

# THE YORKSHIRE MOUNTAINEER

Issue: 387  
Winter 2022



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The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club - Founded 1941



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### Cover photos:

As this is a Winter Edition, the cover photos are winter scenes from the 2021 Photo Competition, both by Jane Wainwright. Sorry, I don't have locations.



## From the Editor.

Deadline for input to the next Newsletter, TYM388, is 14th June 2022

As always, material for the next newsletter can be sent to me at:

**[newsletter@theymc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@theymc.org.uk)**

or

**[ymcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ymcnewsletter@gmail.com)**

or my personal e-mail available to Members on the website

Once again, I'd like to thank the contributors who have taken the time to put their experiences down on paper / electronic format. I'd be lost without them. This is a special thank you this time around as I've had to hold some articles back for next time because I have so many. So thanks again.

I also have a number of photo's that I haven't room for, so these too may appear in future editions.

Finally, an apology for this edition being a bit late, our Secretary has a lot on his plate around the AGM and this delayed his input and I also have a lot on so took longer than usual to send in the final version.

*Steve Bostock*

### **With regard to the Scar House Reservoir meet on 20/02/22.**

For the record, as the meet coordinators we abandoned our attempt to get to the start point due to excessive flooding in Nidderdale near Wath a short distance from the start point where the Nidd had breached its banks. Having set off early and made several diversions to avoid flooded and otherwise blocked roads our determination ran out and we retreated in worsening conditions to Grassington and a wet journey home.

We don't believe anyone made it to the start point, no one has been in touch if they did.

**Graham Willis**

## Committee Matters

The Yorkshire Ramblers Club had been in contact with the Secretary regarding a certain aspect of BMC insurance. It was felt that the current system of BMC Liability Insurance regarding Guests and Aspirant Members attending club meets was a barrier to recruitment. The YRC proposal is that the current three-month-grace-period is amended following investigations revealed that UK club activity insurers generally recognise the need to include cover for potential new members to allow attendance at a pre-defined number of club "taster sessions". The YRC are asking for the BMC to change from the current three-month time-limited attendance policy to a four-meet grace-period no time-limit policy.

Clubs affiliated to Mountaineering Scotland and the British Caving Association are already benefitting from such a no time-limit policy so the YMC have agreed to support the YRC proposal which is to be forwarded to the BMC Clubs Committee.

The installation of a signal booster for the Coniston hut is due to take place at the beginning of April. This follows the failure to have a landline installed, due to unavailability and the excess cost of having a new one put in place.

Mentioned in previous issues has been the fact that evidence has been discovered of members unauthorised use of the hut, even during lockdown. As a consequence, the committee is planning to install an alternative lock entry system, with barcodes instead of keys. Development is to take place over the summer, but no specific date for its introduction has been determined.

The Coniston hut opened on 27/10/73 and plans are being considered on how best to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Proposals include organising a special meet at the hut and perhaps producing a small booklet containing photographs. The possibility of inviting Karabiner Club [KC] members of that era was also to be investigated, since the KC were owners of the property before the YMC.

The signs are that the Yorkshire Gritstone Guide Volume 1 will sell out early in 2023 prompting the authorisation of a reprint. This has now been completed and much of the work on this was undertaken by Robin Nicholson, who has had editorial involvement in previous guidebook production. He has also stated that he would be happy to be involved with Volume 2. So in recognition of his contribution, which was for free, he and his family have been offered free membership for 2022 and 2023.

With regard to Annual General Meetings, concern was shown that only members attending such meetings could, for example, elect committee members (where contested) or vote on motions. The view was that all members should be given the opportunity to vote, either by way of a ballot, online or by post. The introduction of such a scheme for the 2022 AGM was not feasible due to time restraints so further discussion was to take place at a later date.

Prior to lockdown, discussions had taken place with the Craven Mountaineering Club [CMC] about organising joint meets where each club's meets looked likely to be undersubscribed. This would also apply to climbing meets. The CMC had been invited to circulate details of the YMC Grassington meet so the result is awaited with interest.

**This issue of the newsletter, TYM 387, is the penultimate one with which Editor Steve Bostock will be involved. His agreed tenure was for eight issues only, it is sad to say. A replacement is yet to be identified but if any member fancies putting their individual stamp on the publication, please do not hesitate to come forward.**

## **Barden Christmas Lunch—12th December 2021**

Kath & Graham; Rob & Becky; Natasha; Abbi; Joanne; Sol and Derek.

A smaller number than usual for a walk that started in poor weather but ended on a high in bright sunshine. The usual route was taken up to and over the upper reservoir, then joining the bridleway from Rylstone. We arrived at the shooting hut just after 12 o'clock, where Sol had arrived a few minutes earlier. A very varied selection of goodies were available, which we attacked with gusto. It was then a casual stroll back to the cars with wonderful views across Wharfedale.

### **Derek Field**



### **Boxing Day**

Ann, Laurie & John Morse; Natasha Cook; Abbi Lawson; Jane Wainwright; Sol Lomas; Kath & Graham Willis and Derek Field.

No snow in Leeds but 4" of it in the car park at the Cow & Calf. Very difficult to even get into the car park with plenty of spinning tyres. We cleared the entrance a bit with the Café owner's shovel which helped until the gritter arrived.



We split into two parties for a walk to the Tarn, a low level group and a high level. The high level team of Natasha, Abbi and Derek arrived first closely followed by the low level party where we had a coffee break.

The high level team then visited the Beck Stone, where Natasha scrambled over the stream to clear the snow off it so it could be photographed.

We then climbed up the side of Backstone Beck until we reached the level area with a choice of ways. We chose correctly as we soon reached the top of the quarry, where the two ladies of the party posed for a photograph with a male member they met.

Descending from the quarry, Abbi found a red plastic sledge, so both she and Derek enjoyed a ride on it back to the car park.

The day ended with three latte's in the heated tent. (Nothing was heard ever again from the low level party).

**Derek**



## Mary Waters

Four of us went by train to the Peak District to meet up with Mike Waters. He was going to take us on a walk up Edale to visit the Woodland Cemetery where his beloved wife Mary is buried.

Mary was a Norfolk girl who came up to Yorkshire to teach in a multi-race school in Bradford in the 1970's. At that time, my two young daughters were taking part in a concert at Cleckheaton Town Hall. Mary came to watch / listen and brought with her a group of her pupils. It was obvious from the well behaved kids that they adored Mary, as did anyone who had the privilege to have known her.

Mike was waiting at Hope Station for us as we climbed down from the train. As we started the walk, a rain / sleet shower swept down the valley, however, it soon blew over and the clouds started to lift from the surrounding hillsides. Patches of blue sky started to appear as we neared the Woodland Cemetery. We all stood in silence around Mary's grave each of us reliving the good times we had enjoyed with Mary over the many years that we had known her.

At that moment, the sun burst through and flooded the woodland setting in lovely winter sunshine, a fine tribute to a very special friend.

On our way back we called in at The Cheshire Cheese pub for some refreshment, sitting around a table in the sunny bar with an open fire. We chatted over the wonderful times that Mary had shared with us.

Back at the Station, with time to spare, we all climbed into Mike's car for a whistle stop tour of the Dark Peak. The honey trap spots of Castleton, up to Whinnats Pass and down into Barber Booth, then down Edale and back to the Station at Hope.

Many thanks to Mike for arranging this visit to Mary's final resting place.

Gone but not forgotten.

**Malcolm (Sol) Lomas – December 2021.**



**The Woodland Cemetery at Hope**

**I can't say I knew Mary well, but what I can say is that I never saw her without a smile on her face. She was a lovely person who will also be remembered by many for the wonderful personalised name cards at many Annual Dinners. - Steve**



**Derek, Mike, Sol and Martin (photo by Jane)**

**SOMETHING ABOUT MARY**

*There was a touch of madness about Mary:  
 Motorbikes in hallways,  
 Flowers in climbing boots,  
 Loopy leggings on lanky legs,  
 Yorkshire tea and Yorkshire slang...  
 She were quite queer... but lovely.*

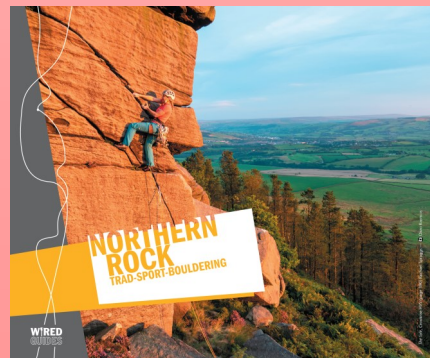
*There was something extraordinary about Mary:  
 Weaving her way up impossible crags,  
 Cycling everywhere and anywhere,  
 Camera in hand, card to follow,  
 Lovely words in floral script...  
 She were quite unique our Mary.*

*There was something special about Mary:  
 A rainbow butterfly dancing on the flower of life,  
 Easily hurt but harming none,  
 Bespectacled smile, unruly hair,  
 All arms, legs and laughter...  
 Our Michael misses Mary.... as do we all.*

**Northern Rock Guide**

We are pleased to be able to announce the imminent publication of a new rock-climbing guidebook - Northern Rock, the latest addition to the Wired Guide series.

This guidebook is not a definitive guide but describes classic routes, at all grades, on crags over the North of England. As well as routes from the guidebooks published by the YMC it also includes routes on the North York Moors, in Northumberland and in Lancashire. The guidebook should be ready to ship in early April and Yorkshire Mountaineering Club members can buy this at the discounted price of only £27.71 + £3 p&p (£36.95rrp + p&p). Pre-orders are being taken now. To get the discounted price you MUST use the members only link on the YMC website. Login and go to <https://theymc.org.uk/discount-guidebooks/>





**No caption required**

### **Let it snow - Let it snow - Let it snow**

A few years ago, we had a Winter Meet, staying in a bunkhouse in Braemar. Of all the years I've been going on winter meets with the YMC, this could be the coldest and snowiest ever.

Getting into the high mountains meant long approaches through deep snow, so that was out of the question. Morrone or Morven, a modest hill overlooking Braemar would give us magnificent 360° views. Just south of Braemar, the Callater Burn flows into the Clunie Waters before joining up with the River Dee in Braemar. It was an incredibly cold and frosty morning as we set off following the Clunie Waters southwards for a while. The ice in the river and frost and snow on the overhanging trees made an incredible winter landscape. We left the riverside and picked up the hill track that would lead us up onto Morrone. The views all around were stunning – to the north-west Braeriach, Cairn Toul and Ben Macdui glistened in the winter sun. To the east, Lochnagar stood out proud, with a bit of imagination it could be Nanga Parbat. We dropped down northwards into a nature reserve and back to Braemar.





**Mary, Mike, Jane & John on the summit of Morrone (photo by Sol)**

Next day, the Highland Council managed to get the road up to the Linn of Dee open. Our plan was to walk to Derry Lodge up Glen Luibeg and hopefully get to Corroul Bothy for lunchtime. On our way to Derry Lodge we met Steve Bostock and Mel & Roger Shaw, who had walked in to Corroul the day before and overnighted there – I hope they had ward sleeping bags (see Postscript – Ed). We were making slow progress in the deep snow and managed to get to the entrance to the Lairig Ghru for a look at Corroul Bothy as a black dot away in the distance and knew we weren't going to make it. We sat down in the snow and ate our sandwiches and sipped our hot drinks, then decided to turn around. It was a long and tiring return journey back to the comforts of the Bunkhouse.

The YMC Winter Meet is officially a long weekend, but we had further plans and the following day we left Braemar for the second part of our winter meet up in Aviemore. The Highway Council had again done a great job keeping the road between Braemar and Tomintoul open, which eased our journey considerably.

In Aviemore, we met up with Brian and Marie Murphy and made our way to our accommodation in the Fell and Rock Hut. The following day, Jane Wainwright and I drove up to the Ski Centre above Loch Morlich. It was another bitterly cold day, with no wind. Jane and I sat at the weather station at the top of Cairngorm with not a cloud in the sky, brilliant sunshine and incredible views. What should we do next? We couldn't miss this opportunity to go for Ben Macdui. A long trudge and deep snow across the Cairngorm Plateau led eventually to the summit cairn – thank goodness we had good visibility.



### **Mary, Mike, Mel, Roger, Steve, Jane and photographer Sol meet up in Glen Lui**

We walked a little further to look into the Lairig Ghru and beyond to the hulking mass of Braeriach and Cairn Toul and their impressive corries. Back at the cairn we congratulated ourselves, we had the whole mountain, the second highest in Scotland, to ourselves. We ate the last of our hill food whilst admiring the stunning views. Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a couple of walkers approached. They had come up by way of the Hutchinson Hut and Choire Etchachan, which is why we hadn't seen them. After chatting and admiring the views it was time to leave. There wasn't a breath of wind, but it was very cold as we said our goodbyes and set off down. As we lost height, we also lost the winter sun which disappeared behind the distant mountains. The lower we dropped so did the temperature. By the time we got down to the Ski Station car park it was nearly dark, but we knew there would be a warm and friendly greeting when we got back to the warm and comfortable Fell & Rock Hut. At the end of an amazing day the stars were shining out of a crystal clear sky as we turned in for a well earned sleep.

Next morning we awoke and couldn't believe our eyes! Some time during the night it had started snowing and it snowed and it snowed. It was obvious that we weren't going anywhere this morning. The first job was to try and dig the cars out. The more we dug, the more it snowed. In the afternoon, we took a walk into Aviemore where lorries were parked nose to tail on either side of the main street, covered in snow. Back to the Hut for more digging snow. We were supposed to be leaving the following day to make way for a party from the Pinnacle Club but we couldn't get out and they couldn't get in – some no problem.



### **Sol and Jane on the summit of Ben Macdui**

Next day there was no let-up in the weather. Behind the YHA in Aviemore is a pedestrian subway that goes under the A9 and leads to a Nature Reserve, so we decided to have a rest from shovelling snow and go for a look. Once onto the wooded hillside the snow was waist deep but we had a peasant afternoon exploring. When we got back, a snow plough had managed to clear the estate road but we still had a lot of digging to do before we could get the cars out to the main road. We were told by the Police that the following day should bring an improvement with the Council working through the night to clear the A9.

So next morning we packed up and were ready to leave just as the first members on the Pinnacle Club started to arrive.

The end of another YMC Winter Meet – the coldest and snowiest that won't be forgotten for a very long time. Thanks to everyone involved for a brilliant winter meet.

**Sol Lomas – December 2021**

### ***Postscript***

We did indeed have very good sleeping bags, but we had also carried 20 odd kg of coal into the Bothy to ensure a cozy night. We had the place to ourselves for most of the evening, but two guys turned up fairly late on to join us. They disappeared very early the next morning and were last seen half way up the steep slopes of Ben Macdui on the far side of the Lairig Ghru. They were clearly very fit.

As Sol has said the conditions were stonking. Checkout the cover photo's on TYM383. Before turning in sometime around midnight we all braved the freezing temperatures to go star gazing, with no cloud and no light pollution, a fabulous sight.

It was this trip that decided me that I had to get my troublesome hip sorted. Carrying a heavy rucksack into the bothy had been a very slow and painful process and only slightly better on the way out with a marginally lighter sack.

I don't recall any problems getting to the Linn of Dee for the walk in but I do remember that the weather was brill both walking in and back out and being very slow I had a well-trodden path to follow all the way. I also well remember meeting Sol and the others on the way out but I had forgotten that photo's were taken, so I've snaffled a copy of that one for myself.

Incidentally, I have also been up Morrone with a large contingent of the YMC, on a previous trip to Braemar. On that occasion the weather wasn't that good and views from the top were non-existent.

**Steve Bostock**



**Deep snow at the Fell & Rock Hut**

## **Pateley Bridge. Nidderdale.**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

Start Point: Southlands Car Park. Pateley Bridge

Attendees: Bill Cordingley and Freda Williamson (guests), Ken Tilford, Eve & Steve Bartlett and Kath & Graham Willis (YMC members).

From the car park in the town centre we headed south to the quiet hamlet of Bewerley, turning right at Turner Bridge. Climbing steeply up through Strikes Wood, we paused several times to take in the views (a good excuse for a breather) and passing the disused quarries we crossed the road and continued up to Yorkes Folly on Nought Moor.



The route took us along the Nidderdale Way at the edge of the moor above Guise Cliff, with a short detour to take in the summit trig point of High Crag. Returning to the Nidderdale Way we headed south towards the village of Hayshaw and the hamlet of Lanes Foot. At the cross roads on Monk Ing Road we found a suitable wall to shelter us from the wind whilst we had our lunch and we were surprised at the amount of traffic for such a remote location.

From here we continued down Monks Ing Road to Dacre Banks where we followed the path alongside the River Nidd, passing Harewell Hall and Farm before dropping down to Glasshouses Bridge. Crossing the river we followed the path back to the car park in Pateley Bridge

Refreshments were taken at The Crown on Pateley Bridge High Street.

The total distance travelled was approximately 15.1km (9.5m) & 352m (1,154ft) of ascent.

**Kath Willis**

## **Langfield Edge and Stoodley Pike**

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January 202

Start Point: Roadside parking near Methodist Church on Mankinholes Bank - SD957 233.

Attendees: Jackie Payne (guest), Mike Belk, Steve Buxton, Peter and Jennifer Tennent, Ken Tilford, Kath and Graham Willis (YMC members).

With the group of seven walkers assembled in good time we made a prompt start down the road passing the church on our right through Lumbutts hamlet. From here we continued up the road and we were surprised to see a car pull up alongside us, with one of our members inside. Despite our offer to wait, he insisted on meeting us further along the route, so we continued uphill until we arrived at the Shepherd's Rest pub at Hey Head Green.

Here we joined the Pennine Bridleway for a short distance to Rake End before taking the path on to Gaddings Dam. As we arrived we encountered a couple exercising at the far bank – it is a very popular spot for wild swimming apparently!

Leaving the dam wall we followed the path on Langfield Edge which was extremely muddy in parts and although it started as a clear day, the cloud base started to lower and our target of Stoodley Pike became less visible the nearer we got to it. Just after Withens Gate on the Pennine Way we passed a group of girls who informed us that our friend was looking for his party and sure enough we caught up with him and then we were eight!

As we arrived at Stoodley Pike we were disappointed that there would be no views today, so climbing the spiral staircase up the monument was not such a tempting prospect. Instead we found some shelter and had an early lunch along with several other groups of walkers and cyclists. It was quite cold and damp so we didn't stay very long and after a group photo in the mist, we headed east on the path downhill.

Crossing a stile on our left we continued in a north easterly direction to Swillington Farm and still following the Pennine Way, we skirted Edge End Moor before taking in the minor top of Lodge Hill. From here we had good views at last and the clouds were starting to disperse as Stoodley Pike came into view once more. It just goes to show you don't need to be at the highest point on a walk to be able to see the big picture.

Dropping down from the stones that marked the summit, we re-joined the Pennine Bridleway on London Road (track) to Mankinholes, south of the Youth Hostel. Here we joined the road down to our start point.

Refreshments were taken by some of the group at the bustling Top Brink Inn at Lumbutts. It was good to see that some remote pubs have managed to survive the pandemic!

The total distance travelled was approximately 13.3km (8.3m) with 358m (1,174ft) of ascent.

**Kath Willis**



## Weekend Meets 2022

All Saturday and Sunday Meets start at 10.00am prompt unless otherwise stated.

Please contact the Meet Coordinator if you intend to join a Meet or require further information.

Please check [www.theymc.com](http://www.theymc.com) for confirmation of start point details.

Meet Co-ordinators' personal email addresses and phone numbers can be obtained from the website membership list or contact the Meets Secretary - [meets@theymc.org.uk](mailto:meets@theymc.org.uk)

### **\*\* Please Note – Covid 19 \*\***

**Due to Covid 19 national and local restrictions some meets may not take place, or may change at short notice. If you intend to attend a meet please check with the meets secretary and/or the respective meet coordinator prior to the meet that it is still going to take place.**

**All meets are to be conducted in accordance with the current government requirements (legal and guidance) for social distancing and some meets may have restricted numbers.**

**Attendance at any meet at the Coniston cottage including maintenance meets is by advance booking only through the hut booking secretary - [ymchut@gmail.com](mailto:ymchut@gmail.com)**

- Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> Alderman's Hill, Pots & Pans, Cotton Famine Road. Peak District.  
Bin Green Car Park, above Dovestones Reservoir. OL3 7NN.- GR SE 017 044  
Kath & Graham Willis – [meets@theymc.org.uk](mailto:meets@theymc.org.uk)
- Apr 8<sup>th</sup> Coniston Hut – Housekeeping Meet. (2 nights).  
Booking - [ymchut@gmail.com](mailto:ymchut@gmail.com)
- Apr 15<sup>th</sup> Easter Club Meet Coniston Hut (4 Nights).  
Booking - [ymchut@gmail.com](mailto:ymchut@gmail.com)
- Apr 24<sup>th</sup> Thixendale via Brubber Dale from Fridaythorpe. Yorks Wolds.  
Roadside parking near pond in Fridaythorpe village. YO35 9RT.  
Ben Gilbert & Graham Willis - [meets@theymc.org.uk](mailto:meets@theymc.org.uk)
- May 1<sup>st</sup> Kinder Scout via Grindsbrook Clough from Edale Village.  
Parking in Edale (pay and display). SK 124 853.  
Natasha Cook - [ctasha@live.co.uk](mailto:ctasha@live.co.uk)
- May 22<sup>nd</sup> Ilkley Moor. Yorkshire Dales. Navigation Training Meet. Cow & Calf Car Park.  
Approx. post code LS29 9RF – GR SE 130 467.  
Derek Field - [derek-field@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:derek-field@hotmail.co.uk)
- May 28<sup>th</sup> Skye Spring Bank Holiday Hostel Meet. Portree (7 Nights)  
Natasha Cook - [ctasha@live.co.uk](mailto:ctasha@live.co.uk)
- June 5<sup>th</sup> Buckden Pike. Yorks Dales.  
Buckden village car park. BD23 6RE - GR SD 942 773. Approx. post code BD23 5JA.  
Eve & Steve Bartlett - [stevebarts@talktalk.net](mailto:stevebarts@talktalk.net)
- June 24<sup>th</sup> Coniston Hut – Housekeeping Meet. (2 nights). Booking - [ymchut@gmail.com](mailto:ymchut@gmail.com)

## Winter in Scotland

The 2022 YMCA Winter Meet was arranged for Thursday February 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> inclusive. When organising the trip last autumn, I found that July's "Freedom Day" from Covid restrictions had meant a flood of bookings for Scottish Huts, and so we were unable to get one. The location was therefore the Backpackers Hostel in Fort William, which was actually something of a hit.

We ended up with only four members attending, having had a couple of cancellations. Two of my previous three Club Winter Meets have had closer to 10 members attending, and I enjoy the opportunity that the long weekend provides of getting to know other members a little better. However, only having a few attendees certainly eased the accommodation and booking arrangements and it worked out well.

Giles Drinkall and Steve Buxton drove up together, whilst Mike Belk arrived having already spent a week doing Munros. We found that the Hostel was small but had a good and friendly mix of walkers and climbers, a cheerful dining room and an excellent crushed-sofa-and-open-fireplace lounge.

We arrived at the tail end of Storm Dudley, which had battered northern England and Scotland (whilst Storm Eunice was hammering the Midlands and the South a day later). Friday - our first opportunity to get out - was predicted to be fairly breezy with circa 30 mph winds gusting to 50 mph in the valleys, and a high chance of precipitation. Our group had a range of experience of winter conditions, with one member not having used ice axe and crampons before. So we decided to wander up to the CIC hut from the North Face Car Park, to see what conditions looks like. Consensus in the Hostel was that there was so much powder snow around that the avalanche risk meant everybody was keeping well away from gullies.

This was a bit of a disappointment to me. In February 2015 I went up No.4 Gully as part of a guided group in conditions of a perfect blue sky and no wind. It was stunningly beautiful, with a continuous background noise of shutters clicking from everybody on the Ben, all day long. I had visions of the Friday spent "loosening up" on the CMD arete, Saturday consisting of various gullies possibly progressing to something exciting (for me) on the Sunday such as The Ledge Route. I'd been consulting my new book "Scotland's Winter Mountains with one axe". But the weather had different ideas.

We walked up to the Hut through progressively deeper powder snow, being blown around by the wind and sinking up to our knees in the shallow depressions. Cloud base was only about 700 m. A short lunch was taken in the lee of the empty Hut, which had been vacated earlier by five Italians we had met on the walk in. They had spent five days in the Hut, but had only managed to go climbing on two of them. We met several other sets of climbers, and the common line was "we're just having a look, it's probably too risky to do anything".

That evening one of the other climbers in the Hostel said that he and his partner had attempted to reach the Douglas Boulder, but their short walk up the slopes had triggered three small slips, so they retreated to avoid setting off something more dangerous.

The weather forecast told us that Storm Franklin would be arriving fairly hard on the heels of Storm Dudley but that the following day, Saturday, would be the lull between the two, and should be a clear, still day. Giles and I decided to go for the CMD arete whilst Mike and Steve targeted a Munro on the other side of Loch Linnhe.



## The CMD trip

It was indeed a beautiful day of blue skies, sunshine and a gentle breeze predicted to last until early afternoon when fog / lowering cloud was due to arrive.

We were leaving the North Face Car Park by 7:40am. A rosy hue was discernible on the summit of Ben Nevis, and the higher we climbed up Càrn Mòr Dearg the better the view got as more and more snow-covered tops came into the scene. We were luckily able to follow in previously-stamped-down footsteps for nearly all of the ascent, significantly reducing the effort. Above 1000m the powder snow had consolidated into an icy crust that was generally strong enough to hold our weight and which (mostly) was covered in tiny, rimed nodules that gave excellent grip to crampon-less boot soles. (I imagine there is a proper name for this, so perhaps members would like to write in to let me know.) A little higher, albeit on relatively shallow slopes, we found areas of ice that didn't have this highly adhesive surface. Given we were on a convex slope, we decided it was time for crampons.

We reached the summit of Càrn Mòr Dearg at 11:00am, bang on schedule. The arete was glorious, with only a couple of places where particular care was needed, and provided a comfortable lunch stop with stunning views towards the end.

The summit of the Ben was a cheerful place with everyone telling everyone else what a fabulous day it was. Giles and I checked the "standard" navigation mantra from the trigpoint of 231° for 150m then 281° for 1km. At the end of the initial 150m section, we saw that we were within 10m of the lip of Gardyloo Gully. It was absolutely fine in good visibility, but this is supposed to work in a hoolie. In that context, it was much too close for comfort in my book. So I would be tempted to take direction slightly more forgiving – say 225° from the trig point for 160m, and then revert to the 281° for 1 km thereafter. I couldn't see anything dangerous in that more southerly angle, and it is in fact much closer to the "path" that people were taking. I realise that this is contrary to accepted wisdom, and that there is usually a lot of – well, wisdom - in that which is accepted. If any members want to explain why a bearing of 225° is more dangerous than the "standard" 231°, I'd be very interested to hear it.

The rest of the walk down was uneventful. We shed our crampons before the dip down to the Lochan and tried (generally unsuccessfully) to scoot down the snow slopes on our backsides / sides. I've heard people talk about glissading, but I feel that that is too elegant a term for what was really bum-scudding. And not very good scudding at that.

The final stretch from the Lochan back to the car park was something of a slog across interminable shallow dips meaning we would be up to our knees (and occasionally thighs) ploughing through powder, stepping briefly onto rock / heather, then into another dip, and another one, and another one. You get my drift.

Eight and a half hours after setting off we were glad to be back at the car, but only 10 minutes after that we were feeling extremely pleased with ourselves. It had been an excellent day.

The Attempted Munro – Mike Belk writes.....

The day dawned bright and clear and we were on the Corran ferry by 8 am, the intention being the Corbett Carn Na Nathrac on the Ardgor peninsula. We duly disembarked and set off on the main road to Strontian where we turned off onto a minor single track road for 5 miles. This road went over a pass 350 metres above sea level and the snow and ice on the untreated road became a cause for concern as we ascended. at the car about 1 o'clock.



### **Beinn na h-Uamha**

However, we had snow tyres on the car and we reached the top without mishap, only to be met by a local on foot who told us his van was stuck 500 yards down the other side blocking the road. After some debate we decided to turn around and return towards the ferry where there was another potential Corbett to climb called Beinn na h-Uamha.

We soon found the starting point and parked up, but we knew there was a potential problem waiting for us in that after the initial 5 Km walk in, there was the river Gour to cross. When we got there, the river crossing did look very difficult, and after roaming up and down the bank for 20 minutes we reluctantly came to the conclusion that we wouldn't be able to cross without wading. Again, we turned back, extremely disappointed, and we had lunch back

At this point Steve suggested that we go back across to the mainland and go up the cable car at the ski centre, where we might get a couple of hours to practice some ice axe and crampon skills. Desperate to rescue something from what was ironically the best weather day of the Scottish winter, we shot over to the Nevis range and we were on the cable car by 2 o'clock. We did find some snow and ice to practice on but

it was largely too soft and deep for ice axe arrest. However, we still thought it a worthwhile experience and enjoyed it, in spite of having to queue for 45 minutes to get the cable car back down!

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Steve and Giles had to return home on the Sunday morning. Mike and I were booked for another day. But the weather forecast told us that Storm Franklin was arriving Saturday night and that Sunday would be extremely windy with a lot of rain / snow. Were we tempted to go and get lost in a whiteout somewhere up a hill? Briefly. Then we decided that we too would head for home. Mike had already been away 10 days and I had one week of climbing in Spain booked for a couple of weeks' time, so we both thought it better to preserve a little relationship capital. Thus ended the 2022 YMC Winter Meet. It was short, but thoroughly enjoyable.

**Andrew Drury**



**Andrew on the CMD arete**

## And finally.....

If there's anything more that you think the club should be doing please let the committee know: by speaking to a committee member or email the club Secretary - [ymcsec2016@gmail.com](mailto:ymcsec2016@gmail.com)



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