

The Yorkshire Mountaineer



Issue 363

November 2014



In this issue ...

- **Ski the Italian Dolomites 2015**
- **The Editor meets climbers Jack and Angela Soper**
- **Flasby Fell Kids Circuit**
- **The Tour De France Grand Depart Yorkshire**
- **Ghost of Ben Alder Cottage**
- **Long hill walks & mountaineering on Ben Nevis**
- **Proposed Winter Meet 2015**



Newsletter of the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club - Founded 1941

Editorial

Congratulations Caroline Phillips for identifying two of the picture locations in the last issue's photo competition as Lakeland slate walls near the Coniston Cottage. You were the first person to send in your answers. The competition in this issue, on the back cover, is to identify YMC members of 1978, compiled by Mary Waters. This picture hangs on the wall in the lounge of the Coniston Cottage. Please send your entries to me.

I am sure some members will say on reading this issue the editor is again writing about the Dolomites. I did ask in an earlier issue for articles about member's favourite places. I have not had any yet.

Included is an article about young climbers. The 'Yorkshire Mountaineer' is not really the place for guides to boulders, an exception has been made for this article. It's about youngsters enjoying climbing outdoors. One man's boulder is another man's mountain. I hope William, Sebastian, and Oliver continue to be interested in the outdoors. We can all thank glaciation for the boulders scattered across the Pennines.

2014 was the year of the cyclist. Yorkshire put on a great show for 'The Tour de France Grand Depart'. Two members have written about their memories of the weekend. Also a good friend of mine, a keen Yorkshire cyclist and climber, as a guest writer tells about his weekend watching the race.

He came up with an amusing end to his article.

The November issue is close to Halloween so I thought the Scottish ghost story worth including. I have recently stayed alone at the Coniston Cottage, there is no truth in the rumour, is there?

Malcolm (Sol) and Jane have written about adventures in the mountains with Brian Murphy. They are frequent contributors and have a trip to Skye waiting to be published. This will appear at the end of February 2015 with a couple of 2014 meet reports.

In November I visited Calgary, for a friend's 70th birthday party. While there I spent a weekend at the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival and was invited to go to the UK equivalent, the 'Kendal Mountain Festival' held at the end of November. How did the events compare? The Banff purpose built conference centre is set in a backdrop of massive snow covered mountains, where if you are out hiking it is necessary to watch out for a lone bear and hope it's not a grizzly. Kendal is a market town on the fringe of the Lake District where the mountains are easily accessible.

The films shown were action packed. I'm amazed how the new generation are diving off peaks, flying over summits, canoeing down massive waterfalls, cycling along ridges, spending days climbing big rock walls in extreme

Editorial cont..



weather conditions. They and their teams have the skills and technology to capture these activities on film. Two of the Brit films, Danny Macskill 'The Ridge' shows mountain biking on the Cuillin Ridge, and the film 'Stone Free' about the free climbing soloist Julian Lines, got whooping and cheering standing ovations. There was plenty of clapping at Kendal but no cheering. At Kendal there was a standing ovation for the premier of Jeff Lowe's film 'Metanoia' about his life story and direct solo route up the North Face of the Eiger.

You will by now have realized that the AGM announcement and agenda, minutes of the committee meetings, list of members, hut rules and other administrative information are not in this issue but have been emailed or posted separately. Forms for nominations for the committee are included.



The club has an excellent treasurer in Ann Morse. Is it about time the club had a Lady President and Vice President? A change for the better! Are there any volunteers willing to take on the role, there's no age restriction? You will have a busy committee to do most of the work. Girls can match men in the outdoor activity world, particularly rock climbing. I saw plenty on film at the film festivals.

Ski the Italian Dolomites

The ski season is just about here, if you fancy a trip further east with more predictable weather and ski conditions than in Scotland, head for the Italian Dolomites.

In the last issue of 'The Yorkshire Mountaineer' I described a self catering apartment the Villa Belvedere (www.belvederedolomiti.it) in San Vito di Cadore just 2hrs north of Venice or Treviso. Ski slopes are nearby and Cortina d' Ampezzo is just 10 km away. Should you prefer to stay in a hotel for your ski trip, where you have 5 star treatment, at 3 star prices, then try a stay at Villa Rosella (<http://hotelvillarosella.it/en/>) in Val di Fassa (<http://fassa.com>). The transfer takes slightly longer from Venice but it is also easily accessible from Bergamo,

Verona , Trento and even Innsbruck.

The hotel is located about 2Km south east of Canazei, the largest ski resort in the Val di Fassa, on the outskirts of the village of Penia. It is at 1486m altitude, despite this the resort employees are skilful at keeping the roads open, even in periods of heavy snow. Should you travel there by train, head for Trento. The hotel can be reached by taking the regular bus service to Penia. The terminus is right next to the hotel. Penia is on the north bank of the river Torrento Avisiuc. If you visit at the end of the ski season you will see a spectacular torrent in flood. In the ski season it is nearly dry or frozen. The river flows north - west to Canazei and past the Marmolada Camp Site.



Photo By: Tony Crosby

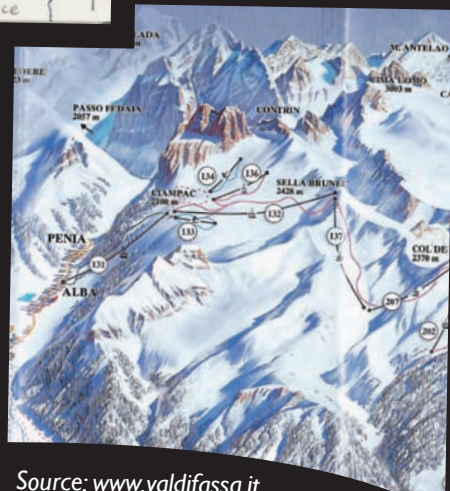
Ski the Italian Dolomites



Photo By: Tony Crosby

During the ski season there are frequent ski buses along the valley. Buying a Dolomiti Super Ski pass (www.DolomitiSuperSki.com) gives you free rides along the valley to all the resorts. The Superski pass entitles you to use lifts outside the valley giving access to 1200km of ski runs and 450 lifts. There is a cheaper pass available should you wish to stay in the local area where there are numerous pistes and lifts, Val di Fassa e Carezza. Prices are reduced for children and seniors.

From Villa Rosella a skier can walk or even ski 200m to the ski lift, Funivia Ciampac. The lift takes the skier up to 2100m, to a ski tour panorama with a network of pistes. When conditions are safe, free of avalanche danger, experts in the club could ski off piste or even go ski mountaineering. If you like a bit of a challenge after a long day, a black piste Alba – Ciampac takes you quickly back to the valley floor.



Source: www.valdifassa.it

At the Funivia Ciampac there is a ski school Scuola di sci Canazei – Marmolada (www.sculascicanazei.com). At the same location there are shops where skis and ski boots can be hired.

For the more expert skier there is the 42km ski tour the Sella Ronda. Mostly red pistes but with a couple of short black pistes. The Sella Ronda

Ski the Italian Dolomites



Photo By: Tony Crosby

can be skied both clock wise and anti clock wise in one day. It is necessary to start early and join the tour at a lift not in Canazei, where at peak season the skier can waste time queuing at this popular lift. The last pass must be reached by 15:30 hrs at the latest and some lifts may be closed in bad weather. There are spectacular views on this tour including the Sella Towers and the north face of the Marmolada, if you have time to stop and enjoy!

For super fit members of the club, the same tour can be done without using lifts, and in summer can be walked, run, or cycled. Club members who are ice climbers will see many possible ice climbing routes while skiing the

tour. Visit the Val di Fassa where the conditions are likely to be more reliable than in Scotland. There are spectacular routes south of Arabba on the north face of the Belvedere ridge with 3 convenient lifts to the summit including to Porto Vescova. From there, look south to the vast expanse of the north face of the Marmolada which has numerous lines for ice climbing.

Make a short journey from Val di Fassa by bus, taxi or car via Passo Fedaia to a nearby valley. There take two lifts from Malga Ciapela which carry the skier to Punta Rocca, 3250m, the summit of the Marmolada with spectacular views.

Ski the Italian Dolomites

The skier follows a steep red piste down the north face. The slope is slightly exposed and convex so it's not possible to see far ahead, a test of your confidence on skis.

This year cut out the long expensive Atlantic flights, check the ski season weather. Book a cheaper flight to Italy, hire a car, book the Villa Rosella, and try the DOLOMITI SUPERSKI for beginners and experienced skiers.

In the spring issue of the Yorkshire Mountaineer I will be describing via ferrata, rock climbing, mountaineering and mountain hiking in the Val di Fassa. Are there members who would like to contribute to the article on rock climbing in the Val di Fassa, on the Marmolada, the Sella Towers and/or the Vajolet Towers or have mountain

hiked or biked on the extensive network of routes?

Please contact the editor.

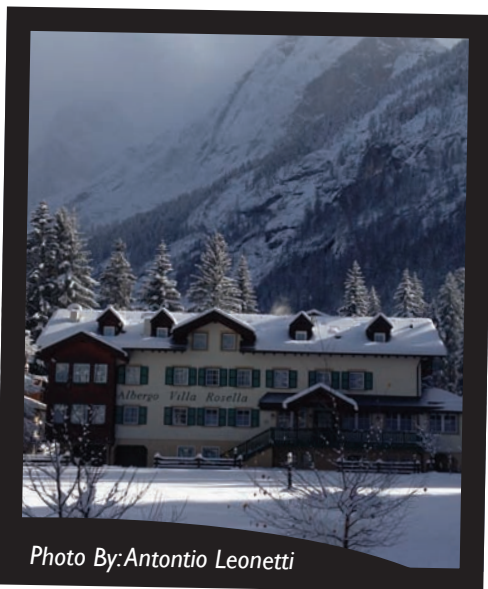


Photo By: Tony Crosby



An afternoon with ...

Jack and Angela Soper

Photo By: Mary Crosby



Many members of the YMC will have walked some or all of The Dales Way, and gone past Linton Falls to Threshfield and Grassington. They might have wondered, as we have, who live in the picturesque cottages on the bank of the River Wharfe. This summer my wife and I were lucky enough to be invited to meet a couple of Yorkshire climbers, Jack and Angela Soper, who live in one of these cottages. They moved there 15 years ago, and have spent much of their time, when not working or climbing, renovating the cottage.

We were visiting in my role as editor of the Yorkshire Mountaineer, looking for a story. Over a cup of tea we had an interesting chat, followed by a walk along the river. Jack and Angela have a long history in UK rock climbing and a love of nature and the outdoors, evident by the numbers of bird feeders

in the garden and the variety of birds and plants. On the inside walls of the cottage are geological maps and pictures of mountains and crags.

Jack was born in 1934 when the family lived at Cawthorne, near Barnsley. While he was still very young, his father would take him walking on Bleaklow, long before it was access land, and their adventures gave him a lasting interest in rocks and maps. He went to Woodhouse Grove School, where he started climbing, then did National Service in Egypt (and spent his leave putting up routes on the limestone mountains in northern Cyprus), and eventually studied geology at Sheffield University, at a time when the SUMC was at its most active. Jack joined the staff at Sheffield as a lecturer and over the years published more than a hundred research papers, many about the geology of the Lake District. He completed his career by mapping the southern Lake District as part of a project for the British Geological Survey.

In his early climbing days Jack was a member of YMC, and he joined the Fell and Rock Club of the English Lake District (FRCC) in 1961. He featured in many new routes, his own and with others, including Allan Austin. But his most significant contributions to British rock were in North Wales, especially Scorpio and the Pinnacle Girdle on Clogwyn d'ur Arddu ('Cloggy'). He was a co-author (with

An afternoon with ...

Peter Crew and Ken Wilson) of 'The Black Cliff' (1971), which is now a rare book. Here's a link to the 1963 FRCC journal with Jack's original article that will give you an idea of what climbing was like before most of the gear used now was invented. <http://www.frcc.co.uk/archive/1960-1969/V20-1.pdf>

Jack spent many summers doing fieldwork in Greenland – where mountaineering skills are essential – and his most memorable climb was the first ascent of the Borgtinde (with Rod Brown). At the time it was the highest unclimbed peak in Greenland.

Angela grew up in Whitkirk, Leeds, and explored the Yorkshire Dales from an early age. While still at school she and her younger brother were allowed to go youth hostelling by themselves; in those days there were no beaten tracks around the Three Peaks and OS maps were 1 inch to the mile, and cloth-backed (they were almost indestructible). The youngsters were

fascinated by caving, and used to go underground as far as they dared with torches, but they never got lost or into trouble. Angela discovered rock climbing relatively late, when a post-graduate student at Leeds University. She has happy memories of summer evenings at Almscliff and Ilkley, where there would be not only the YMC but also the Gritstone Club, the Leeds University MC, and many other enthusiasts. As soon as she got her own transport (an early mini-Cooper) she often climbed in the Lake District, where she met Jack. One outstanding day for her was being on the first ascent of Allan Austin's route 'The Brackenclock' on Pavey Ark in 1971 with Allan himself and Jack.

Jack kept up his geology but looked for other challenges instead of climbing – sailing, fell-running, orienteering – Angela did these too but climbing was always her main activity. She was fortunate in becoming a lecturer at Leeds Polytechnic (now



Source: UKClimbing.com



Photo By: Anon

Leeds Metropolitan University), which meant long vacations and lots of opportunities for climbing. She joined the Pinnacle Club (for women climbers) in 1967 and FRCC in 1971. There were Scottish winter climbs, Alpine seasons, two Greenland expeditions with Jack, Yosemite with Mary (Waters), the Pinnacle Club Himalayan expedition ... and when early retirement came along, the southern hemisphere, Australia and New Zealand, South Africa, Patagonia, Mexico.

Angela remembers the winter training sessions on Don Robinson's original Leeds University climbing wall, Yorkshire area BMC meetings (she was the chair, and became a vice-president of the BMC when Chris Bonington was president), the BMC International Meets, the first leading competitions (Leeds '89), and controversy about placing bolts on Yorkshire Limestone, which has become acceptable over the years. Probably her most satisfying experiences have been 'ticking' many of the best British rock climbs, those in 'Classic Rock', 'Hard Rock' and 'Extreme Rock'. Now it's mainly sport climbing, which she finds good fun and good exercise, but not nearly as memorable.

In October, Angela and Jack hope to be enjoying the usual climbing scene on Kalymnos. Maybe they'll see some of you there!



Photo By: Glyn Edwards

Soper, Crew and Wilson, The Black Cliff: Clogwyn Du'r Arddu 1972.

Soper Angela, Around for 50 years, in YMC 50th Year Journal 1941-1991, Yorkshire Mountaineering Club 1993.

Flasby Fell Kids Circuit

Two boulders, great for kids and beginners but the quality of these climbs will raise anyone's spirit.

Approach

As for Flasby Fell. Gain the high ridge overlooking Gargrave. The high cairn pictured below is a good reference point: Hueco Boulder is just before the cairn and The Pink Slab is just beyond it.



Photo By: John Hunt

Photo By: John Hunt



Hueco Boulder

An obvious, well featured block on the top path over along the ridge of Flasby Fell. If you reach the cairn, you've gone too far. Nice and low. Use sit starts if you've attained near adult height.

1 2 3 / 4 5 6 7

- 1** Boing 3 Span for the top from the break.
- 2** Slash 2 Break, diagonal pocket, top. No corner allowed.
- 3** Little Corner 2+ Start at the little corner. Climb direct.

Flasby Fell Kids Circuit

4 Cutting Corners 2 Less direct from the corner, trending right to finish in the lower centre.

5 Huecos M Climb those huecos – just too good.

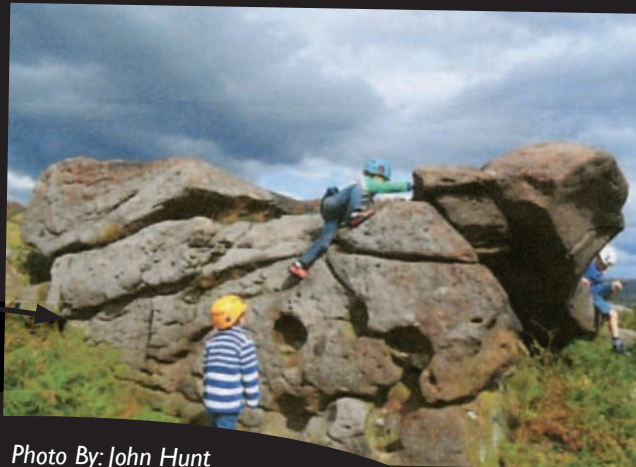


Photo By: John Hunt

Throwing laps on Huecos M.

6 Mad Sculptor 2 The sculpted wall direct over the top triangular block.

7 End Arête 2+ The arête using only the left edge of the features.

8 Full Traverse 3 Traverse right to finish up the end. Hardest in the middle.



Photo By: One of the climbers

Just around the corner is...

9 'Alf 'Ard 5+ Hang the lowest shelf and traverse powerfully along the shelf to a gritty top out.

Flasby Fell Kids Circuit

The Pink Slab

Just beyond the cairn on the high path and in view of Leaning Boulder. Things get a little loftier but the rock quality is excellent.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- 1** Olly's Wall M The short left hand slab.
- 2** Left Edge 3 The left edge of the main wall.
- 3** Triangle 2 From the triangular cut-out.
- 4** Craksenbreks 2 The cracks and breaks to a long reach finish.
- 5** Will's Eliminate 3 Just right of the cracks.
- 6** Undercutter 3+ Just right again from the big undercut. Balancey.
- 7** Flakes of Shallow 3 Link the shallow flakes.
- 8** Long Traverse 3+ Traverse right all the way across the main slab.



Photo By: John Hunt



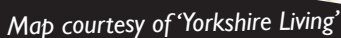
Photo By: John Hunt

by Bev Barratt, a Yeadon man born and bred - a personal view

possibly took preference. The start in Leeds brought back different memories when I spotted three offices in which I had worked, in City Square and The Headrow. One of them overlooked the actual starting line opposite the Town Hall and Art Gallery and I saw the window from which I used to count pigeons when bored by work.

Stage two was, in terms of racing, more exciting, but other memories kept rising. The cobbles on Haworth Main Street about which I wrote recently, camping at Oxenhope when trying to get my first class badge in the Scouts (the route passed the large house in whose garden we were allowed to pitch our tent as it was raining). Strangely enough, just after the race passed that spot I received a phone call from the son of the late Paddy Hunt with whom I cycled and climbed for many years. Sean, the caller is racing now. He lives near Lincoln so I asked him why he wasn't watching the Tour. "They've just gone past" he said "I'm in Oxenhope". I remembered then he spent his childhood not far from there.

Cycling days came back at Holmfirth. Bob Mitchell, Peter Coats and I had been over The Strines and then Holme Moss and had one puncture free spare tubular left between us after a particularly expensive day on tyres. Bob had the final blow out of the day. We gathered round and swearing ensued as he tore off the offending tube. A kindly old lady popped her head over



Decisions had to be made at any one time about whether to concentrate on the remembered backdrop, the crowd in the hope of seeing a few remembered faces, or the race itself. As it turned out it wasn't too exciting a stage so the blue remembered hills

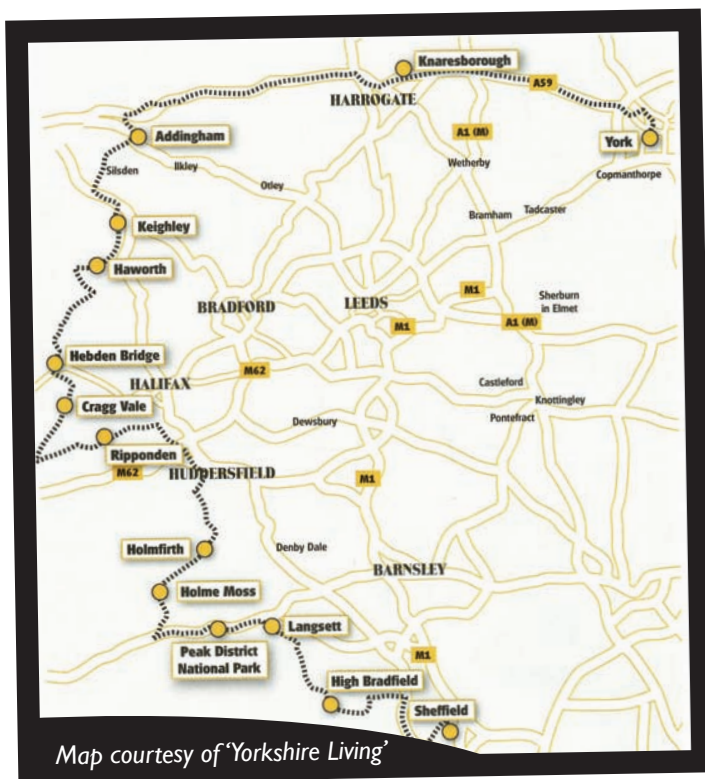
Le Grand Depart in Yorkshire

Tour de France

her garden wall and asked Bob if he would like a bowl of water. Peter and I crept away with fingers over ears. That memory is so strong that it has killed how we got back to Bradford.

But back to the Tour. I was amazed at the apparent speed at which Holme Moss was assaulted, but of course in the days of a 24 toothed big sprocket and 46 ring it was impossible to twiddle away up hill like they do now. Nibali's win in Sheffield brought tears of joy to my eyes, what a brilliant effort. Come back again in my lifetime, Tour de France.

Finally, I wonder if the organiser of the Yorkshire stages, surname Verity, was a relative of Hedley Verity, the pre-war Yorkshire and England bowler who lived at Rawdon, near Leeds. He had two sons, Doug with whom I used to work, and Wilfred who was married to the sister of a friend of mine. Wilfred had a family but he was sadly killed in Otley when a wheel came off a passing Landrover and ran him down. So there could be a family connection.



Le Grand Depart

by **Derek Field**

Kathryn and Martin Tetley, Martin Girt and myself went by train to Ilkley to watch The Tour, finding a roadside spot just opposite the Old Listers

Arms. Soon the caravan came through, a fleet of decorated vehicles but not many freebies. Eventually helicopters were heard, then spotted, heralding the arrival of the bikers, a breakaway of three followed two minutes later by the peloton. Two minutes later it was all gone so the masses of the spectators went to the Riverside Park, where there were two giant screens to watch the rest of the race. Finding a comfortable spot on the banking we lounged in the sunshine for an hour or so, eventually dehydration set in so we went to Wetherspoons to rehydrate and watch the finish of the race. The groans when Cavendish crashed could be heard at the Cow and Calf. Everybody agreed that Yorkshire could do Grand Departs better than Carlsberg or the French.



Photo By: Claire Howarth

Malcolm Lomas (Sol) cycled the hilly part of stage 2 to the cheers of the crowds!



Photo By: Claire Howarth

The Tour De France

**By Dave Hemsley. another Yeadon man born and bred.
Keen Cyclist. Mountaineer. Guest writer**

What an amazing happening in Yorkshire, not enough superlatives to describe it, but here goes, how's this for a starter.

On our usual Saturday morning café visit to Bolton Abbey (Storiths) in May, we heard that the Team Sky were doing a route recce along Stage 2 Route (A59). Two minutes later we were at the roadside, what a fantastic sight. Motorcycle outriders leading Chris Froome and three others were flying past at 30mph, even waving at us as we clapped and cheered. Froome looked terrific.

It reminded me of my first sighting of my 1960s climbing hero Don Whillians. I had just completed a route on Malham Cove East Wall and was looking for a belay to bring up Tony Crosby (editor); Whillians appeared in the flat cap and muttered something in a Lancashire accent (probably 'how do lad'). I was so shocked and found myself stunned into silence as he wandered off. I couldn't wait to tell Tony so I brought him up without a belay (good job it was only a V.S.).

Day one found me at Grinton Moor after an overnight stay at a pals house near Leyburn. We cycled onto the course to be astounded at the crowds in such a remote area. After parking our bikes we chatted to a para-medical who told us they had driven their ambulance from Sheffield leaving there

at 2.30am and for Stage 2 they were on duty at Langsett in the Peak District.

After the peloton had passed we descended to the big screen in Leyburn Market Place to witness the finish. Huge moans went up at the demise of Cavendish but did not spoil our amazing day, unbelievable crowds, brilliant sunshine, what a weekend.



A lovely post script was after The Tour had departed to France, my wife and I visited Harrogate to do some shopping, when walking along the road near the finish we spotted a huge sign in a café window, it read "Mark Cavendish crashed here. He was amazed at our good value prices".

Well done that café owner. Viva Le Tour!

The Ghost of Ben Alder

by Andrew Sugden

I first heard of Ben Alder Cottage some thirty years ago when reading Bill Murray's excellent book, 'Undiscovered Scotland'. Bill recounts the story of a stalker who hanged himself on the back of the front door. Since then stories of haunting and ghoulish goings on have persisted and spread. This remote bothy, nestled under the giant massif of Ben Alder had instantly captured my imagination. The story was that Rob Grieve and a friend, of the SMC, heard footsteps entering the room next door and tramping noisily around. When they went to investigate there was no one there. Later when they had returned to bed, the footsteps started again outside but this time the two men also experienced a strong feeling of hostility and that someone was watching them through the window. On rushing outside with their torches there was no one there! Again the footsteps continued next door along with the sound of furniture being dragged along the floor. However there was no furniture next door! Even now sat here reading this again I feel a chill and the hairs on the back of my neck standing on end.

It was over 25 years before I finally made the effort to visit Ben Alder cottage and I was determined to stay a few days and bag all of the surrounding Munros. Determination, resilience and perseverance were needed aplenty as I had sprained my back a few days before-hand, and the cartilage in my

knee was playing up. A hot water bottle for the back, pain killers and plenty of excitement kept me going on the long drive up to Rannoch Lodge, where I was to park. I guess I should really have been convalescing in front of the TV watching 'Cash in the Attic' and 'Flog it' but I couldn't waste an Easter holiday, particularly one with so much snow still on the mountains.

In no time at all I was cautiously easing myself out of the car and slowly shouldering my massive rucksack. Bending down and putting on boots and gaiters was the hardest part of the day but once I was on my way along the forest track I instantly felt better. I was a man on a mission. I was a man on double the usual dose of Ibuprofen and Paracetamol. (I have since been told by my physician that this is a really bad thing to do)

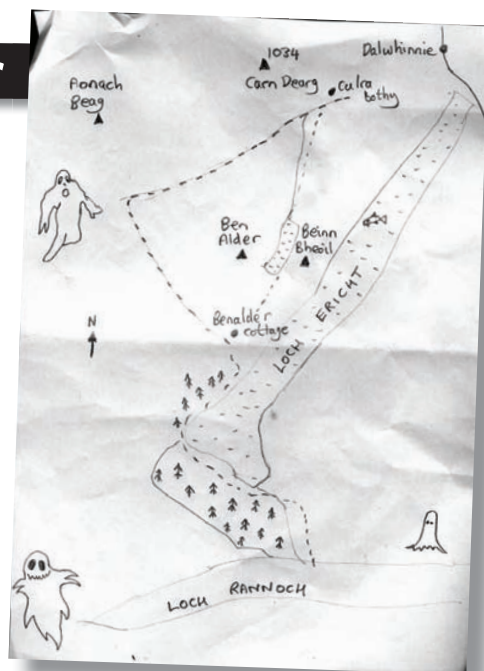
I enjoyed the walk up to the cottage and took my time. The long forest track eventually gave way to open moorland. However the boundary line was a deer fence. Not your ordinary deer fence but something designed to keep out the extinct Giant Elk. Very much like the fence on the movie 'Jurassic Park' that had the job of keeping out the T.rex. With a big rucksack and my dodgy knee it was a challenge, especially the teetering wobbly moment on the top.

Once I had joined the edge of Loch Erich a fresh and rather bracing breeze sprung up and the going was harder.

The Ghost of Ben Alder

The ground under foot was quite boggy and a fair amount of effort was needed now, but the scenery was wild and the surrounding hills were getting bigger and bigger. Although there were plenty of well worn camping spots alongside the loch it did seem like a very lonely spot and I looked forward to the company of others in the bothy. In the excellent story 'The last Chronicles of Gideon Mack' by James Robertson, the main character meets the Devil on the path to Ben Alder Cottage. A pair of walkers pass Gideon on this path and that is the last time anyone sees him. Quite an original and spooky book, I had just finished reading it that week and tried to stop my imagination from wandering.

At last, just as I was tiring and in need of a brew I found myself looking down upon Ben Alder cottage, just the other side of the burn, perhaps 300 metres away. Feeling a little giddy and excited I almost ran down the hill, across the bridge and up to the front door. And then I stopped. From the outside the bothy looked in good repair and well looked after but the tiny windows with curtains of ancient cobwebs revealed nothing of what was inside. I have to say that I did hesitate before pushing the door slowly open. Without my night vision I could see very little but I could feel the cold air on my face and smell the damp, musty odour of the years. The place certainly had atmosphere. There was a tiny room where perhaps four people could sleep but it felt more like a tomb or



a cell and I didn't even like to stand in there for any longer than I needed. The best place to sleep was the main open room with its wooden, raised floor. It commanded an excellent view across the bothy just in case I was 'visited' in the night. With the kettle on and stove purring I mooched around, looking at the pile of old sleeping bags and old food, and reading the visitors book. That was a good read with its tales of epic struggles in storms and blizzards through the night. There were stories of parties almost freezing to death and just making it and of others up all night nearly freezing in the cold. Ben Alder cottage can be a very serious undertaking in winter and it must have witnessed some incredible struggles against the elements. On a lighter note I did notice someone had caught a fat 1lb trout from the loch and I vowed to return in May and cast a line myself.

The Ghost of Ben Alder

The temperature was 9C and a little chilly. Before darkness fell I decided to 'take the Bothy spade for a walk'. I believe that is the correct terminology as used by the Mountain Bothy Association. A word of warning. There is a population of mutated super midges living behind the bothy that can tolerate cold temperatures. Thankfully they missed the tasty exposed parts of my body and fed on the exposed part of lower back. Very itchy indeed.

No one else was in residence and with most of the afternoon ahead of me I foraged for firewood alongside the loch. There was very little and I travelled far and wide to gather up a few meagre pickings. Still it all added up and I was looking forward to a respectable fire and the camaraderie that you get from a group of mountaineers huddled around one. At least I hoped they would come and I was not going to be left alone in Ben Alder cottage. But you guessed it: no one came.



Photo By: Andrew Sugden

There were lots of candles and I made sure the place was lit and free from

any suspicious shadows. Outside the day was still holding on to some of its light and through the window I could see three deer just a few metres from the door. A lovely distraction. Tea was a warming and comforting M and S curry (other equally good brands are available) and cake with custard. The fire was lit and I settled down with my book and a bottle of Teacher's whisky. It had to be a cheap one if a Yorkshire Man like myself has to share it. And still no one came. Feeling claustrophobic I went outside only to be met by a wall of darkness and a sky without stars.

There was just a hint of the moon and grey streaming clouds. The fire kept my spirits up, the Teacher's calmed me and I tried to lose myself in my book in my book 'Breath' by Tim Winton.

A story of mis-spent youth, surfing and risk-taking with the back drop of a beautiful and powerful Australian Seascape.

Still I could not keep control of my imagination and I drew closer to the comfort of the flames. Trouble was that the wood had begun to run low and it was clear I was here by myself for the night. In the corner was a pile of dry food left over the years, and years out of date. A public health hazard, it went on to the fire to produce a huge bonfire that lasted into the night, which is more than can be said for the whisky. The same whisky that I was to share with companions in need. When morning came around the bottle was

The Ghost of Ben Alder

empty and my eye brows were non-existent.

I retired to my sleeping bag as the fire faded to a faint glow. I left lit one very small candle and vowed to go to sleep as soon as it went out. There it was just me and the light from candle surrounded by dancing shadows and a heavy silence. There was not even the sound of a creaky door or roof, the wind, or sparks in the fire. Just the weight of complete silence. That felt quite unnerving imagination started to wander again. The candle only had an hour to go when suddenly my eyes opened and the light of a new day was rousing me from my slumber. I had slept deeply and free from disturbance and bad dreams.

Photo By: Andrew Sugden



I had a slight hangover but in no time I was 'up and at em' as my Fell and Rock mate, Cyril Joyce says (I think he stole it from Nelson). Cloud, sun and clear summits resulted a rapid ascent of Ben Alder from its western flank. It was

covered in thick snow and the sun did shine all day. I ambled along and across the plateau enjoying the moment. Too soon I found myself back at the bothy brewing up, happy but with time on my hands. So I nipped up Beinn Bheoil which did not take too long. A nice way to finish the day and sharpen my appetite for the dreadful dried broccoli and cream pasta that was to come.

When I returned I discovered I that had company. Graham from Glasgow was camping outside the bothy. He was most welcome as was his bag of coal, whisky, and cans of G and T, which he shared. Around the fire he told me tales of mysterious and little-known bothies, and of some of the strange people he had encountered in these places.

It was a most enjoyable evening and as he retired to his tent and I to my little corner I began to think of a more recent story I had heard. A friend knew someone who had spent a night at Ben Alder and had been disturbed by a late night visitor shuffling around in the bothy and then slamming the door on leaving. The next morning when they looked outside the night's fresh snow was undisturbed, revealing nothing of the visitor. My imagination started to wander yet again and I had a quick sweep with my head torch. I contemplated lighting a candle or two.

Tiredness won through. I just didn't have the energy for that sort of thing.

The Ghost of Ben Alder



Map by Tony Crosby

Next morning I bid Graham farewell and I was off north west and parallel to Alder Burn towards Aonach Beag, my mission for the day. Good weather and high spirits spurred me on and I was soon leaving Bealach Cumhann and climbing the slopes of my target. I could just see four coloured dots making their way to the same summit ahead of me and pushed on hard to try and catch them.

Beautiful crisp snow led the way to the summit and with perfect timing the swirling mists lifted to grant me views out west and north, and with my meagre mountain knowledge I could make out Creag Meghah, Ben Nevis, and in the distance the little known Corbet, Ben Fogle. Not lingering too long I charged

along the ridge following the foot prints of my quarry. The cloud gathered around me and at one point I had to trust the footprints as they led down steep snow with sheer cliffs either side and thick white cloud below. I caught them at Carn Dearg, my final summit of the day, had a good chat and was then off down to investigate the Culra Bothy.

However I just couldn't be bothered. From the top of Carn Dearg I had a fantastic view of the immense size of the Ben Alder massif. I still had a long way to go before I reached my little cottage beside the loch. So I headed in a direct line for where the two burns meet just north of Ben Alder ignoring the footbridge down the valley near the Culra Bothy. The burn looked

The Ghost of Ben Alder

deep but I found a quiet section about knee depth and lowered myself down until my feet reached firm gravel. As a science teacher I should have reminded myself about refraction and its effects. The water level came up to my waist and I was now committed. With rapid breaths, high pitch yelps and just a little too much buoyancy to be comfortable, I made it across. I like to think I learned a lesson there and that I would be more cautious with river crossings in future.

Tired and wet I slogged on along the footpath and waded along it where the lochan had risen to cover it. When your feet are that wet what's a little water?

I was really happy. A great adventure in a haunted bothy and a big long day out in the snowy Scottish hills miles from anywhere. As the hill steepened and my legs slowed it began to rain. I smiled. Further on feeling even more tired and now a little cold it rained harder. I couldn't help but smile again. At the top of the pass I looked down at my little cottage and it began to snow hard. I sat down and enjoyed the moment. Worn out, soaked through, shivering and hungry, but happy. A big day, big mountains, by myself and my Ben Alder Cottage half a mile away.

That night I shared the cottage with four others who were sleeping in the 'cell' room. Tired and damp I turned in early and wrapped myself in some of the old sleeping bags that had been left behind. Despite my damp clothes and my shivering I slept deep and long untroubled by phantoms and spirits. The party left early in the morning and I pottered around cooking, brewing, reading and snoozing. A crowded Culra Bothy held no appeal, and though I had food for a couple of more nights, I felt it was time to leave. I had climbed all the surrounding Munros and I had exorcised my Ben Alder demons. My back and knee felt better and I knew I would be back sometime, fishing rod in hand and hopefully with my bothy all to myself.



Photo By: Andrew Sugden

Memories - Brian Murphy

A few tales by Jane Wainwright

I first started walking with Brian on a Long Distant Walker's Association event on Blubberhouses Moor in 1985. I went on my own to try out the challenge not knowing Brian and Marie also had entered. From then on we entered events together and did a few each year just to keep fit, as with a family other things stopped me being away many weekends.

Then Munros started to be ticked off by folk in the club and I did many with Brian. We did all year round camping and some epic, long days. I remember leaving Achintee about 6 a.m. to climb Ben Nevis, the Aonachs and the Grey Corries – a fair day as Brian would say. He had finished his fish and chips in Fort Bill and asking for more before I had even been served. Another trip, nine Munros with an overnight in Culra Bothy, he always said I saved his life with my stove on the summit of Ben Alder around 7 a.m. he was so hungry. One Easter night, Marie was looking down the road for us we were so late returning from Ben Avon. We got to the col, ploughing through deep snow and thought we ought to turn back as daylight was going to be short. Brian got the map out, checked the distance and height to the summit and reckoned 1/2 hour would do it. We made it, but a bit late getting back to the tents.

After he had finished the Munros he had other plans. We got the ferry over to Rhum to do the Cuillin Ridge. A long traverse on the ridge, then down to the

sea and the long trudge back, starving, we got to the tent. The midges were so bad, I got a tin of fruit, tin opener and spoon, dived in the tent and that was our dinner. We had a great few days on Jura to do the Paps. Got back into Knoydart for a night in Sourlies bothy for a Corbett he fancied. Fionaven was hard to get. Marie was that fed up of Brian moaning about Fionaven, after 10 days of miserable weather at Scourie, she told him he had to do it the following day. We did, 10 yards apart, left a bit, right a bit, straight to the top. That night, as I left their caravan to crawl in my tent, I could see the weather had changed. Brian said 'What are we doing tomorrow then?' without thinking my answer was 'Fionaven right'. What a brilliant day, end to end and Marie there to pick us up. Again the walk from Cape Wrath to Sandwood Bay, the first time we needed a compass to follow the Atlantic coast, can you believe, but again the second time a cracker.

Never one for sitting around he had to be out somewhere. He was always well prepared for what he wanted to do, knew the maps backwards, had the gear and great navigation skills. Even the snow chains ready when they were needed to get over to Braemar late one winters night with the police wanting to turn us back.

Though Brian was struggling the last few years, he climbed Ben Nevis in his 75th year. Celebrated his 80th in the club cottage and even got up

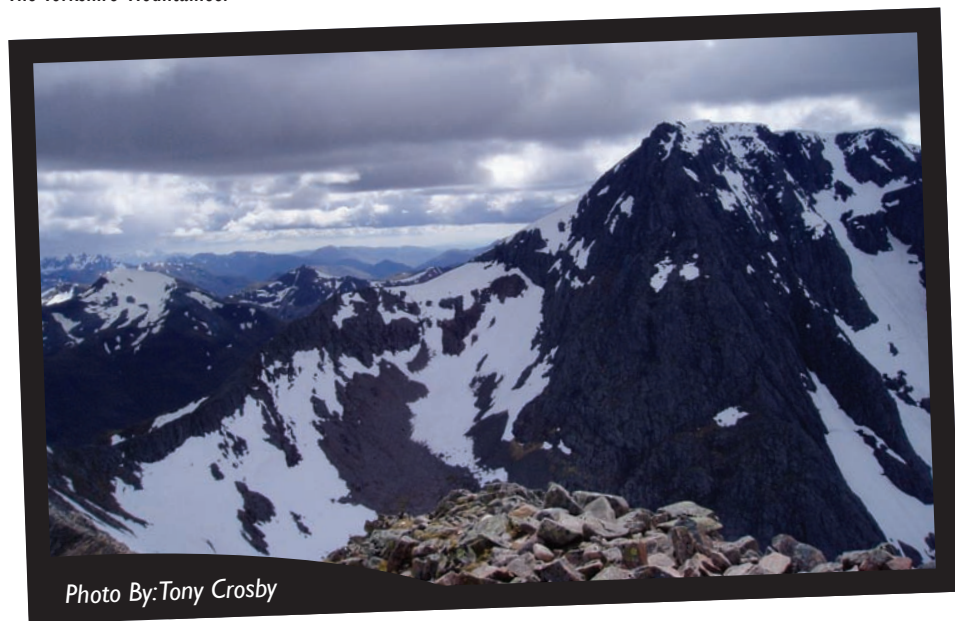


Photo By: Tony Crosby

Cairngorm in March – thanks to the funicular.

I have many, many memories of times in the hills with Brian, camping, bothying and brewing up. He could always tell the tale too – albeit a bit exaggerated. He will be sadly missed in the YMC.

Memories of climbs on Ben Nevis

by Malcolm Lomas

I knew Brian for many years, so it was very sad to hear on my 80th birthday, that he had passed away. I had met with Brian a few weeks earlier and he seemed to be in quite good spirits. I don't think that any of us realised just how ill he was.

Brian was the kind of guy you needed to be with on the hill when the weather turned nasty. Anyone can walk up a hill in good weather, arrive at the top, look round, and see the route of the climb, then look around for an alternative way down. But if the wind is blowing rain sideways, you can't see a hand in front of you, everything looks the same, and you can't see the way you came up or the way you are supposed to be going down. That's when Brian would come into his own.

He grew up before the invention of GPS and smart phones where nowadays, when someone gets into difficulty they ring up and expect someone to come to their rescue. For skill with map and compass, he was one the very best. Many a time I have been thankful to have Brian by my side in difficult circumstances.

More memories by Malcolm Lomas

A couple of outings I shall never forget. Both take place on Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain. We have been travelling to Scotland for many years for the annual YMC winter meet. We were based in Glencoe and the weather was fabulous and great winter conditions. We were going to climb Tower Ridge a classic climb in either winter or summer conditions. We arrived at the roadside beneath the Ben and it was still dark. We walked up the Allt-a-Mhuilin valley and arrived at the CIC hut just as it was starting to get light. After a sandwich and hot drink, we put on crampons, equipped with ice axes we roped up in three parties of two. The conditions were perfect, no wind and blue sky but the sunshine never reached us until we pulled out onto the summit plateau. There was so much ice in the Tower Gap it was just like descending into a glass bottle and the final snow and ice arrete was hard as concrete. After kicking in front points and both ice axe picks the muscles in my calves began to tremble. We had been climbing in the shade all day and it was a welcome relief to stand in the sunshine. We shook hands and hugged each other after a successful ascent of the infamous Tower Ridge.

Another time was while staying at Roy Bridge at Spring Bank time. the weather again was fabulous. We had complete a week of Munro climbing and on our last day we had run out of Munros . I suggested to Brian after such a wonderful week of hill ticking Munros, we should crown it with a rock climb. We chose Observatory Ridge on the

Ben another classic climb, but this time in summer conditions.

We roped up at the foot of the ridge and with 150ft rope run outs we quickly gained height. It didn't seem too long before we pulled out on the summit plateau and had a well earned bite to eat and drink. It was a glorious summer evening as we descended Carn Mor Dearg Arete to Carn Mor Dearg, then back down the valley of the Allt a Mhuilin. What a wonderful way to end an incredible week and to see Scotland at its best.

Sadly the next time we go out on the hills Brian won't be with us but our thoughts will be with him, he will be sadly missed. Rest in peace Brian, you have been a great friend and companion over many years and our memories will live on.

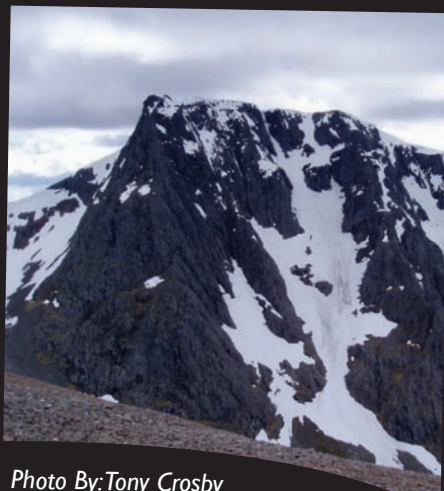


Photo By: Tony Crosby

Photos and maps in order of appearance

Front page

Tour de France Le Grand Depart Yorkshire by Martin Tetley

Young climbers, left to right William, Sebastian and Oliver on their way to the boulders of Flaxby Fell near Gargrave. By John Hunt.

Angela Soper leading Z climb at Almscliffe belayed by John Syrett, Summer 1972. By Ken Wood.

Other photos

Front cover of the programme of the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival November 2014.

Front cover of the programme of the Kendal Mountain Festival November 2014.

Map of the Dolomites Italian Alps area of Val di Fassa and Alta Badia. By Tony Crosby

Map of Ciampac ski tour Val di Fassa. www.valdifassa.it

Campiac beginners slopes. By Tony Crosby.

Hotel Villa Rosella, Penia, Val di Fassa, by Antonio Leonetti.

The Sella Towers in winter snows seen from ski tour Sella Rhonda. By Tony Crosby.

Marmolada north face ski slope, a red route. By Tony Crosby.

Jack and Angela Soper interviewed by the YMC editor at their Threshfield cottage in Wharfedale. By Mary Crosby.

Jack Soper leading the third ascent of 'Shrike', Clowyn d'ur Ardu in 1961 with Dave Gregory.

Angela Soper leading a sports climb 'Sin Ley' (F6b) at Las Vegas Crag Tenerife, belayed by Peter Greenwood. By Glyn Edwards.

Angela Soper with other speakers and coaches at the Women's Climbing Symposium 2013. Picture courtesy of UKClimbing.com.

Young climber on the summit of Flasby Fell near Gargrave. By John Hunt.

Hueco Boulder with relaxing young climbers, By John Hunt.

Throwing laps on Huecos, by John Hunt.

'Alf Ard' with the oldest climber in action. By John Hunt.

The pink slab. By John Hunt.

The Long Traverse 3+ By John Hunt.

Maps of stage 1 and 2 The Grand Depart Yorkshire Summer 2014. Courtesy of the editor of 'Yorkshire Living Cycling edition ' Summer 2014.

Malcolm Lomas (Sol) cycles stage 2 before the race. By Martin Tetley.

The classic French photo of spectators lining the route of The Tour, watching the cyclists approach and catching a glimpse as they speed by.

Location maps of Ben Alder Cottage in Scotland. By Andrew Sugden.

The Ben Alder Cottage. By Andrew Sugden.

The valley and river near the cottage. By Andrew Sugden.

Location map. By Tony Crosby (edited Google.com)

Footbridge. By Andrew Sugden.

The North Face of Ben Nevis with Carn Mor Dearg Arete on the left, Observatory Ridge and Tower Ridge to the right., viewed from Carn Mor Dearg. By Tony Crosby, May 2014.

Mill Cottage Glen Feshie, location of the YMC winter meet 2015.

Back page

Compilation of photos of YMC members by Mary Waters in 1978.
How many members can you identify?

Young members will need to consult their grandparents.
of the next issue 13th September.

Proposed Winter Meet 2015

Should you wish to see the mountains of Scotland in Winter come along to the 2015 YMC winter meet

The meet will be held at Mill Cottage , Feshiebridge, Glen Feshie, where 10 beds have been booked for the 4 nights of Friday 27 Feb- Monday 2 March.

Full cooking and dining facilities, all electric. Shower, toilets , drying room, multi-fuel stove in lounge, firewood and coal. Pots, pans, cooking utensils, cookers, dustbin bags, toilet rolls, light bulbs etc. No pets (teddies excepted!).

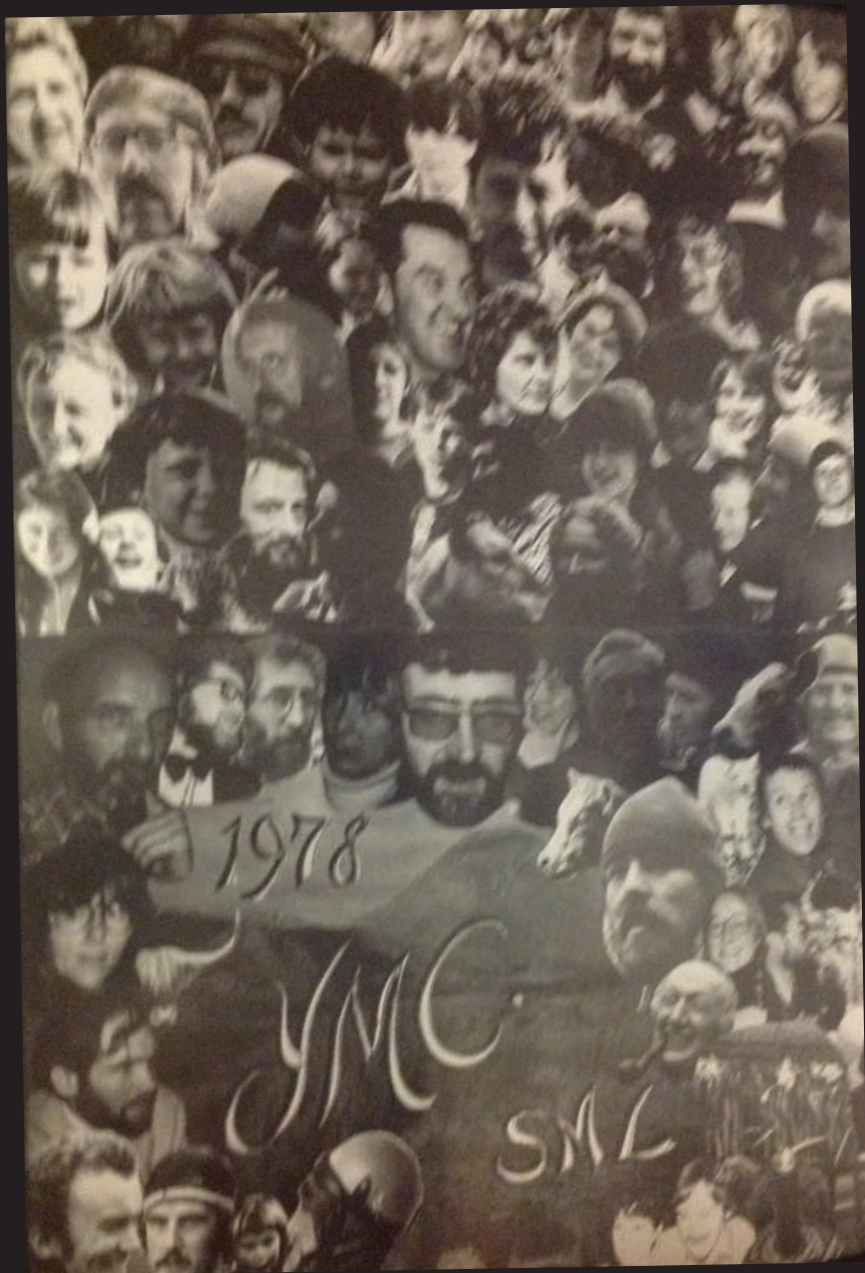
Just bring your sleeping bag and hot water bottle! £9 per person per night.

Dave Girt (10 Maple Terrace, Yeadon, Leeds, LS19 7HL) will be taking bookings only with payment (cheques payable to Yorkshire Mountaineering Club) from 1st January 2015 onward. Preference will be given to 4 night bookings.

P.S. Described by Sol as “ a superb little hut isolated on the banks of the River Feshie at Feshie Bridge, the only downside being potentially difficult car access under snow conditions” (The Yorkshire Mountaineer, Issue 361). Bring a big shovel!”



Photo By:Anon



Yorkshire Mountaineering Club Limited is registered under the
Industrial And Provident Societies Act 1965 Registration No.30036R