

# West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Newsletter



July 2019

This month's photo: WBMC & BRMC Members climbing in Pembroke, by Pete Poultney

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Hello readers,

Sincere apologies for the late delivery (again!) Huge thanks as always to this month's contributors: Pete Poultney, Jonathan Howells, Dave Jones, Ken Priest, Nigel Tarr, and an especially big thanks to John Edwards for providing all three articles this month!

I'm always looking for things to add to the newsletter, so if you have anything that you'd like to be featured in next month's newsletter - whether you're selling gear, looking for a climbing or walking partner, you've seen an event that members might be interested in, anything at all - send it to [newsletter@wbmc.org](mailto:newsletter@wbmc.org) (or through our website if it's an article) before the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month.

If you've never written an article before, why not give it a go?

Cheers,  
Joe

## The WBMC meeting place



**Horse & Jockey**  
49 Stoney Ln,  
West Bromwich  
B71 4EZ

Join us every Thursday night from 9pm for a chat and a drink.

Note that indoor meets are still at The Cricketer's Arms

**BMC**  
AFFILIATED CLUB

*The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.*

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

Cotswold Discount Code: AF-WBMC -K3

# Noticeboard

## BMC Strategic Plan 2020

The BMC is producing a new Strategic Plan to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, and they're now asking BMC members and partner organisations for their feedback on their new mission, values, strategic themes and enabling activities.

The draft plan identifies five key strategic themes:

- Membership engagement and support
- Access and Conservation
- Education and skills
- Leadership and development
- Competition climbing

These are underpinned by five enabling activities, the essential building blocks that must be in place to enable the BMC to operate effectively:

- Finance
- People
- Infrastructure
- Governance
- Collaboration

You can read the summary document at:

[https://thebmc.co.uk/media/files/Strategic%20Plan\\_2020\\_summary%20doc\\_02.pdf](https://thebmc.co.uk/media/files/Strategic%20Plan_2020_summary%20doc_02.pdf)

You can read the draft strategic plan at:

[https://thebmc.co.uk/media/files/Strategic%20Plan\\_draft%20text\\_30%20Aug%202019.pdf](https://thebmc.co.uk/media/files/Strategic%20Plan_draft%20text_30%20Aug%202019.pdf)

Finally, the survey is available at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BLYP8NJ>

*You will need your membership number for the survey.*

## Free Solo Documentary

*Professional rock climber Alex Honnold attempts to conquer the first free solo climb of famed El Capitan's 900-metre vertical rock face at Yosemite National Park.*



Photo from nationalgeographic.com

You can watch the Trailer for Free Solo on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urRVZ4SW7WU>

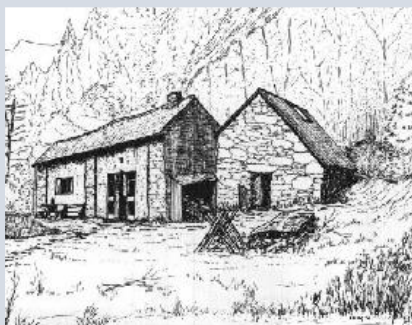
*Free Solo* is available on All4 (Channel 4's streaming service), Amazon Video, or you can buy the DVD from the official website: <https://www.freesolofilm.co.uk>

## Social media posts can invalidate your Home Insurance!

Just a note to jet-setting members: if you publicly post photos of your holiday or mention the dates you will be away on social media and your home is burgled, your claim could be thrown out by the insurers.

The Financial Ombudsman is concerned that many policyholders do not realise that insurers might check their social media accounts. It warns that anyone who does not keep their details private is particularly at risk of having their claims denied. This is because an insurer might consider they have not done enough to guard against the theft, by making such information public. Always check your privacy settings before posting! Limit your post visibility to friends only!

## Hut donations



*Note the new prices:*

Members - £6.00  
 Guests - £10.00  
 5-17 - £4.00  
 Under 5s - Free

Stamped addressed envelopes are provided in the hut for payment.

## To book

Email our new Hut Secretary Pete Poultney:

[hut-secretary@wbmc.org](mailto:hut-secretary@wbmc.org)

Please contact Pete *before* going to the hut.

WBMC members can purchase a hut key from Pete at a donation of £4

# Coming up

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 – 8pm  
BMC Midlands Area Meeting



Venue:  
The Free@Last,  
49 Nechells Park Road,  
Birmingham  
B7 5PR

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/cb9Xxej1pnqau1RH7>

Those who would like to use the climbing wall at "Free@Last" can do so from 18:30, cost is £7. For more info phone 0121 327 5959 or [www.freetatlast.st](http://www.freetatlast.st)

Following the meeting there will be complimentary refreshments, and a talk by guest speaker Emma Twyford from Llanberis who represented the GB team for around 8 years. She is one of the route setters who set up 'Creative Climbing' to inspire more ladies into Sport Climbing by providing beginner workshops.

16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>rd</sup> February 2020  
Scottish Week

Jonathan Howells: I have secured the Ben Nevis Inn hotel and leisure club for 2020 in Fortwilliam, but I could only get Sunday to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb to 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.

## Prices

- £35 pppn for twin/double
- £14 extra pn single room supplement.
- Children aged up to 4 are free.
- Children between the ages of 5 to 14 are half price when sharing with 2 full paying adults.

*Unfortunately the hotel is not allowing dogs to stay over.*

To secure a place I require 1 nights stay deposit.

You can pay me several ways:

PayPal: my email is [Jhowells42@gmail.com](mailto:Jhowells42@gmail.com).

Cheque: made payable to J. Howells

Because now I can scan cheques on my mobile phone, this will make it easier for me. This year I handed back used cheques to the original owners so they could destroy the cheques themselves if anyone is worried about this method.

Or you can pay with online banking – please text me and I will give you my bank details.

If you want to share a room I will try and help you and pair you up with someone but I can't guarantee I will be able to. You will need to find someone before paying a deposit.

If you are new members and unsure about what to expect please don't hesitate to contact me:

07821544407 – [Jhowells42@gmail.com](mailto:Jhowells42@gmail.com)



Photo by Mike Smith



# Who did what, when for WBMC? Part 1

An updated compilation of past WBMC Officers and committee members By John Edwards



It was intended to mark the occasion of the Club's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by printing a small book, covering the various aspects of the Club's history and activities over these years. John Henk put together details of the committees from 1952 to 1977 in preparation for this book but it never materialised and only some of the posts featured in the Club's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book.

John kept the document up to date until 1986, when he resigned from the committee due to illness. Thanks to his diligence in recording, it has been possible to bring the list up to date for posterity. However, I fear the list is still not quite 100% complete as a note at the bottom of my file says '1989/90 & 1996/97 to do!' Can anybody help with a meet card for those years?

## PRESIDENT

Harry Barlow 1956 - 1975  
 Bert Wright 1975 - 1980  
 Pat Tweedale 1980 - 1987  
 Peter Woodward 1987 - 1992  
 Carol Franklin 1992 - 1997  
 Geoff Robinson 1997 - 2002  
 John 'Mitch' Mitchell 2002 - 2004  
 Bob Duncan 2005 - 2010  
 Mike Smith 2010 - 2015  
 John Eadon 2015 - 2020

## CHAIRMAN

W.H.P. Wright 1951 - 1954  
 H. Young 1954 - 1956  
 V. Evans 1956 - 1958  
 E. H. Hutton 1958/59  
 G. Hughes 1959 - 1961  
 F. B. Purcell 1961 - 1964  
 Pat Tweedale 1964 - 1966  
 Wally Cheesbrough 1966 - 1968 & 1970/71  
 A. Walker 1968 - 1970 & 1971/72  
 M. Bamford 1972/73  
 Bob Duncan 1973/74  
 John Henk 1974 - 1976 & 1980 - 1982  
 J. Shaw 1976 - 1978  
 T. Bamford 1978 - 1980  
 Geoff Robinson 1982 - 1984  
 Ray Mullett 1984 - 1987  
 Hugh Gore 1987 - 1989  
 Ken Priest 1989 - 1992  
 Pete Goddard 1992/93  
 Nev Tandy 1993 - 2005  
 John Edwards 2005 - 2008  
 Geoff Hill 2008 - 2011  
 Andy Brown 2011 - 2016  
 David Jones 2016 →

## MAGAZINE EDITOR

*(Not listed on meet card until 1998)*

John Cracknell 1989 - 1991 ("Highish")  
 Iris Cooksey 1991 - 1998  
 Sara Perks 1998 - 2002  
 John Edwards 2002 - 2005  
 Andy Snape 2005 - 2006  
 Geoff Hill 2006 - 2008  
 Lesley Knapper 2008 - 2011  
 Mark Wood 2011 - 2015  
 Joe Priest 2015 →

*Founder member Peter Woodward used to duplicate and distribute the Newsletter until his death in 1995.*

## SECRETARY

Pete Woodward 1951 - 1954  
 Miss A. Jones 1954/55  
 Edward (Ted) Hutton 1955 - 1957  
 Mrs H. Knight 1957/58  
 Pat Tweedale 1958 - 1961  
 M. Powell 1961 - 1963  
 John Henk 1963 - 66 & 1968-74  
 A. Walker 1966/67  
 Nigel Tarr 1967/68  
 Miss Carol Harris 1974 - 1978  
 Mrs Carol Franklin (nee Harris) 1978 - 1989  
 Bob Lister 1989 - 1992  
 Francis Rogers 1992 - 1997  
 Sue Judge 1997 - 1999  
 Iris Cooksey 1999 - 2000  
 Dave Hellyer 2000 - 2002  
 Sara Perks 2002 - 2007  
 John Eadon 2007 - 2009  
 Paul Brindley 2009 - 2012  
 Mel Evans 2012/13  
 Barbara Challinor 2013 - 2016  
 Sue Goddard 2016 - 2019  
 Jan Cox 2019 →

## Who did what, when for WBMC? (continued)

## HUT SECRETARY

Pat Tweedale 1959 (Hut Fund Administrator)  
 Mike Powell 1964/65  
 Graham Ball 1965/66 & 1970/71  
 Jack Dodd 1966/67  
 Keith Dawes 1967/68  
 Geoff Fellows 1968/69  
 Mick Bamford 1969/70  
 Mick Wearing 1971/72  
 John Wagstaff 1972 - 1974  
 Jake Shaw 1974 - 1976  
 John Latham 1976 - 1979  
 Geoff Brown 1979/80  
 Stan Cox 1980 - 1982  
 Ken Priest 1982 - 1986  
 Malcolm Collins 1986 - 1988  
 Graham Socket 1989/90  
 Ron Puncheon 1990 - 1992  
 Bob Franklin 1992 - 1998  
 Roger Boulton 1998 - 2000  
 Mike Smith 2000 - 2002  
 Mike Thompson 2002 - 2014  
 Alison Whitehead 2014 - 2019  
 Pete Poultney 2019 →

## TREASURER

J. Gardener 1951 - 1953  
 C.R. Vaughan 1953 - 1954  
 Frank W. Thompson 1954 - 1955  
 Pete Henk 1955 - 1960  
 T. Offer 1960 - 1961  
 Pat Tweedale 1961 - 1964  
 Wally Cheesebrough 1964 - 1966  
 Nigel Tarr 1966 - 1968  
 K. Cooke 1968 - 1981  
 Pete Goddard 1981-86 & 1990-93  
 Ron Ralphs 1986 - 1990  
 Sue Thackery 1993 - 1995  
 Margaret George 1995-2000  
 John Eadon 2000-2007  
 Mel Evans 2007 - 2012  
 Paul Brindley 2012 - 2019  
 Elizabeth Reynolds 2019 →

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

*(POST CREATED IN 1993)*

Les Elsmore 1993 - 1995  
 Mike Lay 1995 - 1999  
 Mike Smith 1999 - 2000  
 Debbie Redding 2000 - 2003  
 Jonathan Howells 2003 - 2007  
 Alison Whitehead 2007 - 2010  
 Andrew Mitchell 2010 - 2014  
 Joanna Cheung 2014 - 2018  
 Hazel Webb 2018 →

## COACH SECRETARY

*(Role created in 1984)*

John Davies 1984 - 1989  
 Gordon Judge 1989/90  
 Phil Walters 1990/91  
 Mike Smith 1991 - 1999  
 Steve Redding 1999 - 2001  
 Steve Popple 2001 - 2003  
 Mike Smith 2003 - 2007  
 Nigel Tarr 2007 →

## VICE CHAIRMAN

G.Hughes 1961 - 1963  
 F.B.Purcell 1964 - 1965  
 Pat Tweedale 1966 - 1967  
 Wally Cheeseborough 1968 - 70 1971 - 72  
 A.Walker 1970-71 & 1972-73  
 M. Bamford 1973 - 1974  
 Bob Duncan 1974 - 1976  
 John Henk 1976 -78 & 1982-84  
 J. Shaw 1978 - 1982  
 Geoff Robinson 1984 - 89 & 91 - 93  
 Hugh Gore 1989 - 1991  
 Ken Priest 1993 - 1994  
 Pete Goddard 1994 - 2005  
 Nev Tandy 2005 - 2008  
 John Edwards 2008 - 2011, 2013 - 2015  
 Geoff Hill 2011 - 2013  
 Mike Smith 2015 - 2016  
 Graeme Stanford 2016 - 2019  
 David 'Geordie' Hind 2019 →

## PRESS SECRETARY

Mr Vaughan 1954/55  
 Ron Ralphs 1962 - 1964  
 G. Ball 1964/65  
 Owen Tandy 1965/66  
 K. Cooke 1966/67  
 R.Standing 1967 - 1970  
 M. Hawker 1970/71  
 Mrs M. Blakemore 1972/73  
 L.W. (Les). Elsmore 1973 - 1975  
 J. Latham 1976  
 Mrs B. Williams 1976 - 1978  
 G. Jones 1979 - 1981  
 A. Mugwagwa 1981/82  
 V.Lopes 1982 - 1984  
 Hugh Gore 1985 -1987  
 The post seems to have lapsed after this.

# A letter to members from Captain Cag

By John Edwards



Dear Friends (I believe I might even be able to call some of you 'fans'!) You can imagine how amazed I was to encounter your old chairman, John Edwards at the *Bergerie de Radule* at the end of June. It's been many years since we last met and during that interval I've become increasingly comfortable living in and around the old transhumance routes in Corsica, enjoying their wonderful climate & wines, walking amongst the granite spires & swimming in the pools dotted along the mountain streams, plus stroking the odd mouflon. The scenery is great, the food basic but tasty and the Pietra beers are good.

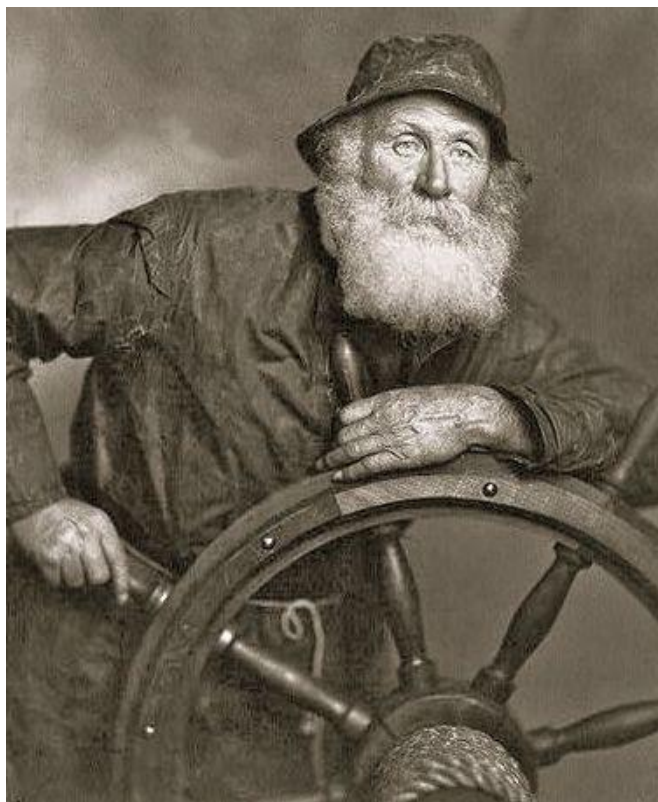
However, I do miss helping you deal with your problems and questions and feel it was a great honour and privilege that you were prepared to entrust me with your most intimate and personal problems. If any of you still have problems with your love life, or need help with other matters that are being a trial or tribulation, please remember I'm still around and prepared to help - just send your problems to me via committee member John, because I have finally entrusted him with my email address since he has promised, on pain of death, that he would never reveal it to anybody - not even the HMRC or the UK's counter terrorism police - and 'No' - it wasn't me who spilled the beans on Sir Kim Darroch's emails, although of course I do still have friends in high places in the British Government.

I was pleased to hear from John that West Brom MC as a club is still thriving, but was shocked to hear that support for the coach meets has declined to dangerously low levels. The WBMC coach meets are famous around the world, even in Corsica, and some of my friends have told me their great regret at not being able to join you on them. It would indeed be a great shame if their existence was threatened because, to put it bluntly, there were not enough bums on seats! You never know what you've lost until it's gone so I urge all my West Brom MC friends and fans to support the coaches. As an incentive, I urge you to tell Nigel when you book that "Captain Cag told you to support the coach" and, as an incentive to do this, I'll make sure the 500<sup>th</sup> person to say the magic words is rewarded with a fine bottle wine, courtesy of my Sicilian Mafia friends.

Well that's all for now but before I go I know some of you are concerned by the increasing amounts of fake news around these days. I recently heard that as of 24/4/19, the Donald has made 10,111 false or misleading claims in the previous 828 days. Apparently he does it to signal his contempt for the establishment, which subliminally pleases his supporters. Anyway I was recently asked who takes the photographs for the Fake News reports. I think it's no secret when I say they are Faux Tographers (boom boom!) In turn I asked them what fake news and empty

HP ketchup bottle have got in common? They were flummoxed! Easy I said "No sauce!" (get it?)

Which reminds me: I came across a penguin in Bastia recently? He was driving to the shops when all of a sudden his engine starts running really badly and smoke starts pouring from under the bonnet. Luckily, there was a garage right opposite the shops, so he pulls in there. The mechanic said he'd be happy to take a look but wouldn't be able to get around to it for a couple hours. The penguin said "That's no problem" and walked across the street to the shops. There he killed time walking around doing some window shopping, picked up a few Penguin bars and cooled himself down by buying an ice cream cone. After the two hours are up, he goes back to the mechanic and asks "Have you had time to look at my engine?" The mechanic says, "Yeah, it looks like you blew a seal." The penguin says, "Nah, that's just ice cream." TTFN.



# Possibly the Hottest GR 20 on Record

Part 1

By John Edwards



I was first told I would love doing the GR20 by a female colleague at work and then remember Phil Matthews saying something similar when we were on Elbrus together in 2005. He walked it unsupported in 12 days back in 2002 and described how tough it was in a 3 page article in the WBMC November Newsletter. For those who can't remember his account, the GR 20 is widely considered to be the most difficult and one of the most beautiful of all Europe's long distance trails, passing through ca. 200km (125 miles) of remote mountainous wilderness. At least 20,000 attempt the route each year but, according to one guidebook, "barely half manage to complete the whole route." It came about in the 1970's when alpinist Michel Fabrikant linked together ridges, cols and ancient transhumance paths to cross the valleys close to the island's vertiginous spine.

I bought the Paddy Dillon Cicerone guide & David Abram's "Trekking in Corsica" book straight away but other trips and events got in the way of me doing anything concrete about the "Jay-Er Vingt". Spending 2018 helping Carol get through her health problems brought home to me that I wasn't getting any younger and I did wonder if by now maybe my knees wouldn't be up to the 13,500 m (44,250 ft) or so of height gain & loss along the route, so I thought 2019 had to be the year.

I realised that I would only get the green light from Caz if I went with a guided group and thought that Adventure Peaks S to N approach looked the best as it saved the biggest days until the end, whereas KE Adventure threw you in at the deep end by going N to S. The internet showed that KE had just 1 space left on their June/July trek so I phoned Adv. Peaks and asked how many they had booked on their 2019 GR20 trips. They told me I'd be the first if I booked so I said I'd think about it and immediately got on to KE to secure their last space! With hindsight I now think walking N to S is by far the best option as this means one is usually on the shaded western side of the mountainous island spine for the early morning climbs which even then leave you dripping with sweat by 6.30am! Also it's better to attempt the toughest stages when you are relatively fresh and not struggling a little with aches and pains towards the end of the fortnight.

So it was that I met up with 9 others and our guide at Bastia airport at 11 am on Sunday 23rd June, having travelled overnight via Manchester & EasyJet. I soon discovered that I could have spent most of the night in my own bed if I'd realised Flybe do the trip from Birmingham! Our party consisted of:-

**Helen** from High Wycombe - who retired from HSBC 2 years ago.

**Helen** from the Wirral - another ex bank employee who was now a garden designer - & her husband Glenn - Chairman of Gwydyr MC, whose members accidentally kept getting put on our tables at the Ben Nevis Hotel last February!

**Pesh** - an India-born Londoner who runs his own property rental business in the city.

**Martin** - a Wimbledon-loving, Cambridge graduate who, having retired early from British Gas, had been on many treks & holidays all over the world.

**Ramiz** - a 63 year old anaesthetist at Carlisle Hospital. A Bosnian Muslim, he came to the UK in 1974 to escape persecution. Plus there were 3 other medics from the same hospital!

**Jon** from Middlesbrough & his partner Jane from Newcastle were a critical care doctor and nurse & Simon was another doctor who liked long-distance rowing. I discovered half way through the holiday that, like myself, he was also an Antarctic Fid, having spent 15 months or so as the base medic at Halley Bay in 1994.

Our guide was another **Martin** - a young 30-something from Alsace, who worked for 'Corsican Adventure', the company KE use to run their 4 "Real GR20" trips each year. So I was definitely the oldest at 72 + a bit, but strangely, the only males to have hair on their head were me & Martin the guide!

We had all chosen to walk the last week in June & the first in July to hopefully avoid the really crowded peak summer months. Paddy Dillon in the Cicerone guide states that then "the days will be warm, but not too hot" but none of us anticipated the record-breaking 'chaleur' that built up in central France and the Mediterranean this year. Even at 2,000 metres, the shade temperatures had built up to the middle 30's (C) by the afternoon and we even heard that 110°F (43°C) had been recorded at a refuge 2 days ahead of us! Mind you it could have been worse: apparently it rained almost every day last year in June and all we had was 30 minutes of rain on Day 10, with our single afternoon thunder & lightning storm missing the ridge we were on by some distance.





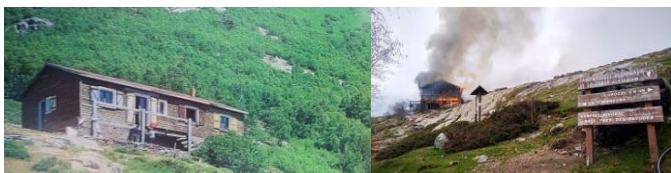
## Possibly the Hottest GR 20 on Record (continued)

With our guide having the responsibility of keeping us safe & on route, "all" we had to do was walk and clamber over the exceeding rough terrain because KE had also sorted out our accommodation each night and pre-booked all our meals. After we spent the Sunday afternoon exploring Calvi and enjoying a group meal in the town centre, we got to bed around 10:30pm and set our alarms for 5am, since it would be breakfast at 5.15 and a 6am short transfer to Calenzana where the route starts the next day.

### Monday (24/6): Calenzana to Refuge d'Ortu di u Piobbu

*Almost 5,000 feet of climbing but not too bad.*

We started walking at 6.30am, most of us carrying 3 litres of water which I had to start sipping straight away it was so warm. I was relieved to find the walking speed seemed fine for me and we stopped for short rests / nibbles about every hour or so. I managed to text Carol a couple of times and after a grassy col it started to get a bit more scrubby. We'd been walking a little under 5 hours when Glenn started to feel a little heady so we stopped in the shade for a little while before carrying on up to the Bocca au Bazzichellu (1486m) where we ate our lunch under some trees. After a few more ups and downs, during which we saw a Lammergeier circling overhead, we spotted the tents by the ruined refuge. Yes, Piobbu was burned down about a month before we were due there! Perhaps because of this the food we had that night was the worst of the whole trip. I still felt I had enough energy in my legs to go for a short evening climb (2.5 hrs, 574m ascent) to the summit of Monte Corona (2144m). I was quite disappointed when I approached Martin to tell him this and he said I couldn't under any circumstances do this as he was personally responsible for us all. I did say that I was used to wandering the hills on my own but it made no difference and, not wanting to be thrown off the trip as such an early stage, I decided to sit by the hut ruins watching the antics of the lizards on the hot rocks and the sun gradually setting over Calvi before heading off to bivvi outside my tent.



Left to right: Before the fire, the fire on 4<sup>th</sup> May, and the aftermath on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019

### Tuesday (25/6): Refuge d'Ortu di u Piobbu to Carrozu Refuge

#### *The First Day of 'Proper' GR 20 Scrambling.*

Another early start as today's stage involved a rocky ascent into the Cirque de Bonifatu. Warm work as we climbed past the Bergeries de La Mandriaccia (shepherd's summer cottages) so some of us started what would become standard practice, wetting our headgear in a stream. At some granite slabs, Martin demonstrated the recommended method for ascending (small steps leaning slightly forward) and descending (Charlie Chaplin waddle with splayed feet & bent knees) these and told us there'd be lots more, many much steeper, and he wasn't lying!



We climbed into the sunshine and reached the Bocca Piccaia (1950m) at 9:15am. The views on the other side were spectacular – eroded granite cliffs & pinnacles as far as the eye could see. We continued a high level traverse, contouring from one side of the ridge to the other until we reached a grassy col at 12:45pm where we had nibbles before descending into a shaded birch wood where, 50 minutes later, we ate our lunch. Immediately we arrived at the refuge (3:15pm) I doused my head under a cold tap and within half an hour Martin suggested a 15-minute walk down to some river pools for a swim. After my previous night's request I couldn't really refuse and, along with the Helen's & Glenn, had a really refreshing dip before heading back for a very tasty curried soup, pasta with herbs & tomato and chocolate & chestnut cake, all washed down with a glass of red wine. Some of us then dozed & chatted in the shade watching the sun go down before retiring to our tents. I had been allocated a Quetcha tent to myself and, as there was no rock-free ground to bivvi on, I decided to use it.





## Possibly the Hottest GR 20 on Record (continued)

**Wednesday (26/6): Refuge de Carrozu to Haut Asco**  
*Slabs, Slabs and more Slabs: A 'No Poles', hands-free day for me.*

A short but critical day for, if it is wet, the Spasimata Slabs that lead up to the Bocca a i Stagnu (2010m) can be dangerously slippery. I decided to keep my poles on my rucksack so as to have my hands free for the scrambling. We made a relatively late start (7am) and were soon crossing the suspension bridge above the 'swimming' pools of the previous evening. We got 2/3rd way up to the col above a tiny lake in the shade before we had our first stop. The slabs were wonderful and reminded me a bit of Coire a Ghrunnda in the Cuillin, but Greg was being sick, losing body salts & fluid, and at the top of the col (1860m) he almost fainted with dizziness. After a break and load re-distribution we carried on up to the final col, around 400 ft below the summit of A Muvrella (2148m) where we lunched. A relatively short descent brought us to "Le Chalet" – a palatial hotel at Haut Asco ski station – at 3pm, where we enjoyed beers on their sun terrace. Here Martin made the sad but sensible decision that Glenn would have to leave us and have 5 days off to recover before rejoining us for the southern half of the route. After an excellent 4-course dinner, I shopped for souvenirs & wrote some postcards before the luxury of going to sleep in a real bed.

**Thursday (27/6): Haut Asco to Bergeries de Vallone – A Tough Thursday but alas No 'Solitude'!**

What was the highlight of the walk for many people – the 'Cirque de la Solitude' is, alas, not really on the cards these days, thanks to the foolhardiness of a group of walkers back in 2015. There was a red weather warning in place for the 10th June and sure enough clouds built up around mid-day. (photos of the Cirque from the internet are below)



Apparently the guardian at Asco refuge had warned the group about going onto the GR20 that day but they left anyway and another party who spoke to them as they were close to entering the Cirque told them it would be stupid to continue saying "It'll be like in hell there soon" but again they said they would carry on and see what it was like.



At around 11am a small avalanche caused by melting snow (Corsica had experienced 3 weeks of 35°C weather) started a landslide & released enormous boulders and then a mini storm with torrential rain between 3 & 5 pm released more mud & landslides. All the ladders and most of the rungs and chains were swept away, as were the 7 walkers. 4 bodies were found relatively quickly but the final ones were not recovered until 28<sup>th</sup> July & 15<sup>th</sup> August! The route was closed to the public and an alternative route devised. Although the Cirque was re-opened to the public on 14/6/18, there are now no waymarks, ladders or other scrambling aids to help and those that enter need to remember a French geologist's report indicated that many tons of unstable rock & rubble remain poised to collapse in the Cirque. So guided groups now take the slightly longer & higher route which crosses slopes north of Monte Cinto and climbs to the Bocca Crucetta (2450m) before dropping down to the Refuge Tighettu.



Part 2 next month...

# Coach Meet – Stanage

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019

## Depart

07:00 – West Brom. Edward St Car Park (B70 8NL)

07:20 – Penkridge

## Drop off

Ringinglow (SK 290 837)

Upper Burbage Bridge (SK 260 829)

Hooks Carr Car Park (SK 224 828)

## Pick up

Lay by A6187 (SK 220 816)

## Required maps

OS 1: 25 000 Outdoor Leisure No 1 – Dark Peak

OS 1: 50 000 Landranger 110 – Sheffield



Photo from visitpeakdistrict.com

## Fares

Members – £20.00

Guests – £22.00

Under 16's and full-time students – £8.00

To book contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729.

Should you need to cancel do so no later than the Wednesday prior to the coach date or a £5.00 fee will be charged. Fail to turn up and the full coach fare will be expected.

## Suggested routes

### From Ringinglow

Route 1 (~10 miles / 16km, 140m ascent)

Follow the Houndkirk Road South East for a mile before heading South to Houndkirk Hill. Turn West and reach Burbage rock then follow the edge North to Upper Burbage Bridge. Again turn West to the top of Whit Path Moss before following Stanage Edge North West for 2 miles to High Neb. Back track to SK 240843 and follow footpaths back to Hathersage.

### From Upper Burbage Bridge

Route 2 (~11 miles / 17km, 160m ascent)

Head West to White Path Moss then turn North West and follow Stanage Edge, detouring to Stanedge Pole, 3.5 miles, over High Neb, to SK 230874. Turn back on yourself and follow the footpath south to Bamford Edge and the top of Bamford Moor. Go South East to SK 218840 and follow Hurst Clough South to the golf course then turn East and finish at Hathersage.



Photo from mountaintracks.co.uk

Climbers – Fill your boots on Stanage Edge, the premier gritstone edge in Derbyshire. Climbing at all grades. Leave the crags with enough time for the 1.5 mile walk back to Hathersage.



# Coach Meet – Braithwaite

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Please note this is now a normal meet not a long meet

## Depart

07:00 – West Brom. Edward St Car Park (B70 8NL)

07:20 – Penkridge

(Short stop at Charnock Richard Services)

## Drop off

Scales 340268

Keswick Junc (A66/A591) 264244

Braithwaite 236236

## Pick up

Braithwaite 236236

Keswick Coach Station 264234

Scales 340268

## Required maps

OS 1:25 000 Outdoor Leisure

No 4 – The Lakes NW Ennerdale & Derwent

No 5 – The English Lakes NE

## Suggested routes

### Route 1 (~15km / 9.5 miles)

From Scales Farm (340268) follow the path past Mousthwaite Comb (344275) and then turn NE to Scales Tarn (329281). As you arrive Sharp Edge is the obvious on the skyline - this is your next destination. A **GRADE 1 SCRAMBLE**. At the top an easy walk takes you to the top of Blencathra (322275) then continue along the grassy ridge to Knowe Crags (321270). Finally head NW to footbridge over Glenderaterra Beck (296278) then climb to the path junction of the Cumbria Way (293279) Follow this S past Loonscale Crags (293265) and eventually in to Keswick.

### Route 2 (~16km / 10 miles)

Follow the road from the roundabout (264244) to Briar Rigg (267241) and follow the Cumbria Way past a car park (283255) Start climbing steeply to the summit of Little Man (266278) continue on a good path to Skidaw (261291) Descend the very steep West Face of Skidaw to Carlside Tarn (256283) and if time allows walk out to Ullock Pike (245287) Retracing your steps climb to the summit of Carlside (254281) and descend S to Millbeck (256262) Follow the road into Applethwaite and follow the Allerdale Ramble (265255) back into Keswick.

Alternatively: From summit of Carlside (254281) follow Allerdale Ramble S to path junction (253276) take RH fork to wood (250273) follow path S (248269) then E (243269) heading S to Dancing Gate and the road A591 go left a short distance along the road path continuing on opposite side of the road to footbridge (243260) follow path to junction (245251) bear R to footbridge (241248) continue to road A66 short walk to Braithwaite.



Photo from visitcumbria.com

## Fares

Members – £20.00      Guests – £22.00

Under 16's and full-time students – £8.00

To book contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729.

Should you need to cancel do so no later than the Wednesday prior to the coach date or a £5.00 fee will be charged. Fail to turn up and the full coach fare will be expected.

### Route 3 (16-17.5km / 10-11 miles)

#### The Coledale Horseshoe

From Braithwaite follow the road N to car park (225241) ascend steps on R onto the long ridge to Grisdale Pike (199226). Descend the ridge to Hobcarton Crag, following the edge to Hopegill Head (186222). Descend S and then climb over Sand Hill to Coledale Hause (189211) from here walk SW to the top of Grassmore (175204). Leave the summit and continue E over Crag Hill (193203) down the Scar and over Sail. At the col (205205) you have two choices depending on the time available:

17.5km / 11 miles: Ascend Causey Pike (219209) then descend to Stineycroft (233213) this leaves a short walk to Braithwaite.

16km / 11 miles: From the col descend via Stile End (221219) back into Braithwaite.

### Led Walk (~16.5km / 10 miles)

*Join Andrew Brown on his final Nuttall, Hewitt, Wainwright, Simm, Fellranger, Bridge and Buxton & Lewis on Causey Pike!* Leave Braithwaite on the B5292 towards Whinlatter and turn left to follow the footpath along Coledale Beck gradually rising to Force Crag. Continue on and climb steeply to Coledale Hause, turn south and climb even steeper to Crag Hill before swinging east and descend to Sail. Descending east, the route then follows footpaths to Scar Crags and Causey Pike. The onward path is scrambly but not hard enough to be classed as a Grade 1 scramble and drops steeply to Stair. The footpath alongside Newlands Beck provides the route back to Braithwaite. Ascent: 3000' (900m). Some easy scrambling.