibraltar and Alexandria, surrounded by hostile territory. The island was under continuous attack, and Donald was one of many airmen killed when their planes were shot down defending it.

After the war ended, a monument was erected in Valletta to commemorate all Commonwealth airmen who had lost their lives flying from bases in the Mediterranean. Known as the Malta Memorial, this is a 15-metre-high column topped by a large gilded bronze eagle and the motto of the Royal Air Force: "*Per ardua ad astra*". Its circular base is inlaid with bronze panels, the central one bearing the following dedication: "*Over these and neighbouring lands and seas the airmen whose names are recorded here fell in raid or sortie and have no known grave*". The remaining panels are inscribed with the names of all who lost their lives from 1940 to 1945, a total of more than 1500 from the United Kingdom and nearly 750 from the Commonwealth countries of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The names are listed in years and by rank, in alphabetical order, and I quickly found my uncle Donald's name on the 1941 panel. It was a moving moment for me, the reason for my visit. The islanders' bravery under attack

was also acknowledged, for in 1942 they were awarded the George Cross, now incorporated into the island's flag.

The first walk in the Cicerone guide is the *Valletta Heritage Trail* which started by taking us round the defensive walls of the island's capital. Founded in 1565 by the Knights of the Order of St John, the city was built on a barren peninsula surrounded by two large harbours and named after Jean de la Vallette, the Grand Master who had led the island to victory against the Ottoman Turks. Built on a grid-plan with parallel streets running from the Triton Fountain at the City Gate to Fort St Elmo at the head of the peninsula, the three main streets housed the most important buildings of



the Knights, the *auberges* where the different groups lived. These are all ornate buildings with Baroque façades, the most splendid being the Palace of the Grand Masters, now the seat of Parliament; the State Rooms and the Armoury inside show the wealth and power of the Order. Near the Palace is Republic Square where a statue of Queen Victoria stands in front of the National Library, the last building to be constructed by the Knights before Napoleon's rule forced them to leave the island in 1798.

Defensive walls of Valletta

Across the Grand Harbour to Fort Ricasoli

From the main street the walk took us down narrow cobbled alleys which often became steep flights of steps as they near the harbours. The tall dwellings at each side are furnished with attractive wooden balconies, built in the 18th century to give privacy to the women of the house as they watched daily life in the streets. Valletta is also home to many churches and cathedrals, the most visited being the beautifully decorated St John's Co-Cathedral where the tombs of the Knights are found. Malta's greatest artistic treasure is here: the painting of *The Beheading of St John the Baptist* by Caravaggio, commissioned by the Knights in 1608. It is his largest ever work and the only painting which bears his signature.



Triton Fountain



Cobbled street with British pillar-box



Statue of Queen Victoria in front of the National Library

The island had become a British colony in 1800, remaining one until its independence in 1964. As we walked around the town, we found several relics of British rule: the streets contain red pillar-boxes and phone kiosks, restaurant menus feature fish and chips, and English is still one of the two official languages of Malta, all making it a veritable home from home for the many British tourists who visit.



The original capital of the island was Mdina, another fortified city but this time set high above the surrounding plain. After a short journey on a local bus, we followed the Cicerone *Rabat and Mdina Heritage Trail* across the huge defensive ditch, now planted with flowers and shrubs, through the main gateway into the narrow streets of the walled city. In the centre is St Paul's Cathedral, site of a church dating from the 4th century on the spot where St Paul converted the governor of the island to Christianity. At the top of the town there is a magnificent viewpoint over the island, with the huge dome of Mosta church clearly visible in the distance. Based on the Pantheon in Rome, the dome is said to be the fourth largest in Europe, built without interior scaffolding.

Entrance to Mdina

Malta has an excellent bus system, and we were determined to find time for at least one of the coastal walks described in the Cicerone Guide. We chose that in the south-east starting at Marsaskala, a small fishing village set in a picturesque narrow bay. From St Thomas' Bay south of the town, we followed the coast to the ruined fort of St Thomas' Tower, built after a Turkish raid in 1614. Between our path and the sea we passed large areas of salt pans, intricately carved in the rocks. The trail then wound around the headland along the narrow bay and into the town centre, past brightly coloured fishing boats. We next reached the headland at Zonquor Point from where we headed inland, hoping to reach the small Byzantine chapel marked on the map. However, the myriad new tourist developments blocked off all access, and in the end we had to admit defeat and take the road back into the village.



Mosta domed church



Marsaskala Harbour



Salt pans along the coast

The Cicerone Guide includes many more walks on the main island and on the neighbouring Gozo, which is smaller and less built-up. There is still plenty to do should we make another visit.

A long walk to Everest by Marian Parsons

Back in 2009, Mike and I signed up with K.E. for the 'Original Everest route', the way taken by hopeful explorers and climbers to reach Everest in the early days. This strenuous but interesting switchback route takes mostly small paths over a succession of high ridges, through farmland, forests and mountain villages to eventually reach Everest Base camp. The walk begins from Jiri, a village which is 180 km from Kathmandu, on a rough but serviceable road. Jiri is at the roadhead, beyond which a further 180km of hiking is needed to reach Everest.

From Heathrow, we changed planes in Bahrein. Now that might not sound too exciting – but the magnificent opulence of the airport shops took my breath away! There was a gold-plated Porsche as a centre display, and scented waves of robed women sashayed along after their billionaire oil sheiks. Quite a striking sight.

By complete contrast, Kathmandu was dirty, bustling, stinking with fumes, smoke and animal dung, but full of fascination, with highly decorated temples where monkeys played and begged for food. By the river, corpses burned on high biers, then to be cast into the slow and turgid waters, along with garlands of orange flowers.

Our group of seven was soon driven out in the rain to the small town of Jiri. The plan had been to camp there, but the cold wet weather encouraged our leaders to billet us in a rambling and rather basic guest-house, where I discovered that my toothbrush was nowhere to be found! A wayside shack of a shop sold everything under the sun, and a replacement was quickly purchased.

We made sure to sanitise our hands frequently, and our water was treated with iodine, or boiled by our K.E. leader and her camp staff, so we avoided getting sick for the entire journey. Our porters carried the tents and food, so we only needed to have a day sack with snacks, waterproofs and an extra jumper.



The first proper trekking began the next day, with an up-and-down hike over a 500m high ridge to a nice riverside camp at Shivalaya, busy with chickens, goats, cows, mules and Naks. (The last a female Yak.) It stopped raining, which was lucky because our tents could easily have been inundated as the river rose!

The next few days were an absolute delight, over ridge after ridge, through farmland (still mostly brown and bare after the long winter under snow), and forests, and colourful villages where we met smiling schoolchildren

desperate to air their hard-won few words of English. These children might walk several miles every day to reach a school, and they were rightly proud of their achievements, cherishing the opportunity to be educated in a way that many of our own children choose to turn away from. We passed wayside mani stones and chortens, and learned to spin the many prayer wheels in a clockwise direction, hoping to please Buddha by respectfully chanting Om Mani Padme Hum!

We didn't observe much in the way of wildlife, but in the woodlands, various birds were singing their Spring melodies, and we were followed throughout by successive Chaffinches, which had a local accent to welcome visitors: their songs always ended with this final flourish: 'We're really pleased to see you'!



Via Bhandar, Sete, Junbesi and Nhuntala, crossing passes each day which sometimes reached over 2500m, we reached the well known Dudh Kosi river, which is largely glacial meltwater, hence its name which means 'Milky river'. It is the third largest tributary to the Ganges, and is central to the hydrology of the Everest region. We would follow it on and off, up to Lukla, which is where most folk fly into in order to shorten the Base Camp trek. This certainly makes it much shorter, but they miss out on fitness and acclimatisation, and many go down with altitude sickness.

Day 2, sign at the Deovali Pass, 2730m.

Following the steep sided and heavily terraced or wooded river valley to Bupsa and Chuplung, we were gaining fitness all the time. Reaching Lukla, our camp was at 2700m, great for acclimatisation. Mike and I had started to take Diamox tablets, to be on the safe side: although normally prescribed as a diuretic, we'd used it before to help prevent fluids collecting in lungs and brain, which could cause pulmonary or cerebral oedema.

Then we climbed all the way up to the Sherpa capital of Namche Bazaar, at 3440m, via steep forests and long chain suspension bridges. It was wise to retreat and wait if a yak herd carrying baggage was approaching! We officially entered the Khumbu National Park, receiving our permits. A couple of days were spent resting up and shopping in Namche, a colourful and busy place with very steep narrow streets, and flights of steps, all decorated with yak dung! A short uphill hike was enjoyed to the exposed and windswept Everest View hotel, on a ridge top, for an expensive coffee and a distant glimpse of Everest behind the Nuptse - Lhotse ridge.

Busy time in Namche Bazaar



Tengboche was our next goal. This famous Buddhist monastery is on a hilltop at 3,800m, reached through forests of scented juniper and rhododendrons. It is ornately decorated with brightly-painted murals, sculptures and statues. There we were permitted to witness the scarlet-robed monks blowing their long brass horns, dungchen, which give a very deep, long-resonating sound.

Who should we meet there, but Chris Bonington, a long-standing friend of Mike's! He was supporting his son who had just set up a trekking company, and was leading his first tour!



Sherpa memorial



Walking towards Gorak Shep

Camp below Pumori peak

Every arduous 'up' is followed by a mighty 'down', and so it went on, with huge snowy rocky peaks like Ama Dablam surrounding us as we trod the stony paths towards Gorak Shep, 5,140m. Now that's a bleak, windswept, freezing cold, comfortless place if ever there was one, but it's the final kick-off camp before walking on to Base Camp itself. It did offer some pretty birds, in the shape of the local mountain partridge, called Chukar. The prominent peak of Pumori towered above.



Chukar



Reaching a good viewpoint along the rocky moraine ridge overlooking Base Camp the next day, I had a tummy pain and elected to go no further, but Mike continued, and managed to meet various old mountaineering pals among the Base Camp tents!

I enjoyed being in the high glacial environment, with laden porters and yaks passing by in both directions, adding colour to the drab greys and blues of the mountain scene. Huge icefalls and serac bands surrounded us, with constant distant rumblings from the moving glacier just below where I sat.

The Base Camp showed up as blobs of colour here and there among the stony, icy hummocks ahead, with the Khumbu Icefall rising steeply beyond, and the massive walls of Lhotse and Nuptse cradling the scene.



Climbing Kala Patthar (5,600m) the following morning was a tedious plod, but offered a bit of a view of Everest itself in the dawn sunshine. Then it was downhill at last, to camp at the village of Pheriche, 4,300m, once a small farming place but now offering a basic hospital and many tea houses and trekker lodges. A lady passed us at a trot, bumping along on a mule, with her eyes bandaged up – she looked incredibly uncomfortable, and we learned that this was the ‘ambulance mule’, and her sudden blindness was quite common and brought on by the altitude.





The next day was a bit misty, but we followed proper little mountain paths across steep slopes, to Phortse, where we admired a beautiful yak, now cherished in her old age, and retired from load carrying!

Some of the villages had roadside stalls, to entice the passing tourist to buy small craft items or drinks. I purchased a couple of small souvenirs, as it all helps the local economy. There were no 'hard sell' tactics such as you are subject to in many 'third world' countries. We had established very good relations with our porters and camp cook, as well as Ruth our British leader, and kept in touch for years afterwards, sending money to help when Nepal was very badly hit by an earthquake.

When we reached Lukla, we were treated to a Sherpa party that night, and found that Sherpas are very keen to drum, sing and dance! Our flight back to Kathmandu went better than many, as the weather was quite tame and the pilot wedged his inner door open so we could 'enjoy' the view as the plane hurtled off the edge of the cliff and immediately banked sharply to turn down the valley. Many flights have to be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions, and there have been a number of fatal accidents due to the demands of the short runway and cliff-edge position.

It wasn't easy adapting to the filthy air and crowded streets of the city, but we had time to mull over and discuss the experiences of our journey, and we all agreed it fitted the category of 'trip of a lifetime'.



OBITUARY

Edmund Arthur Bramley 1955 - 2025



Anyone who was privileged to know Ed knows how hard it is to capture his character and the profound impact he had on his family and friends. It is his drive, generosity, and relentless optimism which consistently shine through as we celebrate his life here today.

Edmund was born in Mansfield in 1955 to parents Bessie and Eric. Weighing just over 5lbs, Ed entered the world with a fighting spirit, something that he carried with him throughout the rest of his life. Named after Sir Edmund Hilary, the first person to have successfully summited Mount Everest, it seems Ed was always destined to become an accomplished explorer and mountaineer.

In 1963, Ed's brother Adrian was born, and the family settled into their life together. With Eric's profession in the Police, the family often moved between police houses before setting roots at Burleigh Road, Nottingham. It was here that Ed perhaps first demonstrated his keen DIY skills, designing and welding a pair of metal gates for the driveway in a school DT lesson. Ed had many fond memories of his mother, Bessie, including her questionable home cooking, and thrifty nature, sewing patches and extra lengths of mismatched fabric onto clothing and even fashioning a pair of knitted swimming trunks, all of which may have led to Ed's own unorthodox fashion sense.

Ed attended West Bridgford Grammar School where he met life-long friends Mike and Andy, with whom he went on to create many special memories, alongside their families later in life. It was perhaps here, at the back of the music class, sat alongside Andy, that Ed developed his passion for music, although it was often noted that he was tone-deaf and had a distinct lack of rhythm! Ed certainly didn't let this stop him, however, and his enthusiastic dancing at weddings and other events was often commented on later in life.

Inspired by the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and family holidays to the Lakes and Skye, all packed into a Morris Traveller, Ed developed a keen interest in the great outdoors. With a headstrong and independent attitude and a love for nature, Ed was emboldened to complete the Pennine Way at the age of just 16 and was particularly proud of sleeping rough along the way.

Ed went on to study Geography at Manchester University, a time that provided him with many invaluable life experiences, including time spent in Switzerland, where he studied the Gorner Glacier and climbed the Matterhorn. It's safe to say he was always pleased to receive a Toblerone from his children every year for his birthday because of this!

It was also at Manchester University that Ed met Chris, who later became his best man, and wife, Janet. Ed and Janet's relationship started one Friday night at a bop at Owens Park when Ed spotted Janet from a balcony. As they say, the rest is history and the couple went on to marry at St John's Church in 1980 in Wolverhampton, later moving to Cotgrave on the outskirts of Nottingham where Ed worked as a Hydrologist at Severn Trent. Ed had initially wanted to be a cartographer but couldn't pursue this line of work because of his colour-blindness.

Ed and Janet later moved to Leeds where Ed started a new job with Yorkshire Water where he worked until 2018. Ed often joked with his son that he "managed shit", although, all jokes aside, he had a real passion for his job. Throughout his career, Ed loved developing and sharing his expertise, ultimately striving for progress in the field alongside his excellent colleagues, many of whom went on to become close friends.

Janet and Ed were happily married for 45 years, and Ed was a loving and dedicated husband- always finding time to give Janet a kiss every time he left for work and returned home. During this time, the couple started a family, welcoming their daughter Jennifer in 1985, with their son Simon later completing the family in 1990. Ed was undoubtedly a brilliant father, working tirelessly to provide a loving and stable home for the family, as well as encouraging the children's love of the outdoors and sense of adventure. Ed had a unique sense of humour and loved entertaining his children with an array of jokes and tricks, the legendary paper-bag trick being one of his favourites! His loud 'wicked' dress sense, including his infamous Skye Batik trousers and his questionable choice of a bright green Renault Scenic, dubbed the 'green mobile', were further examples of his eccentric nature, albeit at times to the embarrassment of his children.

Over the years, the family enjoyed many days out and holidays away together, with Ed capturing these special moments with his trusty camera or video recorder. Ed's passion for photography continued throughout the rest of his life and we're sure many of you here today have had to wait patiently for him to take the perfect photo or have had the pleasure of sitting through one of his photo presentations.

Anyone that knew Ed knows that he lived a full and active life and squeezed the most out of every day. He had a real passion for walking, running, climbing, swimming and cycling, and thrived on pushing himself to the limit, completing many challenges for charity. He had particularly fond memories of completing the London Marathon, Water Aid Swim and the Three Peaks dressed in a woman's nightie. Ed also created many lasting memories with his friends over the years including camping holidays as a young family and trips away to Lytham St Anne's with neighbours. As well as this, Ed completed the Coast-to-Coast, North Coast 500 and Lands End to John O'Groats with his friend and neighbour, Tim. Ed was also proud to have been a longstanding and active member of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club and was honoured to have served as both the club's

president and treasurer. During his time at the club, he enjoyed regular meets at The George Starkey Hut in Patterdale, and treks to the Alps, Dolomites, Switzerland, Austria, and Morocco to name but a few.

Even in retirement, Ed never slowed down! This newfound freedom allowed Ed and Janet to further pursue their love of travel and to experience the world. Ed and Janet relished the opportunity to embrace different sights and cultures with them most recently enjoying trips to Andalucía, the Netherlands and Copenhagen. Retirement also enabled Ed to support both Jen and Simon in building their own futures, putting his invaluable DIY skills to best use. Ed brought calm and measured advice to any situation and had the ability to break down any problem into manageable parts easily. He would do anything to help his family, and Jen, Simon, Stu and Emily feel eternally grateful to have had such unwavering support in creating not just their houses, but loving homes.

Another role that Ed truly relished later in life was that of granddad. Ed was a devoted and fun-loving granddad who undoubtedly passed on his active nature to his grandchildren. When they weren't exploring the great outdoors, they could be found enjoying a dance around the living room together!

Ed was a proud Leeds Rhinos fan and clearly took inspiration from Rob Burrow's remarkable attitude in tackling MND when Ed himself learnt he had a congenital heart defect and was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Despite facing these challenges, nothing could dampen his optimistic outlook on life. To mark his 70th birthday and raise money for two charities that he held dear to him, Ed completed Lands End to John O'Groats for the second time and in typical Ed fashion he wasn't content with doing the quickest or easiest route but opted instead his own 'lumpy' route. Ed's accomplishment was an inspiration to others raising close to £6000 for Prostate Cancer UK and Leeds Hospitals Charity. Ed took great joy in planning, completing and sharing this achievement with friends and family alike, and we know how much he cherished these memories with the people who were most important to him.

Although Ed's sudden passing has deeply saddened all of those who knew him, it is his infinite positivity, determination and enthusiasm for life for which he will be remembered. Measured and pragmatic in his outlook, Ed was someone who always lived life to the full and this is the legacy he will leave.

The Bramley Family.

Postscript - Ed and the ABMSAC

Ed joined the ABMSAC as an Affiliate Member in 1981, around the time he moved up to Leeds from Nottingham. In his Manchester Uni years in the early seventies, he specialised in glaciology and was involved for two summers in studying the Gorner glacier above Zermatt, as part of the Gorner Glacier Project, which is now the longest running alpine glacier project in the world. The occasional 'rest' day allowed for ascent of several peaks in the area. His first 4000m peak was the Monte Rosa Massif (4634m) with Editor Mike Goodyer in the mid-seventies. In his second summer Ed climbed the Matterhorn (4478m).

He began his climbing and walking career in the Peak District with the Nottingham Meadows Boys Club climbing on the Derbyshire Edges whilst still at school. As well completing his Gold Duke of Edinburgh award, he attended an Ullswater Outward Bound course and after finishing 'A' Levels completed the Pennine Way on his own.

The skills at navigating learnt over the peat bogs of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow, stood him in good stead his whole life in the hills.

He was always a reliable and competent climbing partner. Everyone who shared time with him on rock came back with a smile and fond memories of a great day out.

Ed was a key participant of the trekking meets for over 20 years and organised several treks. As part of the ABMSAC centenary celebrations in 2009, Ed and a few other club members trekked an extended Haute Route, from Chamonix to the Britannia Hut. His trekking exploits included three visits to Morocco, and more recently the Tour of Mont Blanc, and a return to the Tatras from the Slovakian side. In addition, he produced a DVD photographic record for several of the Treks. For over twenty years Ed was the Meet Organiser for the June Welsh Meet at Rhyd Ddu, where he laid on a communal meal for all attendees at a bargain price!



He was also an active member of the Committee. He was Meet Secretary from 2001-2003, President from 2012-15, Membership Secretary from 2015-2021, when the membership database was launched and lastly Treasurer from 2021. Other sidelines included giving talks in the winter lecture programme and producing a Centenary DVD, given to each member (see Archive page on the website). In addition, Ed was actively involved, as a Director, in the management of the George Starkey Hut where his knowledge and understanding of many aspects of what the job entailed repeatedly shone through. Ed's ability to problem solve was invaluable to us all.

The Committee and members will miss Ed's insight, input and enthusiasm for new and existing initiatives. We will miss his company on the hills and reading his Journal reports which showed his joy of the mountains.

Mike Goodyer and Andy Burton

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at the Inn on the Lake, Glenridding
Saturday, 7th February 2026 at 5.45pm

President Daniel Albert was in the chair, 27 members in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence: Belinda Baldwin, James Baldwin.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 1st February 2025:

No amendments were suggested; proposed by Marian Parsons, seconded by Jim Strachan.

1. Matters arising: No matters arising.

2. Election of Officers and Committee Members:

- a. President: Daniel Albert's term of office expires in 2027; no successor has been formally proposed to date.
- b. Secretary: Céline Gagnon has been in the role for 3 years.
- c. Treasurer: Andy Burton has taken over the role as interim; no successor has been formally proposed to date.
- d. Meets Secretary: Paul Stock is acting as interim; no successor has been formally proposed to date.
- e. Membership Secretary: Julie Freemantle will step down; no successor has been formally proposed to date.
- f. Vice President: no candidate has been formally proposed to date.
- g. Any member interested in the Vice President, Treasurer, Meets Secretary or Membership Secretary posts are invited to speak to Daniel or any of the other officers.
- h. Current committee members are re-elected for 2026; proposed by Roger James, seconded by Don Hodge.

3. Hon Treasurer's report:

This report was circulated by email on 1st February 2026 and presented in the Journal.

BMC membership cost increase – John Dempster asked to be reminded of the reasoning behind the decision not

to pass on the cost increase from the BMC to members. It will be applied as a tapered support over five years to soften the increase and support members.

Andy personally thanked Ed Bramley for managing the club's finances efficiently, and Ian Featherstone for his support.

Proposed by Heather Eddowes, seconded by Marian Parsons

Heather proposed a vote of thanks to Andy for taking on the interim role of Hon Treasurer after Ed's death.

4. President's report:

2025 has certainly been an eventful year globally. Whilst the young in our comfortable part of the world have sought superficially worthy causes upon which to justify their violent frustrations, their less fortunate cousins have sought clean water, food and shelter from harm, both environmental and military. And the mountains themselves have groaned under the weight of progress. Once again, it was a good year to spend time with old friends in the mountains.

It is no surprise then, that our more traditional meets were most popular. And sadly, the more experimental ones had to be cancelled.

Following the dinner meet, when we heard stories from our very own Pamela, there were well-attended day walks in February, March and April.

The skills meet this year focused on via-ferrata skills in anticipation of the September meet in the Dolomites. Based in Buttermere, for a change, it also afforded some classic Lakeland ridge walking.

In May, a small but very active group enjoyed a week of settled weather in the Northern Cairngorms with a variety of expeditions including a classic scramble up the Fiacail Ridge of Cairngorm. Then, still in May, another group braved the Giddy Edge footpath on High Tor, in the White Peak as well as doing some real climbing on Birchen Edge.

For many years, Ed Bramley has organised a popular meet in the Oread Hut at the foot of Snowdon. June 2025, unbeknown to anyone, was his last one. It was well attended. Many interesting outings were undertaken, and a great deal of fun was had by all. Ed, as always, was the chief cook. It was a special year for Ed – his 70th, that he was training to celebrate with a cycle ride from Lands' End to John O'Groats. The training was a great achievement as he had been quite unwell at the start. He achieved his aim, but sadly died suddenly, later in the year.

July once again brought members from the UK and Switzerland together at our hotel meet. This time in the lovely Lenk in Simmental.

The highlight of the autumn was the via ferrata meet at Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Dolomites. Those that had been scared witless at the Honister training reportedly found the "real thing" great fun and a lot easier.

I would like to say a few words about Ed. Ed joined this club as a young man, very many years ago. Over the years, his contribution has been immense; both formally in nearly all the committee roles available, and just through being a wonderful person to be with on the hills. Since I have been on the committee, he has been the voice of both inspiration and common sense. Being able to dream big, while keeping your feet firmly rooted in reality is the mark of a great mountaineer and a solid friend. In its entirety, his place cannot be filled. But I am immensely grateful to Andy Burton and Paul Stock who stepped in, without being asked, to ensure that we still have a treasurer. The rest of the team have, as always, been magnificent in keeping the show on the road. But

here, we do have a looming problem. Most committee members have now done a number of roles as requests for new volunteers go unheeded. Everyone is allowed to get old and tired. The club itself may not continue for ever, but I foresee that we will run out of workers one or two decades before people no longer want to have meets organised for them. I know that there are many here who are unable to step up, but some are. Please...

Thanks to Andy and Paul, the outgoing and incoming meets secretaries, we have once again a great programme of meets for the year. There is variety in location and activity to suit everyone. And if you feel that some of the activities are a bit much for you, you can still come along for the company. You obviously managed to make it here.

I would once again, like to thank Julie Freemantle who has arranged these dinner meets for many years but is no longer able to attend herself due to family circumstances. We owe her a lot.

Membership is decreasing slowly. Last AGM, we had 160; this time it's 145, of whom 130 live in the UK. The projected decrease over the coming years is not going to be linear but increasing, at an increasing rate. That is, of course, all the more reason why we should have a really great time, this weekend.

5. Chair of the Hut Management Committee report:

This report was circulated in the December 2025 newsletter.

Changes since the report was circulated include:

- a. Bed nights prices have dropped back to £12/ £18 as to not prohibit more people using the hut
- b. The Alpine Club has ended its bed nights subsidy for its members; it is worth noting that their bookings have increased in recent years.
- c. A new stove was installed in time for the Twixmas meet and is working well.
- d. The school's planning application was scaled down and works will not be encroaching the hut.

Heather thanked Andy Burton for his help with the drying room refurbishment and to Tony Howard for doing a lot of the work voluntarily. The drying room will be cleared up and painted at the next Maintenance Meet.

6. Any other business: Mike Goodyer will put the slide show on the website.

7. Date of next meeting: Saturday 30th January 2026 as a provisional date.

Celine Gagnon, February 2026

Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th September 2025

		Notes	2025	2024
Income				
	Net income from membership subscriptions	1	142.83	688.36
	Bank Interest	2	1,513.83	1,568.94
	Dividends and Accumulations	3	4,900.12	4,748.45
Meets	London Lectures	5	-	25.67
Total income			6,556.78	7,031.42
Expenditure				
Journal & Newsletters	Journal (Production & Postage)	-	1,828.60	1,906.29
	Newsletter Postage	-	8.40	7.70
Meets	London Lectures	5	753.29	-
	Net support to meets	9	771.34	719.57
	Annual Dinner	6	985.86	880.75
Training	Training Grants & Skills meet	7	718.00	755.00
DonaBons	Pairedale Mountain Rescue	8	150.00	300.00
	PCC of Pairedale	8	250.00	250.00
GSHL	Refurbishment of drying room	10	4,059.74	82.43
HMRC	Tax on interest - previous year	11	19.01	-
	Tax on interest- current year	11	287.63	298.10
AdministraBon	Smart payment costs and bank account charges	12	264.29	207.16
	AdministraBon	13	405.23	383.06
Total expenditure			- 10,501.39	- 5,790.06
(Deficit)/Surplus on Club activities			- 3,944.61	1,241.36
Increase in market value of investments			7,545.12	47,152.97
Overall change in club income			3,600.51	48,394.33

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30th September 2025

Fixed Asset Investments				
	Investments at market value	3	218,910.61	210,594.75
Total Fixed Asset Investments			218,910.61	210,594.75
Current Assets				
	Club deposits to venues for future meets	9	1,092.00	2,515.00
	Cash on deposit		43,742.02	47,143.84
Total Current Assets			44,834.02	49,658.84
Current Liabilities				
	Corporation Tax	-	287.63	298.10
	Club members deposits paid to club for future meets	9	-	99.00
Total Current Liabilities			- 287.63	- 397.10
Net Assets			263,457.00	259,856.49
General Fund				
	Balance brought forward from previous accounting year		259,856.49	211,462.16
	Balance transferred from Income & Expenditure account		3,600.51	48,394.33
Carried forward at 30th September 2025			263,457.00	259,856.49

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year to: 30th. September 2025

Association of British Members
of the
Swiss Alpine Club

1. MEMBERSHIP

	2024/25		2023/24	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
New Members: Oct-Dec previous calendar year (iv)	0	-	0	-
Memberships renewed-BACS and Stripe	155	6219.11	168	6,336.00
Members with zero payment	6	-	5	-
New/renewing Members subsequent quarters	0		2	61.50
TOTAL Membership income		6219.11		6,397.50
SAC Membership bulk payment (i), (ii)	16	-1780.57	19	-2,061.34
SAC - ChF transfer fee		-15.00		-15.00
TOTAL SAC related payments		-1795.57		-2,076.34
BMC affiliaBon payment – New Members Oct-Dec previous calendar year	0		0	-
BMC AffiliaBon payment (iii)	138	-4047.54	151	-3,608.90
BMC AffiliaBon payment subsequent quarters (iii)	0		1	-23.90
TOTAL BMC Affiliation fees		-4047.54		-3,632.80
Gross income to ABMSAC		376.00		688.36
Stripe fees		-233.17		-101.03
Net income to ABMSAC		142.83		587.33

(i) On behalf of SAC Members paying via ABMSAC.

(ii) SAC credit for next financial year due to membership changes after bulk payment made is **Not Yet Known**

(iii) In 2024/25, the club did not pass on the **£5** BMC price increase to members, which equates to a total support to members of **£775**.

2. BANK INTEREST

There have been no changes to our banking arrangements over the past year.

	30 th Sept. 2025	30 th Sept. 2024
Bank interest	1,513.83	1568.94

3. INVESTMENTS

There has been no change to the number of investments we hold during the financial year.

Our investments continue to perform well.

Investment	Comments	No. Units at year start	No. Units at year end	Type of payment
Aberdeen Standard		7,782	7,782	AccumulaBon
Brunner Investment Trust 25p		4,687	4,687	Dividend
Invesco Select Trust 1p		12,778	12,778	Dividend
LionTrust		6,541	6,541	AccumulaBon
Murray International 5p	Changed from 25p to 5p	9,795	9,795	Dividend
Witan Investment Trust 5p		12,825	12,825	Dividend

	30 th Sept. 2025	30 th Sept. 2024
Aggregate market value	218,910.61	210,594.75
Total dividends including change in unit value of accumulaBons	4,900.12	4,748.45

4. LEGACY DONATION

In the 2022/23 financial year, the club received a £2000 legacy donation from the late David Harland.

This legacy has been used to improve the Drying Room at the hut and will be specifically named after him.

5. LONDON LECTURES

The amount shown is the net cost of the London lectures in 2024/25 lecture series, as ABMSAC covered the total initial cost of the lectures. A refund from the AAC has yet to be received.

6. ANNUAL DINNER

The cost of the annual dinner reflects several payments, including the guest speaker and menu cards, as well as an amount of wine for each table.

7. SKILLS WEEKEND AND TRAINING GRANTS

The skills weekend in April 2025 included a visit to Honister quarry with a guide to learn basic via ferrata skills.

8. DONATIONS

As with last year, the club has made a small number of donations that reflect our connections with both the local community and the wider mountaineering community.

9. NET SUPPORT TO MEETS

Expenditure on meets this year include:

- Deposits already paid to venues by the club last financial year, including refunds where the venue has cancelled.
- Deposits paid by the club for meets next financial year.
- Support provided to meets where fixed numbers of spaces had to be booked, but the uptake was less than the total.
- Provision of wine at the Annual Dinner.

10. GSHL RELATED MATTERS

This covers the refurbishment costs to the drying room paid into the Company accounts as a donaBon (see also 4.)

11. SMART PAYMENT COSTS (STRIPE)

The use of smart payment opBons for both membership and meets conBnues to be the preferred option for most members, and now also includes a small charge made by the bank for each BACS transaction. If you wish the Club to derive maximum benefit from your payments, please use the BACS facility.

12. ADMINISTRATION COSTS

The change in administration costs this year is primarily down to both renewal of software licences and the cost of postage.

Andy Burton
Honorary Treasurer
Date: 28 January 2026

Ian Featherstone
Honorary Examiner
Date: 28 January 2026

Examiner’s statement:

In my view the financial statements are in accordance with the Association’s accounBng records as of 30th September 2025 and disclose a surplus for the twelve-month period then ended.

Useful contacts

George Starkey Hut (www.george-starkey-hut.com)

Members must book beds in the Hut before the visit to ensure space is available. See the Hut website for details regarding the hut booking system. Warden Marian Parsons. Contact on george.starkey.hut@gmail.com



Oread Mountaineering Club (www.oread.co.uk)

We have reciprocal rights at both huts. Tan Yr Wyddfa, Rhyd Ddu, LL54 6TN, North Wales Heathy Lea, Baslow (Grid Ref: SK 273722) To book see the hut booking link on the website.



Yorkshire Ramblers Club (www.yrc.org.uk)

We have reciprocal rights to stay in the huts, one is in Liñ le Langdales in the Lakes and the other is near Clapham in the Yorkshire Dales. To book see the hut booking link on the website.



Swiss Alpine Club (www.sac-cas.ch/en)

SAC members can log onto the site using their membership number and puk number (see membership card). Get up to date information on about routes, huts and suggested tours in summer and winter.



BMC (www.thebmc.co.uk)

All UK members are automatically members of the BMC. The website has up to date information on access and conservation to mountain areas. Contact- phone 01614456111 email - office@thebmc.co.uk



ABMSAC Office Holders 2026

Committee

OFFICE	HOLDER	ELECTED
President	Daniel Albert	2024
Vice President	tbc	
Hon. Treasurer	Andy Burton	2026
Hon. Secretary	Céline Gagnon	2023
Hon. Membership Secretary	Julie Freemantle	2021
Hon. Meets Secretary	Paul Stock	2026
Hon. Editor	Mike Goodyer	2009
Hon. Hut Warden	Marian Parsons	2014
Training coordinator	Heather Eddowes	2018
Co opted Committee Member	Roger James	2020
Co opted Committee Member	Judy Renshaw	2021

Historic List of Officers



George Starkey Hut Ltd

ABMSAC Directors: Daniel Albert, Andy Burton, Celine Gagnon,

HUT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Heather Eddowes, Derek Buckley, Don Hodge, Ian Mateer, Marian Parsons.