

# Fylde Mountaineering Club Adventures...and more

Spring 2021

*Slippery crags*

*Big seacliffs*

*Stunning scenery*

*Worsening conditions*

*Wave dodging tactics*

*Alarmingly steep overhang*





May I begin by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. I am looking forward to reading this edition of our magazine and see what everyone has been managing to occupy themselves with during this very unusual year. I would like to think that we have a genuine chance of being able to deliver a real syllabus of activities from May onwards and that we can all meet again and enjoy what we love the most – fun and good company in the outdoors.

You should all have had a notification by now (What's On) that we intend to hold our AGM by Zoom and the detail behind this will be sent out in due course. It will be a first for us and it would be great if we had a good turn-out, and it will be from the comfort of our own homes for a change (you'll need to provide your own pie and peas though!).

I hope that everyone is well, and that the next edition of the magazine will have many pictures and accounts of large group activities. Fingers crossed for a great 2021.

**Dave**

Cover photo - Col du Balme Chamonix  
photo - Dave Hicks  
Opp page - Newlands Valley  
photo - John Wiseman

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Well, who would have thought we would still be here in this situation and now in our 3<sup>rd</sup> 'Lockdown'! Unbelievable really. There is hope now though and light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccines. Let's hope by Spring and Summer we will be able to get out and about and enjoy our freedom once again! I am so looking forward to it as I am sure you are.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this Spring edition of the magazine. I am pleased to say that after my worry we wouldn't have enough articles for the mag, you have come up trumps and sent me more than enough articles! In fact I am having to save some for the next magazine, this isn't a bad thing though as we are still restricted in our activities so may not have much material for it.

In this magazine we have tales of wet and slippery crags, visits to waterfalls, walks not quite what they seem, stunning scenery and rough seas! It's all about the adventure!

As always my thanks go out to the members who have contributed to the mag, and also my apologies to those whose articles haven't managed to be included-something to look forward to in the next magazine though.

Happy New Year to you all

**Christine**

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# THE IRTHING GORGE

## Water, Fell and Woodland

*All things North-Summer 2020 walks and climbs in the northern region as recalled by Rob Lewis with Andy Dunhill, Christine Barbier and Chris Campbell*

**T**he Northern Branch of the F.M.C. has not been idle during the Summer's restrictions. As soon as any activity was permitted, a walk took place along the Irthing Gorge, across the adjacent fells and through the woods bounding it.

May 28 was a lovely day and a riverside walk was most appealing, so Andy, Christine and I set off from Gilsland through woods above the River Irthing. These gave way to a permissive path over open fellside before further woodland brought us to a location which

presented a view of our initial objective- the waterfall and pool at **Crammel Linn**.



Thoughts about paddling in the river were quickly dispelled when we saw what was happening there. A lot of people, clearly not socially distanced, were dotted about around the waterfall and tombstoning in the pool from a ten metre platform. \*

### *'Popping Stone'*

We found a secluded spot for lunch and returned to a quieter part of the river where we walked to the *Popping Stone* - the place where Sir Walter Scott was said to have proposed to his future wife.

the river, leaping from stone to stone whilst Christine and I rested in the shade.

### *Feet dipping*

Returning along the river, we found many attractive pools, so that some members of the party were unable to resist cooling their feet in the inviting water. We also found the overgrown

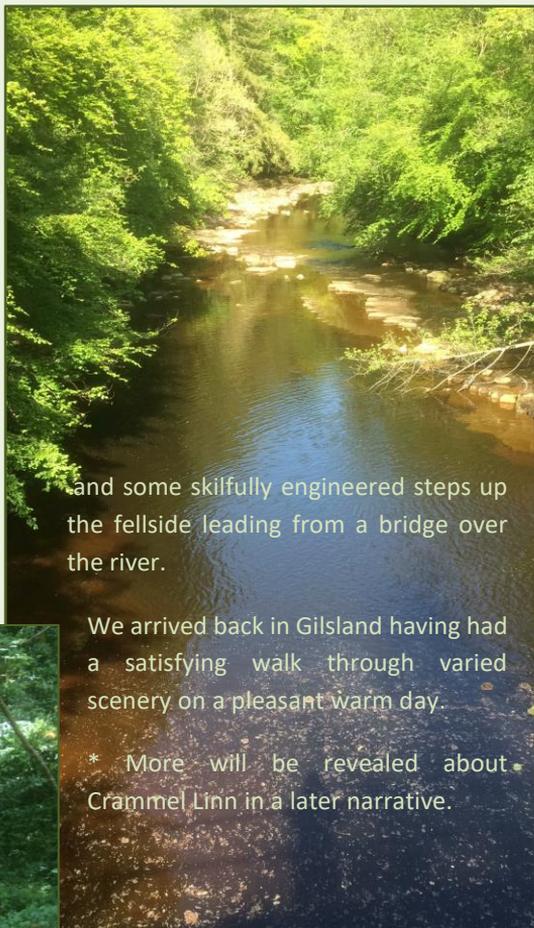


### *River antics!*

At this juncture, Andy amused himself by crossing and re-crossing



remains of an old riverside pool -  
complete with a few tiles still in place



and some skilfully engineered steps up  
the fellside leading from a bridge over  
the river.

We arrived back in Gilsland having had  
a satisfying walk through varied  
scenery on a pleasant warm day.

\* More will be revealed about  
Crammel Linn in a later narrative.



Rob....

# *Persistent rain and shooting restrictions on Middle Gelt Fell*

**Those thoroughly soaked-  
Christine, Andy and Rob.**

On 5<sup>th</sup> June I met Andy and Christine for a walk in the Pennines. This started badly - the persistent rain began almost immediately and we found that our original objective was unavailable due to shooting restrictions. We settled on Middle Gelt Fell, an upland wilderness with typical Pennine terrain; peat hag, grassy tussocks and bracken - in short, just heavy going once off the carefully prepared paths used by the shooting industry. We passed a number of grouse butts on our journey (no comment) and were able to identify Lapwing, Snipe and Curlews on the upland moors.

## *'Worsening conditions'*

Andy decided that to reach the fell top we needed to deviate from the path and trek over rough ground. This we did, in rapidly worsening conditions. Andy was doing his Duracell bunny act and had reached the top of the fell and come part way back down, as I was struggling to get up due to an annoyingly sore hip (the joys of getting older). Eventually we all reached the cairn (Andy for the second time) which was not quite at the top of the fell and we ate our rather soggy sandwiches. I was glad of my flask of coffee.

## *'Thoroughly soaked'*

We went off to the true fell top then made a beeline down the rough fellside to shorten the distance back, arriving at the cars thoroughly soaked. I won't say this was an enjoyable day out, but we did at least make the effort and get some exercise in wild country. I forgot both my camera and phone, so no photos - perhaps just as well given the darkness and the slate-grey skies.

*Rob*

# ARMATHWAITE

## IN RAIN AND SUNSHINE

Andy at the top of Ituna

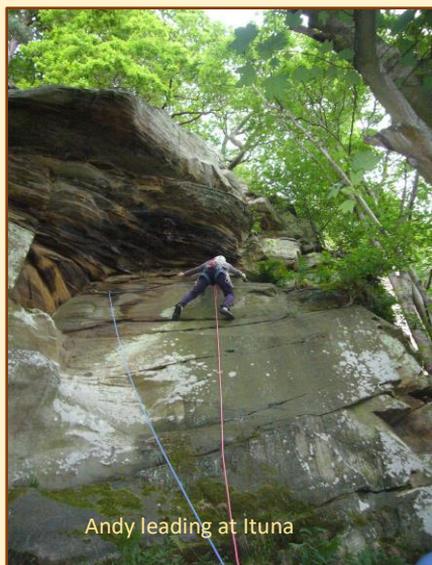
**26 June 2020** Weather doubtful. Nevertheless, Andy, and Christine, Chris Campbell and I parked on the bridge in Armathwaite and set off to climb on the sandstone outcrop near the river, having established that no one in the village was serving coffee. Chris C was there in his role as photographer and Christine

intended to go for a walk.

We arrived at the crag and thought about what to start with. Andy decided that Ituna (S) would be appropriate, so we found the start and geared up. Just at that moment heavy rain arrived.

'Let's get a route done,' said Andy emphatically.

So...I found myself being dripped on by overhanging trees whilst Andy started the pitch, getting my gear nicely wet as he went. The route gets into a corner then breaks right across a steep slab. Andy took some time placing gear, which made me think.....



This route winds its way rightwards as it ascends the crag finishing with a pleasant chimney / groove; it passes through trees so I couldn't really see where Andy had reached until he called down that he was safe. Chris C was calling for him to stop and pose for photos at intervals. As usual, Andy didn't take long to complete the route.

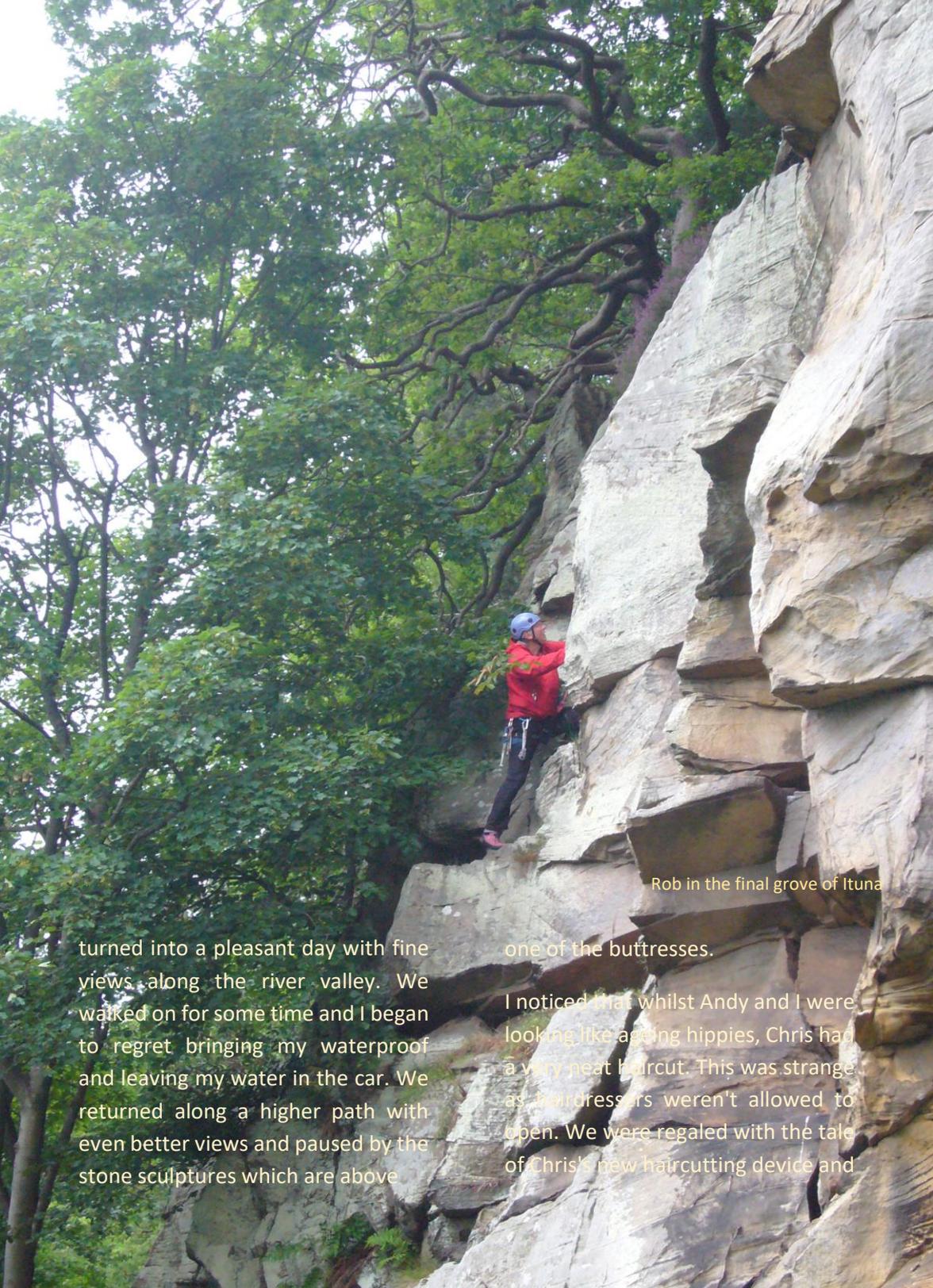
## 'WET AND SLIPPERY'

My turn. Straight up into the corner where the difficulty was - leaving it. It was difficult to see the footholds clearly and by then they were wet and slippery. I was uncomfortable in the knowledge that having removed the gear from the corner, I was in for a nasty pendulum if I slipped. The rest of the route was very enjoyable, even in the rain, although Andy had threaded the rope behind a tree growing against the crag. This was fine for someone as skinny as him, slightly more difficult for me. I employed the ledge - level grovel where the gap was slightly wider. Chris had me posing for a photo in the final groove.

Looking at the conditions, there was nothing to be done except pack up the gear and get back to the cars with the intention of setting off for a walk. This we duly did. Then the sun came out.

## A PLEASANT WALK IN THE SUNSHINE

Off we went covering the same ground, but this time continuing past Armathwaite crags along the river and through the woods. It had



Rob in the final grove of Ituna

turned into a pleasant day with fine views along the river valley. We walked on for some time and I began to regret bringing my waterproof and leaving my water in the car. We returned along a higher path with even better views and paused by the stone sculptures which are above

one of the buttresses.

I noticed that whilst Andy and I were looking like ageing hippies, Chris had a very neat haircut. This was strange as hairdressers weren't allowed to open. We were regaled with the tale of Chris's new haircutting device and

it's various settings, and how, having not read the instructions correctly, he had set it to two to cut around his ears rather than four. By this time, all had grown back so that he didn't look at all strange, but apparently he had inadvertently managed a very short cut indeed.



We were soon back at the bridge; Chris decided to call it a day but Andy, Christine and I continued the walk for a short while along the river from the bridge in the other direction, enjoying seeing a brood of

ducklings on the river as well as a grey heron.



This was a mixed day out with something for everyone; Chris took his pictures, we all enjoyed the walk and Andy and I managed to get climbing underway, despite the early conditions.

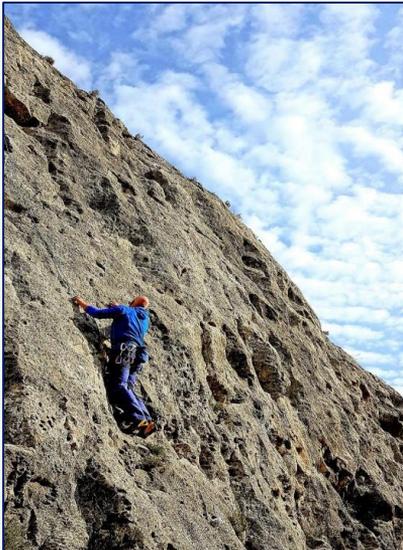
ROB

# Climbing, walking, and enjoyable times with family and friends despite the lockdown year.

**With Martin Bennett**

As for everyone this climbing year has for me been rather different. It began with a change of plan. Late January was pencilled in for what would have been my 20<sup>th</sup> year in a row climbing waterfall ice somewhere in Europe but in the end my only option was to have been to make up a threesome with Wriggers and Nick - I didn't feel I was fit enough! Anyone who's followed these "big leggy" lads will sympathise I'm sure.

Splendid compensation was provided by a week in February on The Costa Blanca with Chris. Staying in Calpe we climbed at some of the usual haunts in those parts as well as some that were new to us.



Chris on the, unusual for a sport climb, 5b route El Diedre at Corbera



Chris on the excellent sustained Trasto (5b) at Barranc Del Ferry



In early March we had booked a family week in Gran Canaria and, with some trepidation, as yet being unaware of what was to come, we went. What a delightful place. We had a lot of coastal and mountain walks in the as always beautiful weather, and until we got to the airport for our return no sign of the virus. A delay was caused by that being the very day Spain closed its borders, so that the Jet2 full of passengers which we would have returned on, was turned around to set the passengers down back in Manchester before

eventually arriving some 6 hours late. We had 7 hours in the airport and 3 hours on a plane, then a night and most of a day on Jet2 in a nice hotel and got home only 24 hours late.

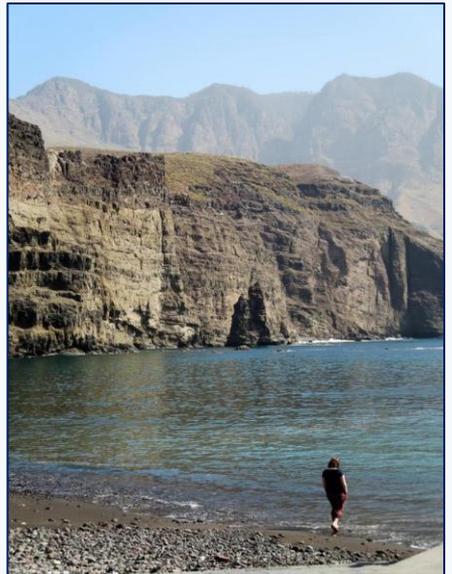


It's a fabulous island for fell walking in the sun, but allow plenty of time for the driving, and don't go if you're prone to car-sickness! I'll say no more.

Walking on Picos de las Nuevas with the famed Roque Nublo behind.

Big seacliffs at Puerto de las Nuevas where we'd gone to see the spectacular Dito de Dio (finger of God) pinnacle, only to find the dito had fallen off 10 years ago leaving only the fist!

That was the last activity before the lengthy lockdown during the gorgeous weather of the Spring when many miles were walked but only straight out of our front door. Local off road bike rides too, The Weaver's Wheel providing appropriate exercise on a number of occasions.



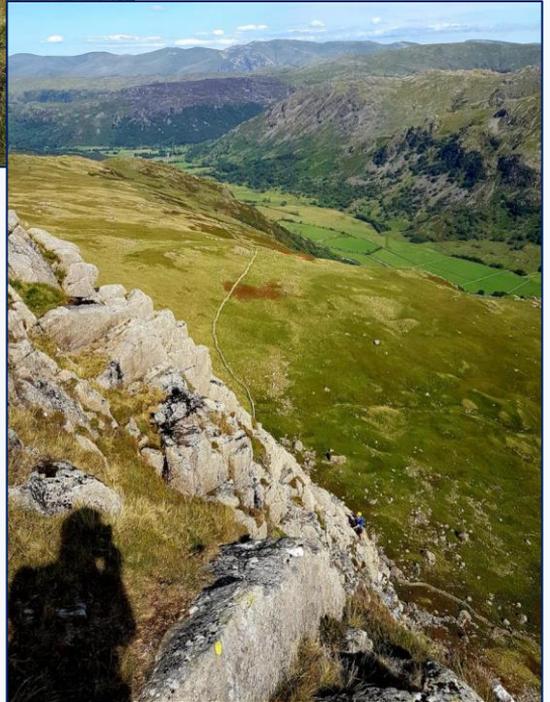
With the

relaxation that came with the Summer, days out climbing became a possibility and I grabbed as many as I could with a variety of partners, mainly in The Lakes but with one sojourn to Derbyshire. A few pictures follow highlighting the best of them.

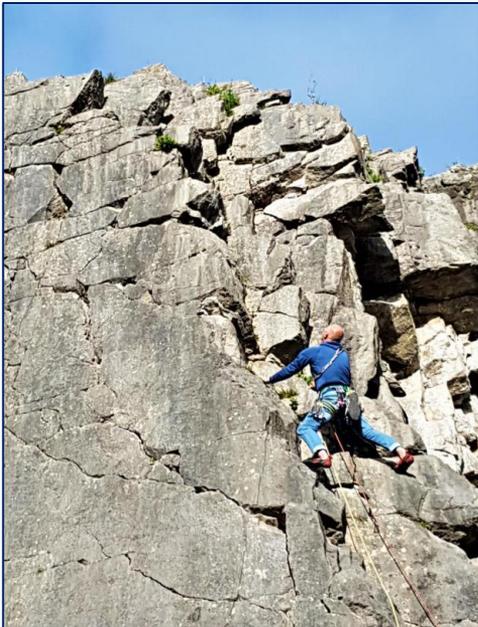


Terry on the minuscule but delightful Upper Shepherd's Crag.

First mountain crag of the year. Simon en route for Gillercombe Buttress and, from the top, some bods still on it.



A couple of evening meets (maximum 6 socially distanced members!) were managed at Trowbarrow and Denham.



Martin on Barrier Reef



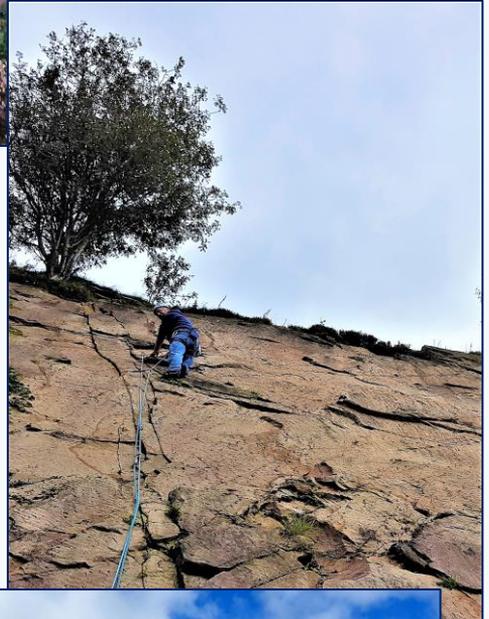
Nick belaying Steve Clarke on Mad Karoo as darkness falls.

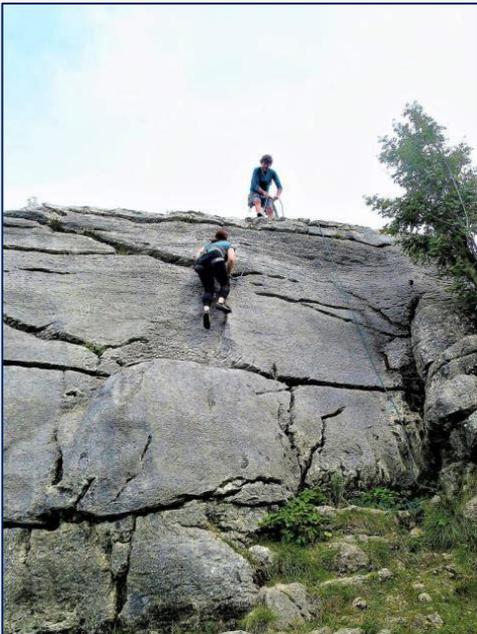
Moment's notice local climbing was arranged on a number of occasions with Chris, notably at Noggarth and Twistleton.

Chris on Ann at Noggarth.

No action pics at Twistleton but one that I think crystallises that "isn't it great just to be OUT" feeling I've felt this year like no other.

My birthdays are usually marked by a climb with daughter Laura and this, my 75<sup>th</sup>, was no exception and found us en famille, complete with a mobile party with cake and champagne at Hutton Roof.



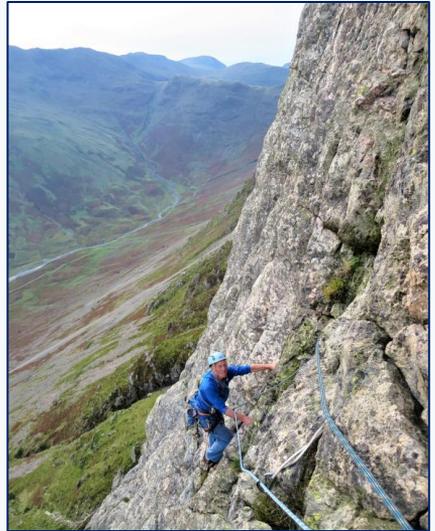


Given that “any port in a storm” might have been the title for this year’s ambitions and achievements, if such they were, I was even to be found sport climbing, a rarity for me at least in The UK, on two occasions, achieving the heady heights of a 6a+ lead at Bram Crag with Nick, but faring rather less well at Harpur Hill with Chris, in the company of Martin and Nick



Nick at Bram Crag and me at Harpur Hill

Inevitably for me the finest days were those spent on high, if not remote, Lakeland Craggs, like the day with Simon at Gillercombe and with Chris on Gimmer and Nick and Wriggers on Pavey Ark.



Chris on Oliverson's Variation and Lyon's Crawl

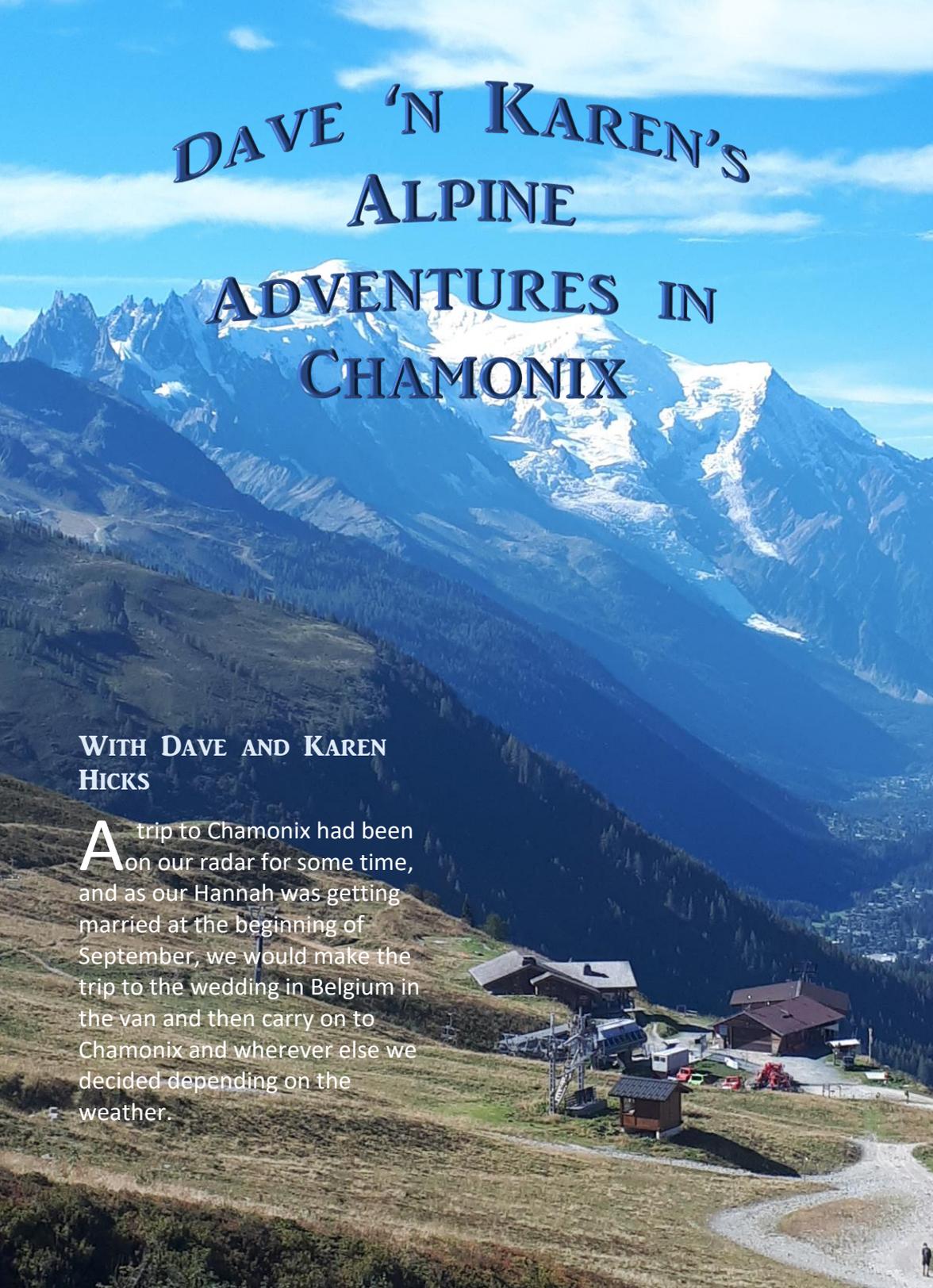


Steve on  
Capella  
and  
Golden  
Slipper.



Looking back, as I have for the purposes of putting this together, in the circumstances I couldn't have asked for a better climbing year, or better chums to enjoy it with.

**Martin**



# DAVE 'N KAREN'S ALPINE ADVENTURES IN CHAMONIX

WITH DAVE AND KAREN  
HICKS

A trip to Chamonix had been on our radar for some time, and as our Hannah was getting married at the beginning of September, we would make the trip to the wedding in Belgium in the van and then carry on to Chamonix and wherever else we decided depending on the weather.

After a lovely few days in Belgium we set off and stopped off on the way at our usual freebie place by **Lac de Orient** where there is a great quiet spot in a wooded area near the lake and importantly close to the public loos. There are usually a few other vans there but this time we were on our own which was superb. The next morning we had an early start, made all the better when we spotted two hot-air balloons on the other side of the lake taking off into a magnificent sunrise.



of your walks and you just sit there and soak up the scenery on the way. Transport along the Chamonix valley is really easy and the campsites provide you with free passes for the buses and the train. The buses run regularly and because of the virus all bus services were free for everyone so we didn't need our passes after all. We also took our bikes and these were great for going into town (10 mins) and we also used to bike down to the Flegere cable car and leave them locked up there. This saved having a weary trudge up to the campsite after a long walk.

The day walks we chose were (in order):

*Grand Balcon Sud*

*Aiguillette Posettes including Col du Balme, Croix de Fer, L'Arolette, & Tete le Balme*

*Lac Blanc*

*Lac Cornu and Lac Noir*

We arrived in Chamonix around two in the afternoon and we drove first up to **Argentiere** where there is a campsite we liked the look of, however we hadn't realised just how far up the valley **Argentiere** is, and so we drove back to **Les Praz** and the **Glacier Blanc** campsite which was superb. The location and facilities are superb also and we had a stunning view of the **Aiguille Rouges** from our pitch.

We had an amazing week here and walked most days. The cable cars are the perfect way to get you to the start

The **Grand Balcon Sud** is an ideal first day walk as it is relatively flat for most of the way at around 2000 meters with a bit of an uphill plod at the end. The view across to the **Mont Blanc Massif** are absolutely stunning and it is a relaxed half day with plenty of time for photo opportunities and soaking up the scenery. We started the walk at **Les Praz** leaving our bikes at the cable car station and went up to **Flegere** and followed the well signed path to **Planpraz** and took the cable car down



to Chamonix where we caught the bus back to **Les Praz**.

## *'BIG STING IN THE TAIL!'*



Dave looking at the views from Grand Balcon Sud

All fired up after our first day we then chose to go up to the **Aiguillette Posettes**. There are a number of ways to do this, but we chose to go up via the **Col du Balme**, the **Croix de Fer**, **L'Arolette**, **Tete le Balme** and finally the **Aiguillette Posettes**. This was a pretty big day out which we started by getting the bus to **Le Tour** and the Charmillon chair lift to the first station, which leaves a lovely longish but gentle ascent to the **Col de Balme** where you venture into Switzerland. At the **Col du Balme** refuger there is a marker stone with one side in France and the other in Switzerland. Karen received a text to self-isolate because she had visited Switzerland! There is a big sting in the tail before finally ascending the **Aiguillette Posettes** as one descends a full 1000 feet from the **Tete le Balme** only to regain most of it to

summit the **Aiguillette Posettes** followed by a pretty but long decent down to Le Tour. Luck was on our side as we only waited about 5 minutes for the bus back to **Les Praz**. This was our longest walk of the week and we rewarded ourselves with an obligatory beer at a lovely little bar about a third of the way back to our campsite. Good excuse to rest our weary legs which had seized up on the bus journey back.



Dave at the top of Aiguillettes Posettes

The next day Karen was a bit under par with man-flu so we had an easy day with a bike ride into town and a spot of retail therapy which was a bit weird and also uncomfortable as everyone has to wear masks. We planned to take it easy the following day as well and I decided we could walk into Chamonix (about 40 mins) where we needed to get a replacement mouthpiece for one of the bladders which had mysteriously disappeared. The campsite had an area map on a board and it showed another path back to [Les Praz](#) which looked more interesting than the usual flat walk back. As most members will know these impromptu, “eeh that looks like a good idea” type plans never usually go to plan. We found the path easily enough which was quite a surprise considering my track record. We walked up, and up and up and up for what seemed like forever. Luckily Mrs H was feeling much better and I didn’t get too much stick. We eventually found ourselves on the [Petit Balcon Sud](#) path which explained the height gain. It was a lovely walk through the woods with occasional good views when there were the odd clearings. We eventually found a path that led down to [Les Praz](#) and we found our way back a little more tired than planned, but having also had more fun than planned so all in all a great day. Feeling quite lazy we opted for a pizza each from the van that visits the campsite twice a week during the season, and it was a very good pizza too.



The weather continued to be really good even though the daily forecasts predicted thunderstorms most afternoons, happily none arrived. We did two more cracking walks along the [Aiguille Rouges](#), first to [Lac Blanc](#) and the following day to [Lac Cornu](#) and [Lac Noir](#).

### *FANTASTIC SCENERY*

It was now weekend and therefore the trails were busier and we did not have place to ourselves as much as we had been having. Both were excellent walks, although the second was our favourite of the two and I would recommend it to anyone. The [Lac Blanc](#) walk was probably an Alpine equivalent of Stickle Tarn on a weekend, and the high number of walkers took the shine off it a little. Both of these walks are accessed via the Flegere cable car followed by the chairlift to Index (2300 metres). For those fancying a bit of rock

climbing there are some superb slabs very accessible from the Index chairlift. The walk to **Lac Cornu** and **Lac Noir** is a great day out and one that takes you through some fantastic and varied scenery. It is a little strenuous at the beginning but nothing too steep. Once the col and ridge are reached one follows the signed path north for 20 minutes to Lac Noir, before retracing your steps back south to **Lac Cornu** and then on to **Planpraz** for the cable car down into Chamonix.

### *'RELAXATION'*

We decided that we had filled our boots with the walking and had drunk our fill of the fabulous scenery. After seven days of waking up to amazingly sunny and clear views of the Mont Blanc massif and all of the Aiguilles, we decided to move on for a little relaxation to somewhere we hadn't been before. The area around **Aix le**



**Bains** had been recommended to us and so Karen set to finding us a campsite and we moved on. We found a campsite just outside of a little village called **Lepin-le-Lac** on the shores of **Lac du Bourget**. We managed to bag a spot



for the van right by the lake which was absolute heaven for Karen as she only needed to walk twenty paces for a swim. We spent an idyllic four days relaxing, doing a little cycling, swimming, kayaking and SUPing (stand up paddleboarding). I hadn't realised that one could have so much fun doing so little, and when I told a pal of mine when we got back home he said "that's what normal people do on holiday".

### *NOW FOR SOME CLIMBING*

All this relaxation made us crave some exercise so we drove down to **Orpierre** for a bit of sport climbing. On our last visit there we had a bad experience at the campsite in the town which left a bitter taste in our mouths and we vowed never to go there again. This left us looking for an alternative, but the nearest one which is about 3 miles down the road was a bit too hillbilly like for us and we ended up driving back down the valley and up to **Sisteron** where there is a fabulous site. The drive to **Orpierre** was only about 15 minutes so we were happy.

We had let Andy Dunhill know that we were around and we arranged to meet

him at one of the crags the next day where he tipped up with one of our intro members Max Konecha and her partner. On arrival at the crag Andy promptly lay down prostrate at the base of the crag with a nose bleed. After a few 'there there's' from nurse Karen he was ready for action and we had a cracking day and polished off a few routes and finished the day off with a couple of beers down in the village. Unfortunately that was the last of the good weather for the rest of the trip and we decided to head back home the following day, but not before going to **Ventavon** to meet with Andy and Christine for a guided tour of this lovely hill top commune and a brew at their place.

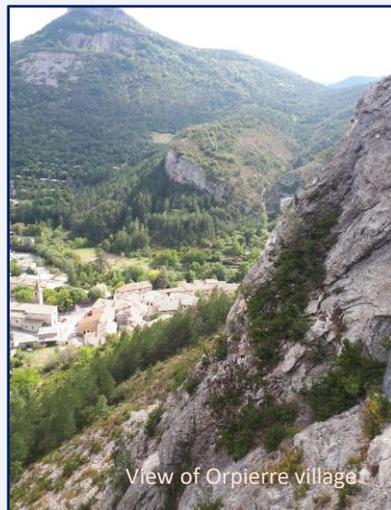


*Andy having a nose bleed!*

We had a fabulous three weeks or so on our travels which at times we thought might not be possible due to the wretched virus. There was the lovely wedding and valuable time with family in Belgium. Our walking experiences in Chamonix couldn't have been better and we have some fantastic photos to help us remember the amazing scenery. Our four days by the **Lac du Bourget** were idyllic and it was great to catch up with friends climbing in **Orpierre**. All in all we feel privileged to have been able to get away from the UK at this difficult time and have this fantastic experience.



Karen climbing at Chateaux



View of Orpierre village

**DAVE**

# Croglin fell

## open and wild countryside

Wanderers-Rob Lewis, Christine Barbier,  
Chris Campbell and Andy Dunhill.

*S*econd of July. The whole team turned up in Croglin for a Pennine walk. After consulting the map, we made our way out of the village to a junction where a minor road led to the start of the route. We were again made aware of restrictions put in place by the shooting industry - very different from our more usual haunts in the Lakes.

### ***SHOOTING LODGE***

Our way led steeply uphill along a broad track before we made our way along a valley bottom enclosed

by hills on either side. Before us in the distance was what appeared to be a modern and sumptuous shooting lodge surrounded by a newly planted grove of trees - this was rather bizarre in appearance being in the middle of nowhere without even a track to it. We followed the direction of a wall up the fellside to meet another track and upon arrival at a gateway, Andy and Chris C consulted the map once more.

We took a path leading steeply up to a broad open fellside - a vast wet expanse of peat hag with plentiful

birdlife - we even disturbed an owl - but it was heavy going underfoot.

Christine, probably more sensibly than the rest of us, declared that she was going back to a large cairn which we had passed en route, but Andy and Chris went on to find the top point which was their destination where I joined them rather more slowly.

fell would be a bad place to be in mist.

This was a walk in open and wild countryside which enabled striding out over sometimes difficult ground. When we returned, we worked out that we had covered over eleven miles.



**Rob**

## ***SOAKING OPEN WILDERNESS***

The whole party reassembled at the cairn where a late lunch was enjoyed - it was one of the driest spots in a soaking open wilderness. We had not seen anyone else all morning and would not see anyone on our return. This



# FRANK LORD

## AS REMEMBERED BY DOUG BROWN

Frank came from a large farming family on the edge of Bacup. He moved to Cleveleys and lived with his Auntie Lilian and worked at ICI Hillhouses. Being interested in crags and hills he joined the FMC, although when I first met him he was a member of the Mountaineering Association and popped up in their excellent magazine. Unfortunately, the MA was run by a domineering chap who believed that nailed boots were the ultimate and only footwear suitable for rock climbing. They went bust!



Bormio Italy 1985

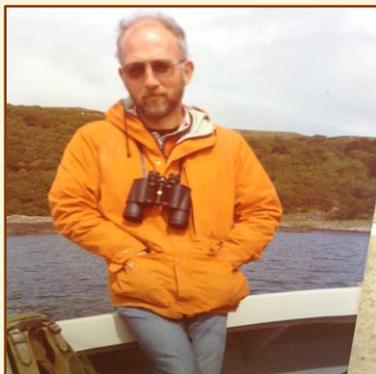
Frank teamed up with Peter Gentil, an experienced Alpine mountaineer, to start the Alpine Centre in Blackpool. This became the go to place for climbing gear and ski equipment. It was a popular venue for those of us who liked to chat about climbing but could not afford the prices. Frank was always very welcoming even though we could rarely afford to buy anything. All this activity at the shop probably led to the formation of the Fylde Ski Club, and a number of FMC members drifted away to skiing. Naturally some of us thought this was a soft option and hardly compared with climbing!

Frank eventually moved to Bormio in Italy where he worked for Alfredo and Elizabeth Cantoni at the Hotel Girasole until they moved to the Hotel Alpi and Golf. He remained with them for the rest of his working life. Many ski holidays were organised to Bormio over numerous years, particularly by Gordon and Joan Heywood. They became known as Heywood's Happy Holidays. Dorothy and I went on many of these trips. Frank, as a sociable person, was very popular. He had a good singing voice which went down well in Italy and many of his friends will remember après ski sessions in La Rocca before skiing down in a torchlight procession, a fiacollata, the excess consumption of beer leading to a number of glorious pile ups on the way down to the hotel.

Frank had an amazing memory for poetry, and many of us have sat entranced as he recited from memory such lengthy poems as Goblin Market and The Highwayman. He also specialised in the amusing nonsense poems of Ogden Nash.

Frank was not at all practical. We once met up in Torridon on a group holiday and Frank, having gone ahead, pitched our shared tent on the edge of a small cliff overlooking a beach. That night we returned from the pub in a rising gale. There were three of us in the tent, with Dorothy in the middle. During the night. In the rising wind, a pole snapped. I was, of course, the one sitting up in my sleeping bag trying to bind the two halves of the pole together.

Heading for the Corryvreckan from Craighouse on Jura.

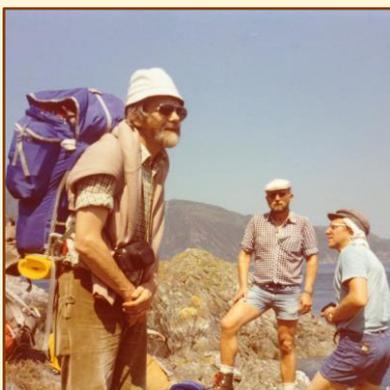


Frank lay in his sleeping bag muttering, "I'm too old for this!" The following morning we retrieved a fair amount of our clothing from the beach below. Happy days!

When Frank retired from Italy he came home and lived in Bacup. He returned to his roots, although many of us wished he had retired to the Fylde Coast where he had so many friends. He had an army of sisters in the Bacup area. Joyce Kent

became a very close friend and together they would sometimes volunteer to warden SMC

West coast of Jura walk with Derek Wilkinson and Doug Brown.



huts in Scotland during the summer months. Unfortunately Joyce died after a short illness and we felt this was a great loss for Frank to suffer.

My abiding memory of Frank is his humour. He was, without doubt, one of the wittiest people I have ever met. He was the life and soul of any group, as others will remember when he was able to turn up for the annual Old Lags

Meeting at Stair. Frank was a kind and generous man and often helpful to younger people. He was a loyal supporter of the FMC and a genuine friend to the club and its members. His passing is sad but the memories he leaves behind enrich the lives of many others. Frank died at a care home just outside Settle, situated in beautiful countryside and in full view of the hills he loved so much loved so much.

Back at the campervan after walking the west coast Jura walk.



**DOUG**

# Frank Lord

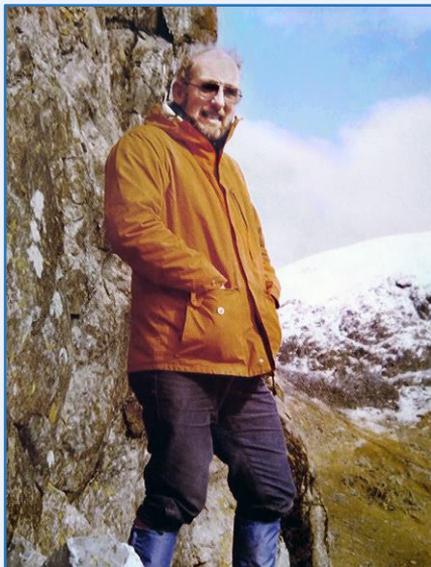
## MARTIN DALE'S MEMORIES

We have recently heard the news that Frank Lord has passed away. Frank has been absent from Club activities for a number of years, so many members would not have had the pleasure of meeting one of the true Club characters.

Frank was one of those larger than life blokes! A very kind, generous and very funny man. He always had a joke or story to tell.

Back in the early 70's, a wonderful thing happened in Blackpool! A climbing shop opened on Church Street. It was called "The Alpine Centre" and it was run by two blokes with beards and glasses. One of them was Frank Lord, the other Peter Gentil. My Mum used to pass the shop regularly on her way to the shops in town. She often called in to plead with Frank and Pete to give me a job. Well, eventually her persistence paid off, because they offered me a job for the summer holidays. I started working there just before my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. I mostly just made brews and folded up the sweaters. I also used to have to go out every morning and swill the front of the shop down. As it was on the way home from the pubs in town you never knew what you might find out there! And the local dogs also liked to use it as a toilet!

I had been down to try and join the FMC on a number of occasions, but I'd never found anyone about down at the Rangers club house where the club met in those days. It was Frank who arranged to meet me down there and introduce me to the club. Typically, on the appointed night, there was only a suited and booted Andy Dunhill there. Everyone else was out on a pub crawl and Andy was just waiting to be picked up to join them. Nevertheless, it was Frank who was instrumental in helping me to join the club, something I will always be eternally grateful for. He also used to take myself and other staff members up to the Lakes regularly on a Sunday, or straight after work on a Saturday evening.



Frank was a very funny guy. He used to nip out for the Evening Gazette every afternoon and used to enjoy reciting the poems from the births and deaths column. He was able to recall these at will depending on the occasion. I got to meet all the club characters who regularly popped into the shop for brews. I was stood there one day behind the counter and Frank said “look at that there”. There was a bespectacled bloke with his nose pressed up against the window peering in. “Like a rat staring through a shithouse brush” said Frank. It was Donald Nicol! As soon as he entered the shop, both Frank and Pete legged it into the back, leaving me to deal with the none the wiser Donald.



Frank liked his Boddingtons! He was a regular in the Thatched House in Poulton and could be found there on most nights. He introduced many folks he met there to the great outdoors. Chris Thistlethwaite to name but one. You could always count on him being in the pub, and he would always welcome you if you just turned up for the evening for a few beers.

Frank was a very good skier. Eventually he quit the Alpine Centre and went to work in Italy at his friends hotel in Bormio. Gordon Heywood organised many a holiday there for club members and friends. Frank proving a great host and also a great help as a ski coach out on the piste.



Frank was a regular at the Owd Lags meets up in the Lakes. He was also a regular at the club dinner. He was a prolific Scottish island ticker too and spent many a holiday walking and exploring the islands.

I have so many great stories I could tell about Frank, too many to mention here! I will however be forever grateful to Frank for introducing me to the club, to pubs, great beer and many friends.

**MARTIN**

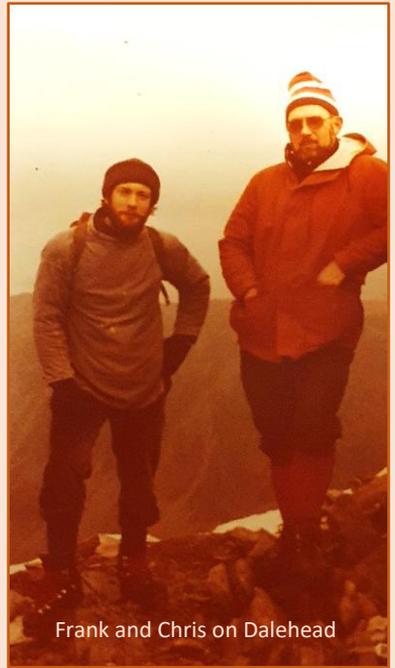
# FRANK LORD

Chris Thistlethwaite's memories.

**F**rank Lord, what a gentleman! It was through Frank that I learned about and joined the FMC, and it was Frank who took myself and my now wife Joy under his wing, spending many days and weeks in his company.

It was in the days of yore, the early 70's, that I first met Frank. He and his Ski Club contemporaries used to attend the same 'well' as my friends and I-The Thatched House in Poulton, where we would partake of the 'elixir of life', Boddingtons Bitter. It was there also that Frank introduced me to a number of club members with whom I was to spend so much time with in the future. The likes of Tommy Carroll with whom I went walking, Brian Wilkinson who I went fell-running with and Paul Reid and Martin Dale, the climbing members of the club, and it is through them that I met and became friends with many others.

Frank used to have a Blue VW van in which he'd chauffeur Joy and I up to the Lakes in order to go walking and I remember at least one trip sharing the ride with Martin who was going climbing. I had many enjoyable days walking in the Lakes with Frank and he was always fun to be with. He had a wealth of short ditties which he would recite at opportune times during the day. He took us to Islay in Scotland for a week where we scaled the Paps of Jura and sailed the Corryvreckan amongst other things. He also invited me on a week's visit to Rhum in Scotland but at the last minute we realised that my week off work didn't coincide with his trip. Instead, Frank arranged for me to meet up with a group of his friends a week later. I hitched up to Mallaig where I met Dougie Brown, Derek Smith and George Parker with whom I spent an excellent week, well, apart from the midges. We met Frank at the dock as he was returning from Rhum, and he suggested that we spend a night in a cave on the opposite side of the island from the camp site. We did this a few days later and found that he'd left us a



Frank and Chris on Dalehead

'Bod Can', 4 pints of Boddingtons Bitter. How good was that! In later years I'd meet him at the 'Gentlemen's' weekends and the Club Dinners where we'd reminisce about days gone by.

It was very sad when he became too ill to attend these events and even more sad to learn that he'd passed away. He was a good friend to me and many others and will be greatly missed.



Frank Chris and Freddie Wilson on a Jura pap

## CHRIS

\*\*\*\*\*

## Jennifer Sharples

It is with sadness that we have to report the death of one of our long time members Jennifer Sharples. She was diagnosed with cancer last June, had chemotherapy, but died at the beginning of November. She had been able to go out walking and cycling and seeing the family until near the end. Our condolences go out to her husband Dave Sharples and their children. Dave has been a member since the 1960's.

## John Wiseman

# WOODY'S WEEKENDS IN WALES

(IN BETWEEN  
'LOCKDOWNS')

With Dave Wood and Hal Rzdakiewicz.

Hal on Fanfare 2

## ANGELSEY

I've always found sea cliff climbing stupidly compelling. One minute sea and sand and then all waves and foam - quite often with no way down!

September held promises. We thought we might bubble our way down to Pembroke. But gone were those 1990's days when 30+ of us would magic-away all obstacles.

### *Invitation*

Rust was gathering on the limbs when Hal and I got an invitation from our two



Hal on Fanfare 3

Moroccan regulars (Ron and Jim) to climb on Anglesey. September 12<sup>th</sup> sounded fine... but hang on.... wasn't

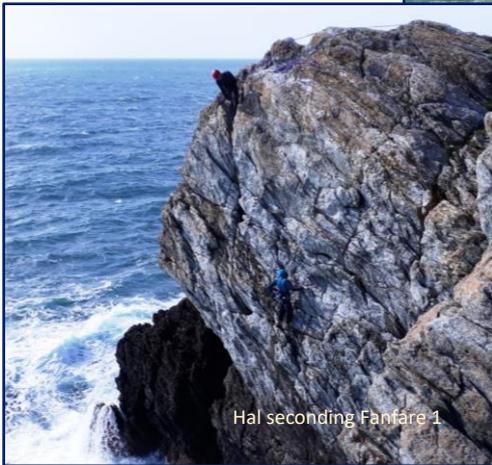
that the morning after we were due a beer swilling session with Andy Blaylock (on leave from the USA), Glen Brookes and Nobby Dale?

Six in the morning came ridiculously early. It was only with a Truckie's breakfast at Holyhead RoadKing that we were able to entertain the idea of hauling our jelly-like arms down to Rhoscolyn. As well as offering some testing classics, this

tricky exposed down-climbing before reaching a wave washed gully.



Nifty wave dodging



Hal seconding Fanfare 1

area of Gogarth North was reputed to provide some amenable grades with scrambling approaches. Since Ron and Jim had become the area's latest activists we took their word.

Described as 'alarmingly steep,' the continuously overhanging Fanfare HVS (4c) led over the sea in stunningly exposed positions and it was a good one to second. Done for the day we checked out Jim who had just taken a monster flier off the supposedly well-protected Centrefold

(E3 5c) giving his second some hanging time with the nut picker.



## *Wave dodging tactics!*

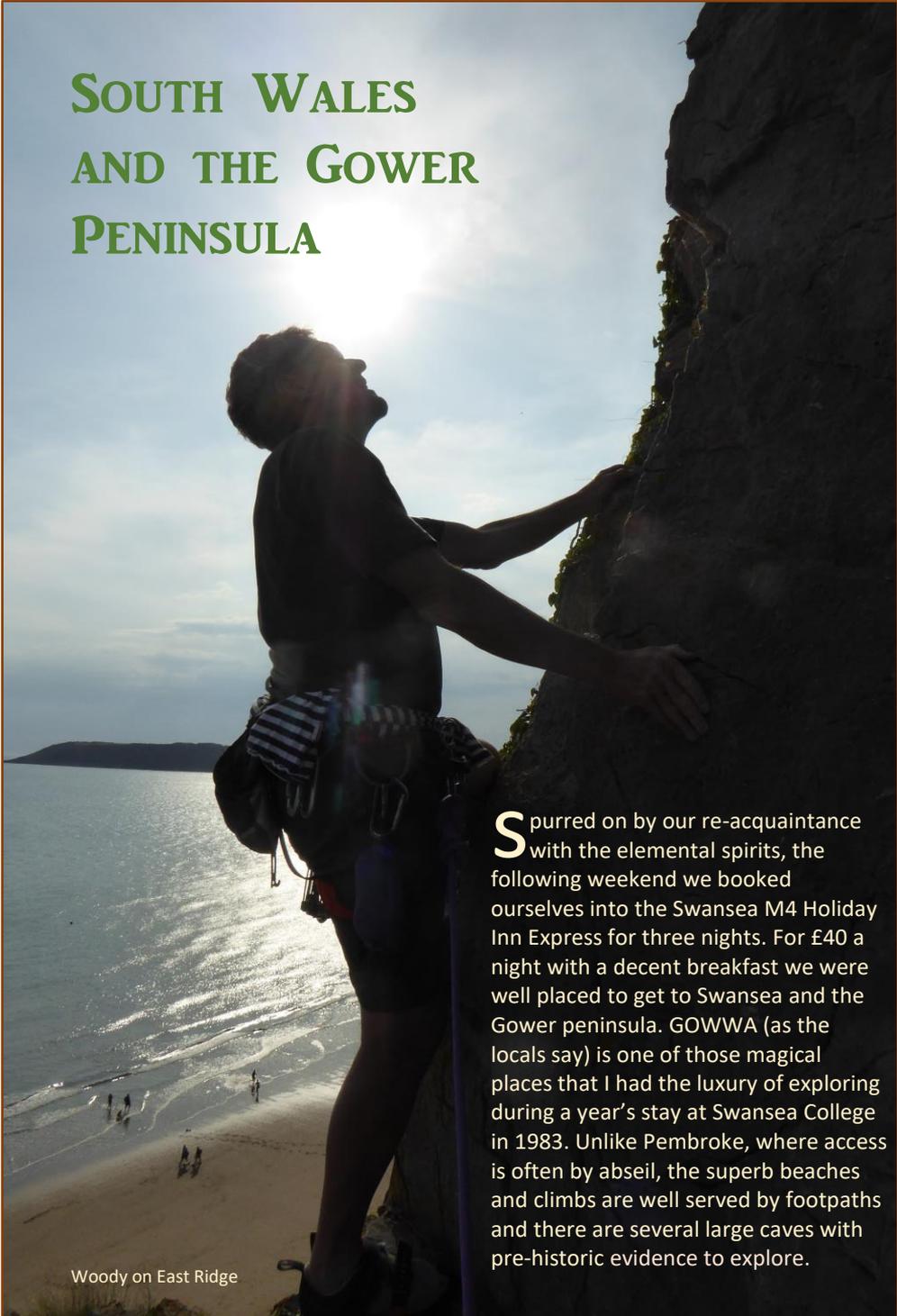
The amenable VS that Ron selected was approached by a reasonable down climb and traverse but with some nifty wave-dodging tactics required. The climb went well with only one stiff pull. Ron thought he would then take us up a hidden gem. This demanded some

## *Gale force winds!*

Beers and medals followed in the Paddler's Rest but our plans for a full climbing weekend were abruptly ended by gale force winds on Sunday. This allowed only a scramble down to the bottom of North Stack Wall and some seal watching.

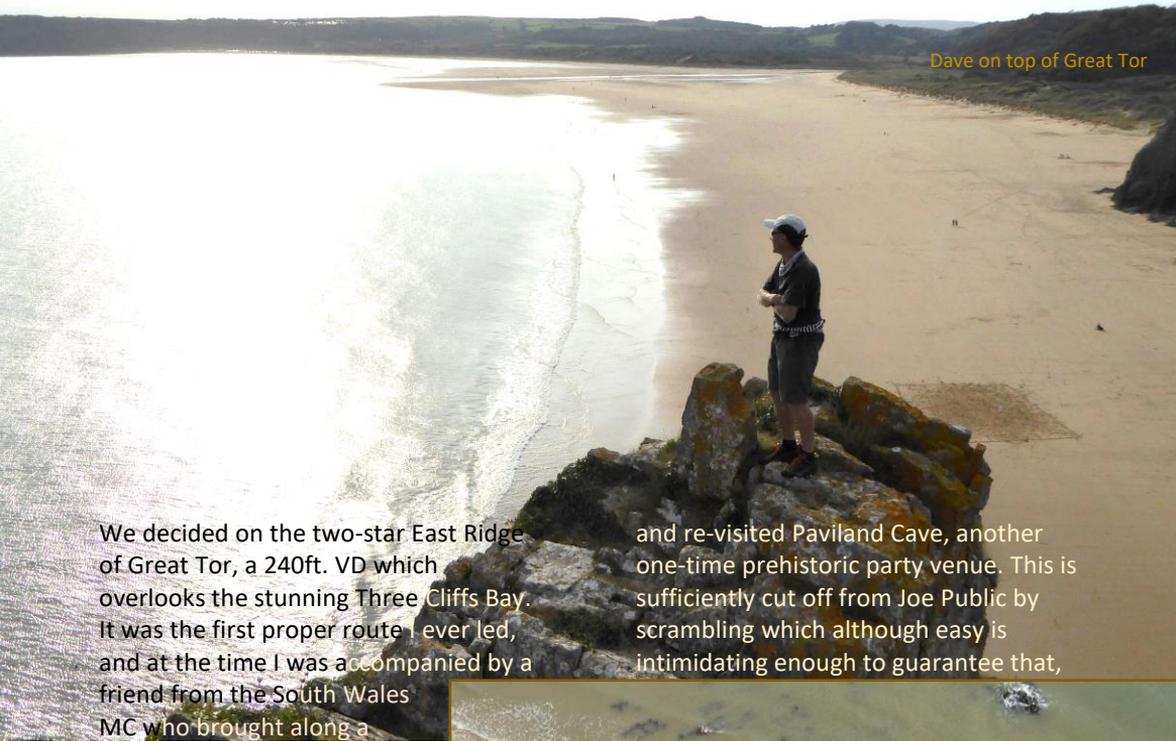
**DAVE.....**

# SOUTH WALES AND THE GOWER PENINSULA



**S**purred on by our re-acquaintance with the elemental spirits, the following weekend we booked ourselves into the Swansea M4 Holiday Inn Express for three nights. For £40 a night with a decent breakfast we were well placed to get to Swansea and the Gower peninsula. GOWWA (as the locals say) is one of those magical places that I had the luxury of exploring during a year's stay at Swansea College in 1983. Unlike Pembroke, where access is often by abseil, the superb beaches and climbs are well served by footpaths and there are several large caves with pre-historic evidence to explore.

Woody on East Ridge



We decided on the two-star East Ridge of Great Tor, a 240ft. VD which overlooks the stunning Three Cliffs Bay. It was the first proper route I ever led, and at the time I was accompanied by a friend from the South Wales MC who brought along a

friend of considerable girth, resulting in several detours and some use of combined tactics. This time around we aimed for a better ascent and chose the 4c variant (or so said the 1983 guide). I thought we had bitten off more than we could chew and deploying the last vestige of strength from my wobbling Rowntree arms, I just about held on. We rounded off the day with a meal and a pint or two of the splendid Gower Gold at one of my old haunts, The King Arthur Hotel, Reynoldston.



Hal on East Ridge

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should you want an outdoor venue to self-isolate, you could hide for the duration. This was also the scene of more rope assisted levitation in the late 1980s when John Hickman, Paul Taylor and I unsuccessfully attempted to pull a certain young lady through the eyelet hole in the capping stone of Shelob's Cave HS. \*\*

### LEVITATION

The following day we explored more

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE WYE VALLEY

Wondering how we might round off our excellent long-weekend, we decided to head east along the M4 to Shorn Cliff, a long limestone crag hidden in the heavy woodland overlooking Tintern Abbey and the Wye estuary.

After some foraging we landed at the Great Central Cave Area. Someone was on Bitter Battle Tears and the belayer was following his leader's movements attentively. It took me instantly back to the mid-1980s when Martin Bennett, Phil Morris and I had stood in exactly the same position. On that occasion an abseiling climber dislodged a stone which hit the belayer on the forehead creating a trickle of blood which ran down his cheek. On reaching the ground the climber said "Well that couldn't have been done by a better bloke." After what seemed like an eternity, but was really only a few seconds, the silence was broken. "How do you mean?" asked the injured party. With no apology or expression of concern the culprit said "Well it just so happens that I am a plastic surgeon and if you take this card to Bristol hospital my mate who is on duty will fix you up." On reflection I thought it was only by a stroke of luck that the climber did not find himself the subject of his friend's services!

We eyed-up the three-star Laughing Cavaliers 100ft HVS - a route I had done during our first visit. The guidebook waxed lyrical: "Another brilliant route typifying the best of Shorn Cliff and

quintessentially British climbing! Exquisite climbing with perfect protection up the very centre of the slab." Despite its kudos and popularity it was not too polished but required some long some long reaches which is perhaps why the grades hovered between 5a and 5b in different guidebooks. I couldn't help thinking that maybe the way forward in such circumstances was to follow Pat Littlejohn's frequent practice of splitting the grades (5a/b).

Choosing the scenic route for our way home we managed to grab some chips in Ross on Wye and drain a welcome pint before closing time in Sandbach. The trip had been the perfect antidote to the monotony of Lockdown.

## DAVE WOOD



Paviland area Gower

# Whitbarrow Scar

day walk post 1<sup>st</sup> "Lockdown"

Whoopee! (Ed)

*with John Wiseman-  
meet coordinator.*

*17<sup>th</sup> September 2020*

## *Rules*

Well, following the lockdown the guidance and rules were relaxed and changed, then after more changes the BMC advised that groups of up to 30 could meet for outdoor sporting/recreational activities, subject to conditions. The new "rule of six" therefore did not apply to such organised groups. So I looked at the risk assessment that you had to complete, and after advice from Tony Jackson who was used to such things with Wyre Council, decided that it was possible. An example of ways to cope is where you have to carry PPE in case you need to give first aid: well, a waterproof put on back to front is an acceptable substitute for a medical gown. Most of the rest of the boxes to tick were what you do normally, the only extras were Covid rules such as distancing and using hand sanitiser.

Keen walkers-John and June, Kev Ebbrell, Tony Jackson and Chris Fry.



I sent out a message to members “A day walk on Whitbarrow, starting from the small car park near Raven’s Lodge.” This was at short notice because I wanted fine weather and was watching the weather forecast to find the date.

We only had four takers plus June and I, and three of them turned up Kev,



Tony and Chris, the fourth was unavoidably taken elsewhere. So, after the mandated “Covid briefing” off we set up the hill, after a while someone said “I have left my water behind” so we waited while they went back for it. It did us a good turn

because after speculating on the geology of the place we saw two Peregrine Falcons flying over the cliff top, then two ravens enjoying some aerobatics in the sunshine.

## *Not cows!*

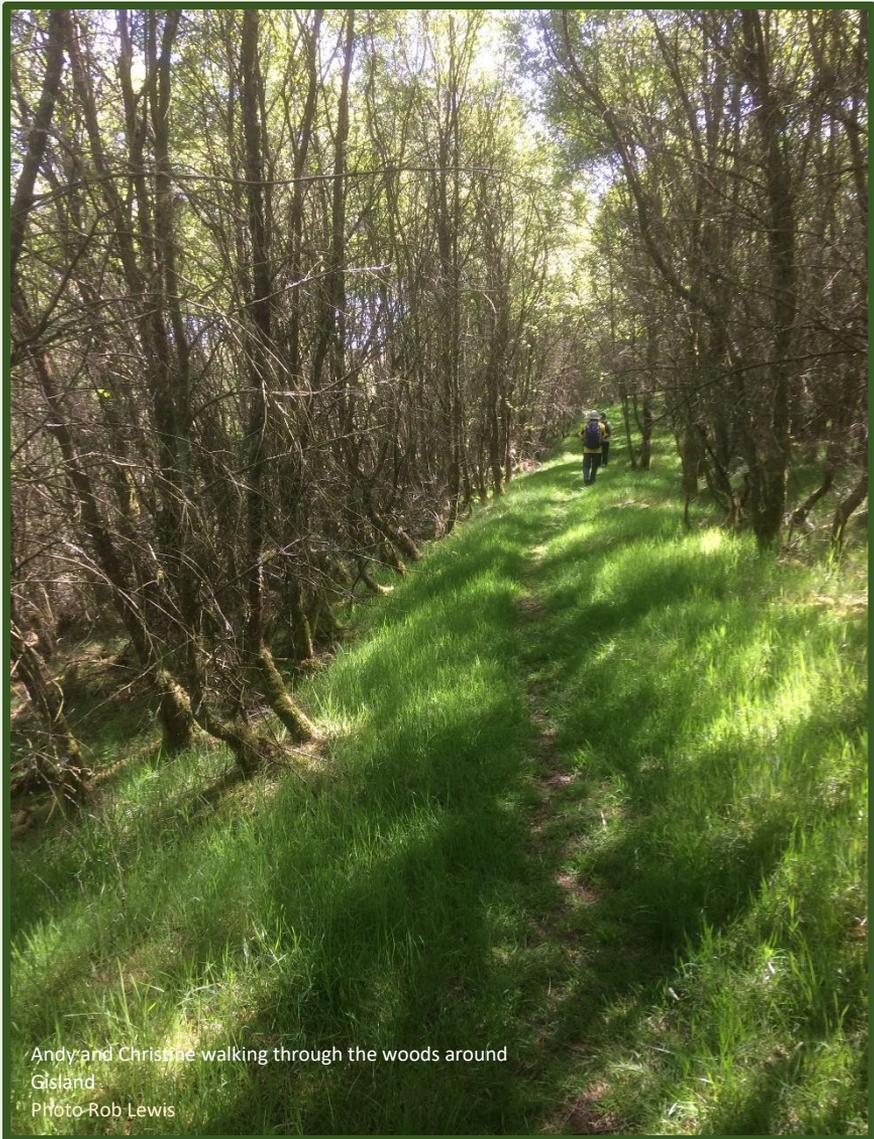
It was nice to be out chatting to people and enjoying the sunshine and the views. From the summit cairn we headed north to a stile. As we approached the stile our

Covid “keep 2 meters apart” was comprehensively undermined. On the fell there is a small herd of very docile cattle, a heritage breed, introduced as part of the management of the area for the benefit of the wild plants, insects and animals, and they were by the stile. One of our group had an attack of “Moophobia” - squealed like a banshee in a horror movie and grabbed two of us, one each side for protection. *Oh John you do exaggerate! I think cows are lovely-as long as they are the other side of the wall! (Ed)* The cows were not concerned—you could walk right next to them and over the stile and they just calmly looked at you.

We did a circuit of the high ground of the Township Allotment before descending off the limestone to the valley down Bell Rake, through High Park Wood to near Witherslack Hall, then up the steep hillside of Black Yews Scar back up to the summit cairn. After that we ambled back, still in the sunshine across the top so that we could get to the top of the cliff of White Scar and look down on the farm and our parked cars, as well as looking to Ingleborough in the distance and the whole sweep of Morecambe Bay. A good relaxing day out.

After the allotted time had elapsed I could destroy the list of those there with contact details as instructed, then all that remained was to wait for a rainy day to pen a piece for the magazine editor.





Andy and Christine walking through the woods around  
Gisland  
Photo-Rob Lewis

## Fylde Mountaineering Club

Is associated to the British Mountaineering Council

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

