

# The Yorkshire Mountaineer



Issue 365

May 2015



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## Editorial

This issue is a 'catch up'. A number of writers sent contributions towards the end of 2014 and early in the new year and I am sure they have looked forward to their articles in the magazine. I am sorry to disappoint those who have promptly sent meet reports describing the YMC meets of winter and early spring 2015. Their stories will appear in the next issue.

Congratulations to Ken Tilford for identifying most of the YMC members shown on the 1978 compilation featured on the back cover page of issue 363. There is nothing wrong with your memory. It's often difficult to put a name to a face from the past. The photo is on the wall at the Coniston Cottage.

The subject of the first article is to use a climbing term 'a difficult pitch'. It's about a slightly different climbing adventure on Everest at the time of the Nepal earthquake earlier this year. The people of Nepal continue to suffer from the devastation caused by the earthquake.

Most days during the winter months, I visit a local leisure centre for an early morning swim. While there I have met a well known chef, Sat Bains, 2007 winner of the Great British Menu on TV, and now a 2 Star Michelin Chef who runs a restaurant in Nottingham. He is a regular early morning visitor to the gym and earlier this year was undergoing rigorous training for an attempt on Everest. He and his team planned to get to 7,100m for a

Guinness World record bid attempt by sitting round a table for a black tie dinner with a menu created by Sat. The expedition was trying to raise £100,000 for Community Action Nepal, [www.everestdinner.com](http://www.everestdinner.com), and Hospitality Action, [www.justgiving/sat-bains](http://www.justgiving/sat-bains).

Regrettably the expedition was abandoned as it coincided within days of the Nepal Earthquake while the team was on the mountain.

There have been many appeals for financial support to aid the relief efforts in Nepal. Martin Tetley (Membership Secretary) has received a letter from Kalsang and Susie Sherpa-Baer of The Walking and Climbing Company, Beverley, thanking the many people who have contributed to The Nepal Earthquake Appeal- Solukhumbu Region. The letter is reproduced in this issue. Many individuals in the club have made personal donations.

In this issue Sean Kelly has written about the popular Isle of Skye meet in May 2014. Andrew Sugden describes climbing on the crags above Coire Lagan during the meet. Tom Thompson gives an account of a visit to the Alps in summer 2014.

Many in the club will have climbed in Snowdonia. Mike Bebbington recalls how he climbed the classic route 'Cenotaph Corner'. The route is on the north side of Llanberis Pass, 37m in length, graded 5b, E1. It was first climbed in 1952 by Joe Brown and Doug Belshaw. Adam Wainwright

## Editorial cont..

Photo By: Tony Crosby



## Editorial cont..

describes his memories of climbing the route during the 1980s.

Bev Barrat reminisces about a stone fall at Hawkswick Crag in the Yorkshire Dales. He also describes the adventures of deceased member, John Howard, who climbed Half Dome in Yosemite in the early days of climbing, it has now become one of the world's popular valleys for rock climbing.

Girls in the club who would like to enjoy climbing in the sun on well protected routes, please contact Caroline Phillips, [coziphillips@gmail.com](mailto:coziphillips@gmail.com). Caroline is planning a trip to the Italian Dolomites to climb Via Ferrata at a date in August this year. For more information about Via Ferrata read 'Via Ferratas of the North, Central & Eastern Dolomites, The Yorkshire Mountaineer Issue 333, October 2009. For locational information read 'Ski the Italian Dolomites 2015', The Yorkshire Mountaineer Issue 363, November 2014.

There are two excellent guides produced by Cicerone, Via Ferratas of the Italian Dolomites :Vol 1, and Vol 2. Start ticking off the climbs this summer and work through the grades. Any climber who has climbed on Yorkshire Gritstone or Limestone will have few problems, but you will need a good head for heights and sun tan lotion.

The maps to use are 1:25000 Tabacco, maps 03,06,07,017,025, depending on which mountain area you visit. They are available in many of the tourist and outdoor shops in the region.

Would you like to learn more about the geology of the Yorkshire Limestone, and the landscape you hike over? If so then you are invited to join a Yorkshire Geological Society field meeting to the Malham area. On the 26th July, a member of the Society will be leading a party to classic localities near Malham. Please let me know if you wish to come along. I have added this meet to the list of Summer meets.





## Chef Sat Bains Everest Adventure

***In April 2015 the Chef Sat Bains, with a team of mountaineers, set out to climb Everest to 7,100m and while there serve a three course formal dinner.***

**Information from Lynette Pinchess, Nottingham Post April 2015**

The Nottingham Post printed a number of stories about the attempt by a two star Michelin chef Sat Bains to raise money for two charities, Community Action Nepal and Hospitality Action (see editorial for contact information)

Chefs are a tough breed, but Sat, with advice from local Nottinghamshire mountaineering experts, realized he had to up his level of fitness. This meant many visits to the local gym under supervision of a personal trainer, exercising in the environmental chamber at Nottingham Trent University.

In the chamber temperature, humidity and altitude can be adjusted to simulate climates across the world, such as conditions likely to be encountered on Everest. All this effort was supplemented by long hikes in the Derbyshire Peak District.

Despite all this meticulous preparation, Sat before reaching the height of the proposed dinner party, suffered life threatening high altitude pulmonary oedema which results in a build-up of fluid in the lungs. Altitude sickness can affect the fittest of mountaineers. After early medical attention it took

two days for Sat to be taken down the mountain to hospital in Kathmandu. The expedition was going to continue but then the earthquake struck Nepal and the attempt was abandoned.

To have survived two such traumas, Sat considers himself to have been very lucky.



# Nepal Earthquake Appeal

## **SOLUKHUMBU REGION**

Dear Martin,  
(YMC Membership Secretary)

Further to our previous message immediately following the earthquake in Nepal I can say the response has been staggering. We have been reminded of the immense kindness and generosity that people are capable of. It has also been so touching to hear how people who have been to Nepal, or know others who have been out there have been affected by the reports from Nepal. It is indeed a sad and very uncertain time for the people of Nepal.

In the last week we have been contacted by numerous people and organisations that are organising fund raising activities. Many of these have already donated to the Penny Appeal and are looking at what more they can do. For example, there is a charity gig in York, a danceathon in Hull and a school sponsored poetry event in Sussex amongst the ideas we have been told about.

We have also been talking to family and staff in Nepal and it is overwhelming to know where to start with the enormity of the damage to the country. We have decided that we want to support three schools in the Solukhumbu region that have been badly damaged and also the villages in this region where many of our porters come from. This region is where the Sherpas come from and is part of the Everest region.

We will collect funds for this project until the end of May and then get them to the area and make sure they are used appropriately; as you know the monsoon season will start in June.

To donate to this fund you can make a payment into this account

**Barclays Bank**

**Sort Code: 20-98-61**

**Account Number: 10539570**

Reference: Nepal Appeal (please add your name / organisation)

Or pay using Paypal through our website at -  
[http://www.walkingandclimbing.co.uk/how\\_to\\_book.html](http://www.walkingandclimbing.co.uk/how_to_book.html)

Please include the reference Nepal Appeal (please add your name / organisation)

(Please note that Paypal charges approximately 3%).

You can give whatever amount works for you and please know that 100% of what you give will go to Nepal

With love,

Kalsang and Susie

Kalsang and Susie Sherpa-Baer  
The Walking and Climbing Company  
16, Finkle Street  
Bishop Burton  
Beverley

# YMC Skye Meet

**May 2014**

**By Sean Kelly**

**Attendees:** Nigel Atkinson, Lawrence Farndell, Janet Hagen, Sally Harris, Sean & Sam Kelly, John Littlewood, Caroline Philips, Roger & Mel Shaw, Graham Smith, Bill Stevenson, Andrew Sugden, John Ward, Patrick & Tom Warren

The Skye meet this year was moved to half-term to accommodate members of the teaching community who'd expressed frustration at being excluded by the usual dates. It worked well and also enabled a couple of apprentices to join the fray.

Despite mixed weather everyone was in action today. Andrew & Janet tackled Sron na Ciche and Sgurr Alasdair. The two Johns, Sally, Lawrence and the Kellys climbed Sgurr nan Gilleann (Sam's first monro) via the inappropriately named 'Tourist Route', a descent was made via Gillian's west ridge; then, as the weather improved, a detour was added to take in Am Basteir, Munro No. 2 and it was still the first day! This also provided an entertaining view of Nigel, Mel and Roger's unorthodox descent from Gilleann, where failed attempts at glissading lead to a human snowball and what looked like a 40mph snow enema. Nigel walked like big John Wayne for the rest of the week. Patrick and Tom encountered a bomb in Talisker bay and had their walk cut short as the disposal team cordoned off half of the bay. The evening's entertainment was provided by Bill and Graham who debated the optimal length to cut a new climbing rope. Apparently the day's expedition had proved their initial choice had been flawed.

Map by: Tony Crosby



# YMC Skye Meet

## MON 26TH

Thankfully the stairs in the Glen Brittle hut have bannisters. It was the second day and already a hand rail was needed to descend them. A big party wandered round the Quiraing while the crag-rats (AS+JH) were back on the Cioch slabs and (BS+GS) climbed close by in the amphitheatre. JL circumnavigated the Red Cullin while JW made the first of several attempts to get to Raasay with his bike.

## TUE 27TH

An alpine start for Bill & Graham who were up and gone before anyone else awoke - Mission unknown but it did involve Sgurr Sgumain and an inappropriate length of rope. Kellys & Warrens entertained the apprentices, climbing and abseiling on the local sea cliffs, while Sally led a party of kayakers over to the Island of Wiay. Meanwhile the unstoppable JL walked over McLeod's tables.

## WED 28TH

This was the day we had been waiting for. After the success of the previous year's trip involving RIBs to get us to the start of a climb, we had arranged



*Photo By: Sean Kelly*

The RIB picked up our 10 man team from the beach in Glen Brittle and deposited us on Rhum at the Dibidil bothy. From here a brutal 1km slog through near vertical bog & heather got us to the top of the other Sgurr nan Gillian at 764m. I was grateful to Sam here for providing me with an excuse to go slowly as we both looked on in disbelief as the others raced for the summit. Once reunited and refuelled the fun began. The clouds cleared and for the rest of the traverse



## YMC Skye Meet

we had uninterrupted views of the way ahead and of most of N.W. Scotland. The route finding from Ainsbhal to Trollbhal was entertaining and involved several brave reconnaissance trips before an easy path was discovered next to where the bulk of the party sat awaiting news from the scouting team. Between Trollbhall & Askival there is a big drop and climb, it's made all the more interesting by the presence of thousands of ankle traps in the form of Manx Shearwater nests. From here it was easy going over Hallival and down to Kinloch for a much needed rest while we awaited our ride back to Glen Brittle beach. A grand day out! Meanwhile JW had cycled round Raasay. This was his third attempt; all others having been thwarted by either timetable or weather restrictions. AS & JH had climbed Cioch Direct and Arrow route; spending most of the day staring out at the unusual sight of a cloud free Isle of Rhum.

### THU 29TH

Today both hand rails were required to get downstairs. The Rhum veterans had a lazy day exploring Spa cave, and easy terrain close to Elgol. PW, AS & JH climbed the Inaccessible Pinnacle and then followed the ridge north as far as An Dorus. It was a good day out judging by the smiles and enthusiasm in the hut that evening.

### FRI 30TH

Another biggy! AS, JH & LF did the Clach Glas - Blabheinn traverse while BS & GS climbed Median route in the Sron na Ciche amphitheatre. SH kayaked to the Glen Brittle headland while the rest of us headed for Coir a' Ghrunnda, Sgurr Alasdair and Thearlaich, descending via the Great Stone Chute. It was a fine end to another great week on the island and enough to whet the appetite for the 2015's trip.

*Photo By: Sean Kelly*



# Isle of Skye

## ***Climbs on Sron na ciche***

**by Andrew Sugden**

The first time I saw the huge cliffs of Sron na ciche they were bathed in the evening sun with all of their features clearly visible. Gullies, terraces, cracks, chimneys were etched across its massive walls as the sun sank behind the horizon chased along by nightfall. My eye was caught by a long, clean sweep of slabs broken by a slanting gash in the rock. On top of that was a steep and towering headwall leading to the top of the mountain. It was quite an awe inspiring sight and I quizzed my driver 'what is it? What goes up there? Have you climbed that? Can we do that?' After 10 hours on the road I was expecting too much from my knowledgeable but tired driver who really couldn't be expected to look up at the cliffs in the distance and drive along at a brisk pace, remain patient and polite towards her annoying passenger.

The next day we descended down from Sgurr Alasdair out of the mist and drizzle into Coire Lagan. The first thing I saw was those slabs split by a slanting gash and topped by a long head wall. The skies were clearing and we could have gone onto the Inaccessible pinnacle after all. The rock was shiny wet and reflecting the sun like pieces of broken mirror glued together. Clustered around its base were tiny bright coloured dots, climbers gearing up and taking advantage of the change in weather. I so wanted to climb there right then.

It was a very slow and leisurely walk down in the sun, constantly stopping and looking back at the ridge, and then, my eye drawn towards those black walls and slabs. Tomorrow at least but for now the call of Yorkshire tea and later Skye Talisker were proving too strong.

The Coire Lagan climbs catch the sun around 1pm and so alpine starts are not needed and this set the routine and pace for the whole week. Tea was brought to my partner at 8.30 who would be sat up by 9.00 sipping it and reading her Kindle. Bacon and egg sandwiches would be my reward and we would emerge from the hut as the midges were retiring for the day. We were on holiday and not about to be rushed.

As always there was a brisk pressing pace which delivered us to the start of our route in just over an hour. Every line had a team in place, plus the rain had returned courtesy of the Cullin cloud factory. So it was out with the sarnies and the guide book (and the midges too) Cioch West seemed like a good option and as the sun emerged Janet headed onwards and upwards. Of course it started to rain, harder and harder, water streaming down the rock. The legendary Cullin friction soon dissolves in the wet, as does my resolve when the temperature dropped suddenly. A disappointed and

## Isle of Skye

Photo by: Andrew Sugden



frustrated leader agreed that it was time to abseil, retreat and seek shelter. The day was lost and I could feel a proper Yorkshire 'monk on' developing.

As soon as the pulled ropes dropped down and Janet leaned out on her rappel the sun burst out. It was lovely and warm, the rock steamed and I was a happy boy again. A couple of easy pitches up greasy slabs followed to the first challenge of the day a delicate slab beneath an imposing head wall. The climb now avoided this and scuttled around to the right to the bottom of a long groove leading back left and to the crux of the climb. Again it fell to my partner to climb this second crux rather than myself. Funny that! I seemed to have the knack of taking a belay just before a hard section! (Well I was short of gear and it looked like

such a comfy spot) It was a lovely and exposed traverse along improbable rock but with surprise holds appearing just in time and the reward of a big ledge sit down on.

I left my happy bunny belayer and headed up towards the cioche which we reached a few pitches later. From the grassy ledge at its base I can recommend the Cioche Direct route, a nice little V.Diff. with surprising climbing and an exposed finish onto the great rock itself. The rain was falling again now and we were up high in the middle of snow where surrounded by sky, air and rock. Not sure how to escape we abandoned Integrity climb and headed up Wallwalk a climb much recommended by Skye guru Sean Kelly.



Photo by: Andrew Sugden

## Isle of Skye

The rain was a real concern as was the late hour of 8pm but that was nothing compared to the midges which took advantage of our lack of repellent and chance to run away. They attacked my ankles with relish and all that I could do was to jig my feet up and down to dissuade them. I noticed just to my side a plastic sword handle peeking out of a rock crevice. You would have needed another but it must have been used at some time for a re-enactment of Highlander on the Cioche. It brought a smile to my face and a short distraction from those miserable maddening midges.

I willed Janet on as she pushed upwards struggling with wet steep rock and clouds of nasty nibbling flies and she answered with a quick ascent of pitch one. I followed and headed up steep rock with large hand holds but foot holds I could not see which were next to useless in the dripping wet rock.

At times like these knees and elbows work well and a couple of bonus in situ jammed wires boosted me onwards. Janet finished the last pitch with a couple of heart in mouth wobbling on / off moments to bring us on to the glaise. We could have done another two pitch VS but scuttled along the glaise in the rain, gloom and pursued by many hungry midges.

Finally we were on the top and in no time at all bounding down towards Glen Brittle to avoid being caught out by the night. As we jogged down it just didn't seem to get any darker and I dropped off the pace to photograph the big red ball of sun sinking slowly away to the west over the sea. Ninety minutes after completing our final and 16th pitch we were back at the hut beer in hand. A very satisfying day on great rock, in great surroundings and with great company.



Photo by: Andrew Sugden

# Trans Alpine Babysitter

**By Tom Thompson**

In 2014 I accepted an interesting challenge from some close friends of mine in SW London. “Hey Tom, you’re good with kids: we’ve got one and we want to run across the Alps. Twice.” I could tell what was coming; they explained that in 2012 they had booked themselves onto the 2013 Trans Alpine (only one of the world’s hardest races) only to find out that G had become- well – pregnant (hmm have they figured out what caused that?) and along came baby Sasha.

The logic went like this; who do we know that could drive our car from place to place in Europe with all our bags, meeting us at a succession of hotels on the race routes, whilst looking after our lovely sixteen month old baby who more or less refuses to sleep for more than 2 hours at a time at night, ensuring she is fed changed and entertained? Of course you get a couple or three hours off per day. Since they are running a marathon a day across the Alps they have to have no night time responsibilities so it’s a 21 hour job.

Suitably impressed by their apparent faith in my ability (or gullibility) I accepted, having spent some time with said baby on numerous day babysitting occasions. I also felt their situation- they had to retract from the 2013 races- without an alternative they might have to wait until they were too old to do the races before she became

more self-sustaining- so the best opportunity was to be 2014.

In early July then we went off to do the Salamon 4 Trails, with my trusty mountain bike strapped to the back of their Golf, mid-ships baby seat bolted on securely. They ran from Germany, through Austria for a couple of days and then to Switzerland’s remote eastern canton. Sasha enjoyed biking, chucking continental breakfast ingredients around hotel restaurants and keeping me up all night. Also splashing in puddles (it rained mostly) and cooing at the attractive hotel assistants who viewed me with curiosity as I battled baggage and baby-things in and out of hotels, demanded access to bar fridges for organic milk storage and made a general nuisance of myself before setting off on my bike into the forest with a grinning baby girl who is addicted to bike speeding on bumpy tracks and waterfall gorges.

Things went reasonably well with Sasha and I mostly avoiding getting into too much trouble while Mum and Dad ran the race. There were some challenges though and on return to the UK it was realised that for one person to undertake this (the babysitting not the endless marathons!) was too much alone and so a second victim was identified and recruited for the longer and more demanding Trans Alpine, a 7 day traverse of Germany Austria and the Italian Dolomites.



## Trans Alpine Babysitter

Jo, a lovely young Irish runner from the S Lakes came in September; the weather was better and I left my bike at home in hope of Via Ferrata opportunities. We spent the first few days getting around the frustrating difficulties presented by Jo having no sleep (she was unprepared for Sashas' nocturnal screaming) and with melt-down on the horizon I suggested we abandon Mum and Dad's idea of a day on and a day off. Having got to be good mates in adversity, we rebelled and decided to run the baby management as a team. This worked out much better; we would take turns to get up at night to deal with the screams, well at least if you knew it wasn't your turn you could roll over and plug your ears. We could also take turns at loading and unloading the car (new day, new country, new hotel...) while the other cooed and played soft toy jenga. I then looked after her while Jo went for a run in whichever country it was, we had lunch together like a happy family, then I went off in search of Via Ferrata.

It was Italy by the time we got this all sorted out. Fortunately the weather improved as did the ambience; snow nearly stopped us on the high route from Alps to Dolomites and we had to wait an hour and a half at a traffic light which guards the one way route into Italy (direction changes each hour as passing is impossible.)

I had by this time walked to 2 Austrian

VF's but it was too late to start them by the time I got there. Things changed in Italy. The first of our six nights in Italy was at Prettau where we took Sasha on a baby backpack walk back towards Austria on a stormy route up valley back toward the snow-draped Alps. Then we had 2 nights at Sand in Taufers. Just a short walk south on the main road from the town centre there is a large furniture store on the right, opposite the church. Round the back of the store a huge Limestone cliff rears out of the trees. A Via Ferrata starts here on a seemingly random pointless circuit of the cliff. Great views down valley and up toward Prettau with its brooding peaks though. Then- what a surprise- the worlds weirdest picnic table, bolted to the side of a cliff way above the town- what a location. Of course I signed the book in its little wooden cabinet on the cliff above.

Next day, venturing further along these cliffs which get higher as the valley drops away to the south, ie the routes start lower down, I was able to make a tremendous climb up cables with some very wet gullies, to reach the meadows above, where a telecoms tower ensures the most excellent phone service, (this is the only place where my smartphone works perfectly, so much for UK coverage).

Soon we were deep in the Dolomites and our second to last night was to be at St Vigil, where I had researched a route

## Trans Alpine Babysitter

high in the mountains. Jo returned from her run to take over baby duty, I had a lunch ready for us all and then set out happily to the hills, runners backpack ready for a flying start. Arriving at the indicated cablecar to get me high into the hills I was dismayed to find it closed for maintenance. Standing there for a moment while the blue mist cleared I saw in my mind's eye a road sign passed that morning on the way to St Vigil: Corvara! I remembered a wonderful Via Ferrata holiday with my daughters ten years back; we climbed Brigata Tridentina route amongst others.

Running back to the Hotel I bashed on the door to get Jo to let me in for the keys to the Golf; Corvara was 50 km away up the mountain road to south; she said "Err to be sure yer'I need a crane to get the car out, its parked in tight by a Merc and a BMW."

She grabbed Screamy and we went round to the car park, sure enough it looked hopeless. Somehow I was sure the gap between the corners of the cars was wide enough if only one could point straight at it. With Jo's patient hand signals and Sasha laughing her dummy off at the antics I did a 55 point turn in my friends brand new Automatic VW Golf Bluemotion, squeezing past the 2 parked cars with a wriggle to account for the shape of the various wings and bumpers. I swear I had to lean the car with body weight to keep it off the Merc's bumper.

Made it, I now had 4 hours max to drive to Tridentina up Passa Gardena and back, not to mention the climb which is massive. Deep breath and boot it into drive, hit the endless hairpins and watch the fuel guage sag as Stirling Moss takes over..

The drive was pure 007, in the power zone all the way, on kickdown and overtaking the endless builders vans.

In an unrealistically short time I was parking in the quarry (passed the turning first time due to being in the hairpin climbing zone) and swapping trainers for my scrambling boots. Along the path to the south for a bit I met a chap out with his 2 daughters, just like me all that time ago. He let me past onto the start of the climb; I knew I had very little time (had to be back for various duties) so decided that I would use one crab on my Keiser rather than swap both onto the cable each rebelay. I would always have a crab ready for each new section that way and I would climb the cable even if my palms stung, no purist sticking to the rock, I wanted to get up and down the mountain double quick!

If you can imagine running a very steep Via Ferrata up a steep high mountain, well that was it. I passed a group of people at the foot of the second section, below the waterfall and very quickly panted my way into the high coire above where I met 2 American women who were unsure of the way

## Trans Alpine Babysitter

ahead; there's a chicken route to left. If you don't know it you could be confused which way to go because you look up and it all winds up in vertigo inducing dizzy spin. Keep right up the ridiculously overhanging ladder leads to the crazy bridge I inform them. Wishing I could have stayed to make their acquaintances I accept my situation as they say, "gee you're in a hurry" and speed up the ladder, traverse round the head of the crag into the gully and look down on to the bridge before belting across and starting to run up through the winding path through the combs above to reach the refugio.

A quick drink of water from the tap on the barren stoney plateau then I leg it across to north to find the fast descent. Years back with my girls, Chris Ashworth and Henry Rose, we took the long route down to the south. Now the route was new to me, running down I encountered Via Ferrata! It was not so steep so I kept my gear stowed and jumped the wire to skip the zig zags, running down wherever enough clear ground allowed speed over climbing. After 10 minutes of run-walk-climb I saw a huge trail section ahead spanning the giant gully I was descending, which was getting hugely wider and more complex as I went lower; did I really climb so high so fast?

The trail looked good, like a grey scree so I ran like the wind; only when I hit the half-moon like crescent of trail crossing the gully did I realise this was

dirty slippery snow!

No escape so I skied across the gully in my boots jumping back into surfer position each time my boots tripped on melted patches, then zig zagged down endless mixed ground to reach genuine scree for the last third of the descent. I bombed past a young couple picking their way down from the last corrie to a tree lined descent to the car. Pleased to see all its glass was intact I quickly replaced my trainers on my sore feet, downed a pint of warm fluid and carried on the epic downhill adventure, this time booting the car all the way down to the Bolzano valley.

As I reached the lower ground I realised I would be still within the agreed time bounds for childcare, meals etc and with a sigh of relief got back to St Vigil in time for a shower, feeling like no-one could ever really get how crazy an adventure I had just had, you just had to be there to know.

## Messing about on Welsh rock

**By Mike Bebbington**

It's early November 1964 and Bob Enwright and myself were enjoying a long weekend climbing in North Wales. The weather was not too brilliant on the first few days so we climbed on the cliffs at Tremodog taking in some fairly hard climbs. For the last day we moved up to the pass and I was hoping to have a more relaxing time taking in some classic VS climbs although from what developed I am not sure that Bob was in the same frame of mind.

We camped next to the unofficial car park just above the Cromlech Bridge and awoke to clear blue skies although it was still bitter cold in the shade in the valley. We broke the ice on the stream to get some water for a brew and as we sat having breakfast the Cromlech came into the sun. Then out of the blue Bob said 'Shall we do Cenotaph Corner?' which I must agree was looking great in the sunshine. However I was really not wanting another epic climb today much preferring some classic VS's but I was not prepared to back down from the challenge. There was also a certain appeal to doing the route as at that time a dozen or so of us regularly climbed together and there was great competition as to who would be first to do some of the harder routes. Cenotaph Corner was high on that list and two parties from the group had attempted it earlier that year only to be thwarted by queues at the foot of the climb on one occasion and dampness on the other. So it

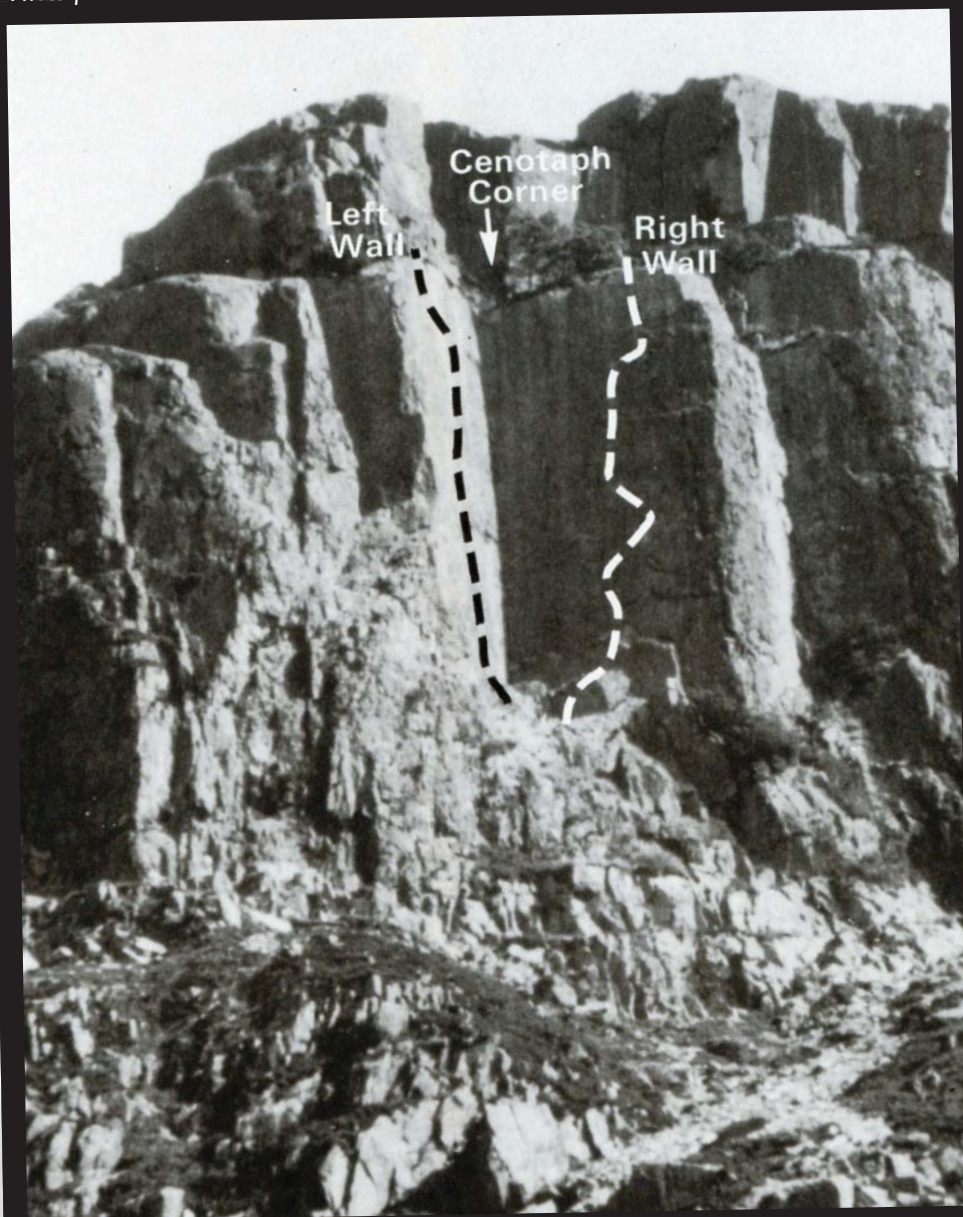
would not be long before the route fell to one of us.

We walked up slowly and pitched ourselves at the bottom of the corner. It looked formidable and I was wishing we could return to my initial plan of climbing some classic VS routes but I was not prepared to back down. Then, as I watched Bob uncoiling the rope I had a flash of pure genius that would extricate me from the situation without losing face. 'Hey Bob, the Corner is 120 feet high and we only have 100 feet of rope, do you think we will have a problem?' expecting him to acknowledge it would be a problem and suggesting we do something else. He replied 'Not at all we will just climb together' and then placed his slings over my head and passed me the end of the rope. So I had not only miserably failed in my last attempt to get back to the classic VS's but somehow I had now engineered myself into leading the corner. I obediently tied on and set about my task.

At twenty feet I came to a really hard move and thought I may have to retreat but Bob shouted up that there was a good thread runner at that point so I had no excuse but to commit to the move. After a couple of attempts I overcame the problem and continued up the corner. It still looked formidable as I peered up the rest of the climb so I decided to just concentrate on the ten feet or so ahead. Eventually I reach

## Messing about on Welsh rock

*Photo from Classic Rock Climbs*





## Messing about on Welsh rock

the pudding stone that was lodged in a wider section of the crack. I had heard about this and had saved my best red, full weight, hawser laid, platted sling for the occasion. I carefully threaded it through the narrow gap at the back of the stone and clipped in. This was the first time I had felt safe since leaving the thread at twenty feet.

I moved up into the niche expecting to be able to rest but no chance of that so I continued to the pegs. As I was leaving the second peg there was a shout from below 'You have run out of rope' Fortunately for safety reasons Bob had had the good sense to tie onto the other end before I left the ground so I knew there would be no delay. Then there was a second shout 'I'll just fasten my laces' I couldn't believe what I was hearing 'fasten my laces, fasten my bloody laces' I thought. I swung back down onto the peg for a rest but of course this was in the days before these cissy harnesses so the rest consisted of gripping the peg with both hands and bridging across the corner calf muscles aching. I must admit that in those few moments my thoughts towards Bob were not very complimentary.

The next twenty feet or so to the top I found to be the most difficult climbing which was made more pressing by the fact I had to ensure that there was sufficient rope between us to make each move. Any jarring on the

rope would have caused me to be southbound, a prospect I did not relish as the pegs I would be falling onto were not in the best state of health. One had a half broken neck and the other had some form of skin disease .

I inched my way up this last section and just as I reached the good holds at the top and thinking it was all over there was another shout from below 'I'm at that hard move at twenty feet' . I braced myself across the corner for any shock loading but of course there was no need as Bob did the move on the first attempt. I crawled out of the top of the corner and headed for the tree which I circumnavigated with the rope and returned to the edge to belay. I peered down the corner and to my annoyance Bob was swarming up the route with apparent ease. It was his only irritating feature making hard routes look relatively easy and it caught you out many times when following him up a route.

Soon Bob joined me and we moved back and laid out in the sun on the warm grass feeling drained but elated. After a while we coiled the rope and returned to the foot of the corner to collect our gear. On a normal day we would have gone on to do other routes but today there was no suggestion of this and we continued down to the car. As we passed the PYG it was just opening for lunch time so we stopped for some well earned refreshments.

## Cenotaph Corner

by Adam Wainwright

In the summer of 1988 I attended a youth meet in North Wales organised by the BMC and held at Plas y Brenin. What started out as a week-long trip extended into the summer as I stayed on after the meet finished with friends from home, and in many ways was the beginnings of a life in North Wales that continues to this day. The week was a fantastic opportunity to meet new people and visit new places and I have great memories of routes climbed during that time throughout North Wales.

Climbing on Dinas Cromlech has to be one of the highlights of climbing in the Llanberis Pass, and North Wales in general. Many of the routes on the cliff are first class, the rock is good, it catches the sun and is deservedly popular. I have climbed many of these routes numerous times although the centrepiece of the crag – Cenotaph Corner – I have climbed only once.

First climbed by Joe Brown, who is still to be seen out and about in Llanberis, in 1952 the route has been steeped in history and legend ever since its first ascent. Described in the guidebook as one of the great milestones in Welsh climbing and first climbed with two points of aid in ‘damp’ conditions this is no understatement, and was considered to be Browns most difficult climb at the time.

My ascent took place during the summer of 1988, at a time when I was climbing routes quite a few grades harder, yet I can still remember the struggle that took place high on ‘the corner’. The corner may have an aesthetic eye looking down from its lofty perch but I remember little aesthetic about the crux. The route begins as you may hope it would continue with good holds, pleasant bridging and straightforward gear placements with modern equipment. An awkward move low down gives an indication of the struggle to come before the corner flows nicely again until high up where the crux lies by the infamous ‘pudding stone’. Polished and awkward, and quite often damp in the back of the crack where you need it the most this section is one of those brutish corners that simply does not succumb to aesthetics, and is quite simply a struggle no matter what grade you climb.

Whilst I have returned to the crag on many an occasion and climbed some of the other routes numerous times, in particular the beautiful wall climbs adjacent to the corner such as Left Wall and Cemetery Gates, the corner will always remain a struggle and so far has been left as one of those climbs that needs climbing once for the historical significance, and once has been enough for me.

## Yosemite

### ***The Birth of a Boulder at Hawkswick Crag and the adventures of John Howard, a former YMC member who climbed in Yosemite in the 1960s***

***By Bev Barratt***

There is a sweet little Severe called Black Jack a short way along from the NW end of Hawkswick Crag. It was first climbed by club member the late Jack Wilson in 1963. Just beyond it was Corner Crack. I say was because most of it fell down one cold and sunny day in February 1969. I am not sure whether it was a club meet or just a gathering of friends for whom my house in Yeadon was an erstwhile club cottage on Saturday nights in those days.

We had worked our way with cold hands along the easy climbs and set

up an abseil down Corner Crack. All but one had gathered for lunch near its base. Still at the top was John Howard, a former club member who had emigrated to Canada a year or two before but was home to spend the winter with us. We were just beginning to eat and drink when his hoarse voice from the crag shouted “below” and a few pebbles fell from under his feet. “OK, they missed us” we responded. “Move, move!” was his now frantic plea. “I’m holding it in, it weighs a ton”. We heeded the urgency

of this response and shuffled off towards the foot of Black Jack. John breathed a sigh of relief and swung to one side on the abseil rope. A huge boulder from the centre of the crack shot out and landed right where we had been eating. John finished his descent and nervous laughter ensued. We ended lunch in sombre mood and decided to call it a day and descended to the pub where



*Photo By: Anthony Raithby*

# Yosemite



*Photo By: Anthony Raithby*

laughter took over. I was back on the crag a couple of years later and Paddy Hunt and I sat on what by then was a very convenient boulder to lunch on while I told him the tale of its birth. I haven't been back since then.

John Howard had a good climbing and skiing life in Canada and America. I think he got married over there. Sadly he was killed in an avalanche. On one of his visits home he gave us an excellent and humorous talk of his ascent of Half Dome at Yosemite. While Bradford was still his permanent abode he used to train for the Alps by running circuits of a local park after dark, carrying a large rucksack weighed down with stones. Our washing line here in Wales hangs from a rope between two trees suspended

on two Ski Hut karabiners from that Half Dome ascent. I was with him once in Borrowdale and he was trying to sell some gear to pay for his return trip to Canada. He had some strange little American

slings which, so far as memory goes, consisted of thin gauged rope on a soft metal runner which could be tapped into a crack by moulding itself into the space. He used these on a thin crack up one side of the Bowderstone by the FRCC cottage and put on a salesman act to try to dispose of them to passing climbers. I don't think the YMC had many members who could afford to be members of the FRCC then, maybe just as well!



## ***Photos and Maps in order of appearance***

1. Cover photo, Everest. From the book Everest summit of achievement by Stephen Venables  
Published by The Royal Geographical Society.

2. An example of a Dolomite rifugio, Rifugio Lorenzi at the start of Via Ferrata Bianchi to the Cima di Mezzo (3154m). Stay overnight before completing the climb to the summit. By Tony Crosby.

3. Star chef in Everest drama. With permission of The Nottingham Post,  
[lynette.pinchess@nottinghampost.com](mailto:lynette.pinchess@nottinghampost.com).

4. Glen Brittle and the Cuillin Ridge.  
Map by Tony Crosby.

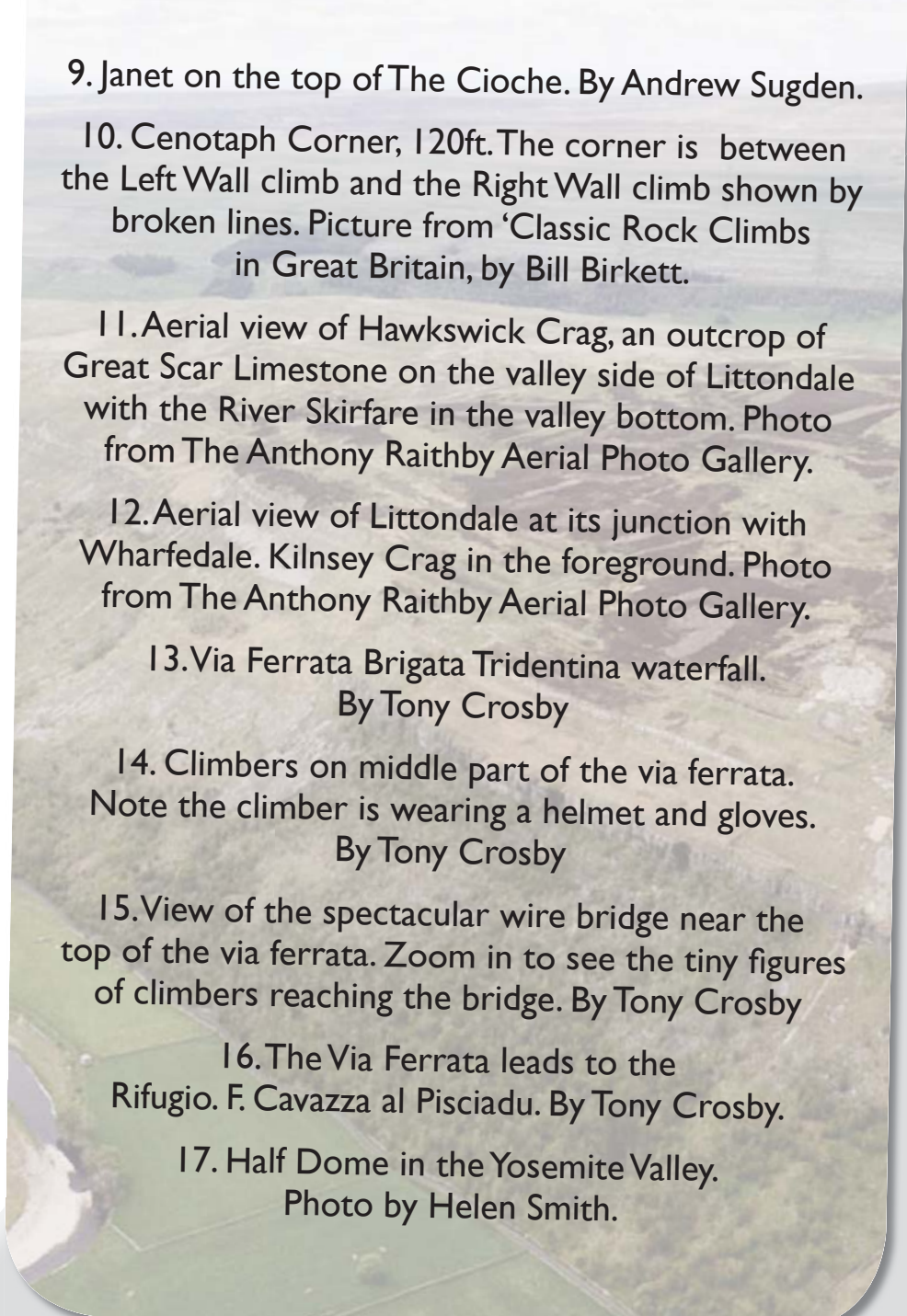
5. Tom Kelly abseiling from a sea cliff during the Isle of Skye meet. By Sean Kelly.

6. Panorama from the Isle of Rum from Ruinsival. Ainsheal and Trollabhal in the distance. Climbers from left to right, Lawrence, Roger, Nigel, Mel and John.  
By Sean Kelly.

7. Janet on the first pitch of a climb with Glen Brittle far below in the background. By Andrew Sugden.

8. A safe belay during the climb with a peak of the Cuillin Ridge in the background. By Andrew Sugden.



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9. Janet on the top of The Cioche. By Andrew Sugden.
10. Cenotaph Corner, 120ft. The corner is between the Left Wall climb and the Right Wall climb shown by broken lines. Picture from 'Classic Rock Climbs in Great Britain, by Bill Birkett.
11. Aerial view of Hawkswick Crag, an outcrop of Great Scar Limestone on the valley side of Littondale with the River Skirfare in the valley bottom. Photo from The Anthony Raithby Aerial Photo Gallery.
12. Aerial view of Littondale at its junction with Wharfedale. Kilnsey Crag in the foreground. Photo from The Anthony Raithby Aerial Photo Gallery.
13. Via Ferrata Brigata Tridentina waterfall.  
By Tony Crosby
14. Climbers on middle part of the via ferrata. Note the climber is wearing a helmet and gloves.  
By Tony Crosby
15. View of the spectacular wire bridge near the top of the via ferrata. Zoom in to see the tiny figures of climbers reaching the bridge. By Tony Crosby
16. The Via Ferrata leads to the Rifugio. F. Cavazza al Pisciadu. By Tony Crosby.
17. Half Dome in the Yosemite Valley.  
Photo by Helen Smith.

# Trans Alpine Babysitter



Photo By: Tony Crosby

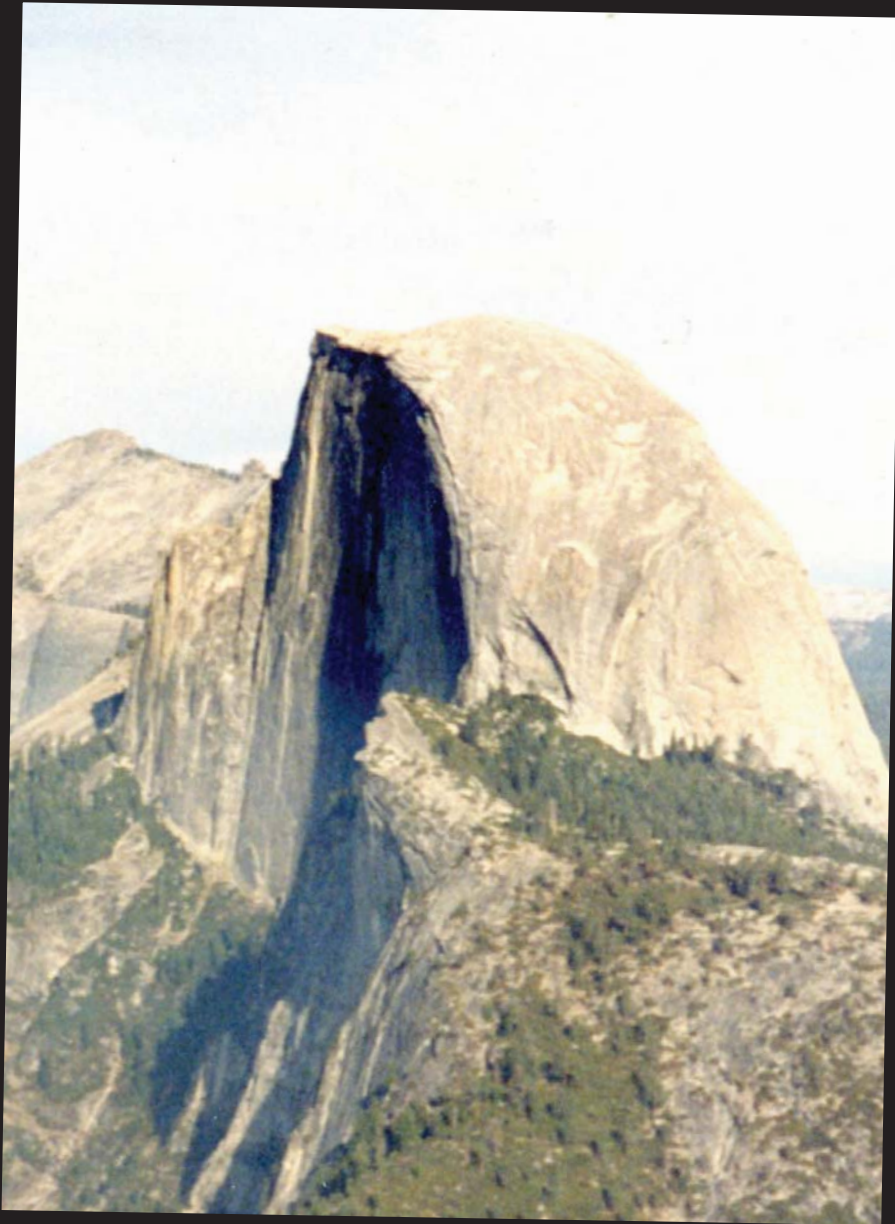


Photo By: Tony Crosby



Photo By: Tony Crosby

**Brigata  
Tridentina a  
classic Dolomite  
via ferrata near  
Corvara, a very  
popular route,  
grade 3B, 300m,  
time 5 to 7 hours.**



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