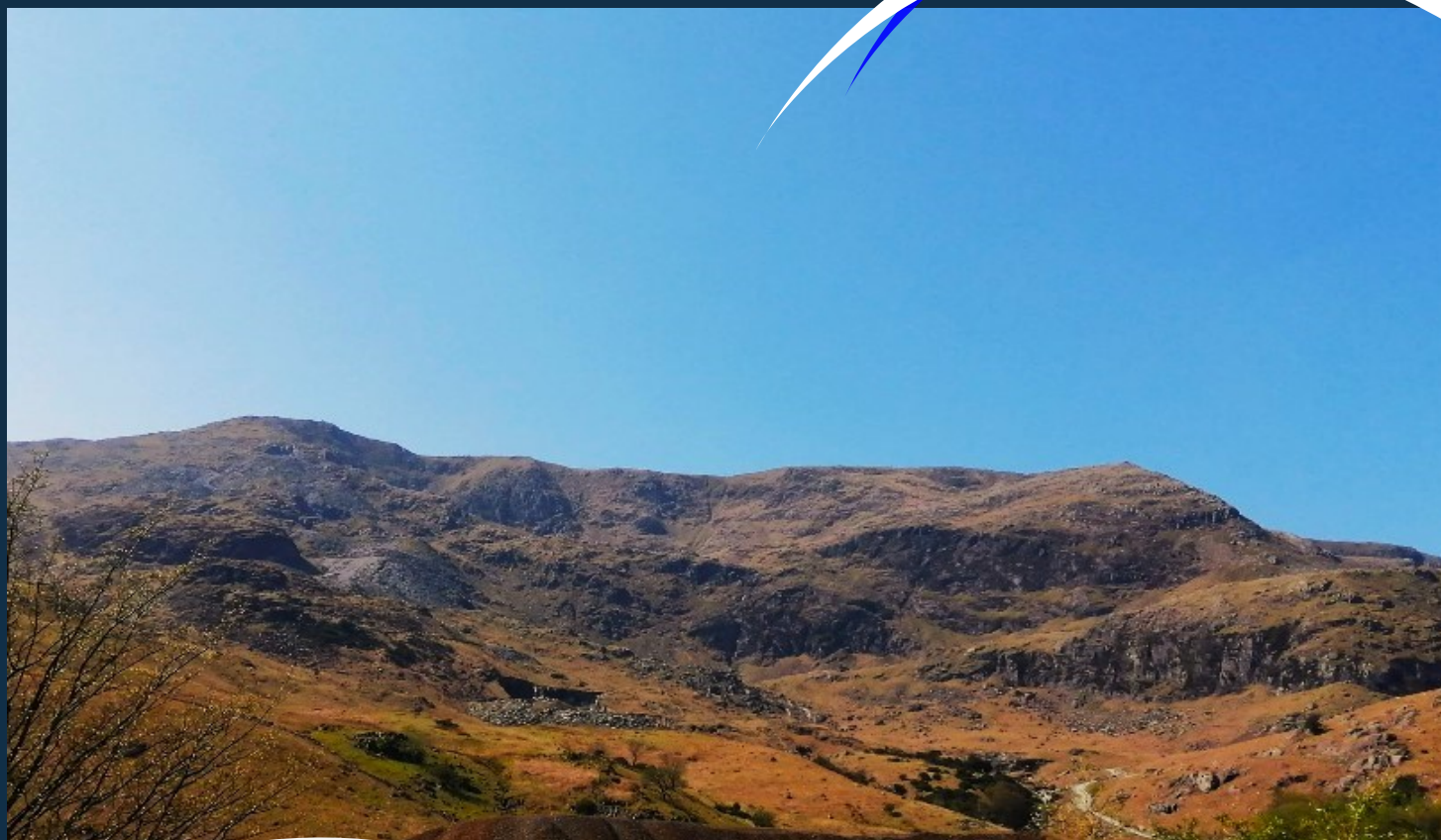


THE YORKSHIRE MOUNTAINEER

Issue: 393

Summer 2023

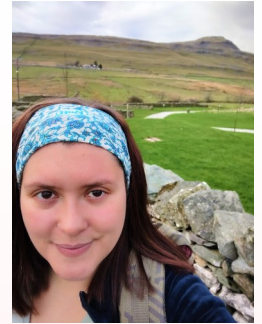


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The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club - Founded 1941

Welcome From the Editor



Well what a lovely summer! I hope you all managed to make the most of the weather be it in the UK or abroad.

Chris and I were lucky enough to stay at Catgills Campsite for a long weekend after our wedding in July, which meant we took some lovely long walks around Bolton Abbey, along the Wharfe and for lovely pub lunches. Sadly the antiques bookshop was closed, although secretly I think Chris wallet was quite glad! Never mind just an excuse to get back out that way again.

The weekend did make us both appreciate what he have so close to home. So often we think to get away for a weekend you have to travel further a field to “make it worth it”, but just that change of scenery no matter how far away, getting out of the house, away from the day to day routines is what hiking, climbing and mountaineering is all about. It’s easy to forget that, so consider this your reminder! Money is tight for a lot of people these days, so get out and explore what is around you, you might be surprised at what you discover!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Huts 50th Anniversary meet in October.

Deadline for input to the next Newsletter is **1st December** to allow time to compile it and sent it off to the printers before the Christmas festivities take over!

Material for the next newsletter can be sent to me at:

newsletter@theymc.org.uk

Soraya Marshall



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Cover photos:

Front: Looking out from Irish Row– Soraya Marshall

Rear: A stroll along the River Wharfe– Soraya Marshall





Committee Matters

Members were informed in the last issue that no firm plans had been established in connection with the Hut 50th Anniversary celebrations scheduled to take place over the weekend of October 20th, 21st and 22nd. It can now be reported that this has changed dramatically.

Confirmation has been received of the attendance at the event of Alan Hinkes, the first British mountaineer to climb all the world's 8,000 metre peaks. Alan will be giving a presentation during the course of the proceedings.

Catering for the event has been finalised and it is understood that a variety of main courses will be available, including vegetarian options, and there will also be nibbles, starters and desserts. Coniston Brewery has been contacted to provide barrels of beer and a variety of wines will also be available.

The 10th Anniversary celebrations which took place in 1983 attracted an attendance in excess of 50 and it is anticipated that numbers could approach that on this occasion.

As a precaution against any inclement weather and also to accommodate numbers, a marquee has been purchased and this is to be erected on the car parking area at the front of the property. As a consequence, member parking will not be available there. Vehicular access for the other cottages in the row will be possible.

Parking will be possible on the track down from the hut and it is likely that the flat area below the spoil heaps a little further up will also be made available.

Some work in the members' cottage will have been completed in time for the event: the wooden storage frame above the worktop is to be removed and the walls on either side of the cooking area will be tiled as in the main kitchen. Stainless steel shelving will be installed. These changes are planned to open up the area.

A proposal was made to raise the hut fees for use of the members' section of the property. The current rate of £4 per person per night was to increase to £5, guests would go up from £8 to £10 and guest children from £4 to £5.

These new rates are planned to take effect from January 1st 2024.

Not only was it pointed out that the increased revenue would offset the considerable increase in electricity costs expected, but also the length of time since the last increase. This took place in 2016 and it also worth noting that when the hut re-opened in 2009 following an extensive refurbishment, fees increased from £2 to £3.

The Hut Warden reported that electricity at the hut had again been left on by members vacating it. In an attempt to prevent a recurrence, notices were to installed but again it must be repeated that members should be aware of their responsibilities when visiting the hut.

The new club website is still not operational. This is due to certain technical problems which are in the process of being resolved and our in-house designers are confident that it will be up and running later in the year.

An important change being planned in the design is to make the club meets list available to anyone who visits the site: currently this is only available to members. This would be a list only, for promotional purposes, but a members only link would allow access to more detailed information on any specific meet.

Volume 2 of the club's Gritstone Guide had now sold out. Former YMC guide editor Robin Nicholson has been advised of the situation and although he had not yet responded, it was hoped the proceedings for a reprint would commence in the near future.

Concern had been shown about the lack of climbing meets in the club calendar, with only two only two official ones taking place in 2023. There was considerable interest from within the Thursday Regulars WhatsApp group in holding more in order to promote the club. Several members of this had shown willingness to organise an official meet and this was to be taken into consideration when the 2024 meets list was formulated.

Chris and Gemma Stanley were accepted as full members and a warm welcome is extended to them.

House-Keeping Meet

Date: 16th– 18th June 2023

I thought this was a really successful work meet; nine people attended, but the number and variety of jobs completed would suggest a greater number.

One job I was dreading was to do a stock take, a quick delegation saved me this task thanks to Pavirnlia and Zuzan, who was on her first work meet, the pair worked together doing various tasks including a thorough degrease of the ovens.

Usually on work meets there is the usual background noise of hammering and drilling, but this time there was also the purr of a sewing machine controlled by Kath who altered several curtains in the lounges, Graham stuck up the rails to hang them, so along with the new lighting and USB points installed in the members lounge a tranquil environment has been created to help one relax in front of the fire after a day on the hill.

Talking of fires, chainsaw Matt did some prudent pruning of one of the diseased trees. The result of this is now housed in a log store constructed at the rear of the hut. Matt worked with an enthusiastic apprentice, Bill, many believe he was a doctor, but I think he was probably a tree surgeon! The only person who could swing a chopper like him was Erik the blood axe.

Also, some repair work was done by Ian replacing a burnt out extractor fan and then spending an inordinate length of time screwed up in the meter cupboard, diverting wiring to hopefully prevent it happening again should people leave the light on. It's also worth mentioning that Ian made the gaping hole in the lounge ceiling, but it was necessary to complete the five minute job of resealing the shower tray.

Most of these jobs were overseen by Dave who also did some plastering in preparation for painting at a future work meet. Myself, I just strolled around with a clipboard and stopwatch, but don't let that put you off coming on a work meet.

As I say, I was amazed at the amount of work done as most of Saturday we were guests at a party hosted by Phillip Johnson; free beer was available all day, just help yourself. Food kept coming in the form of pies, sandwiches, hot dogs, chicken and desserts throughout the day and into the evening when a live band played into the early hours. He also had a guest celebratory, Alan Hinkes, who seemed happy enough to spend most of his time with us at our table.

There are plenty of jobs to do at the next work meet scheduled for the 6th October; it would be nice to see some new faces, or the return of some old ones.

During the course of the meet we usually have a free, sociable, catered meal. But now as an extra incentive, due to the cost of fuel in attending a meet, the committee have agreed, that on a trial basis those attending the meet will be granted a free night at the hut, to be taken anytime!

Ken Tilford

YMC Meet Report- Millington Dale and Holm Dale

Date: Sunday 14th May 2023

Attendees: Ben Gilbert, Tony Raithby, Graham Willis, Kath Willis

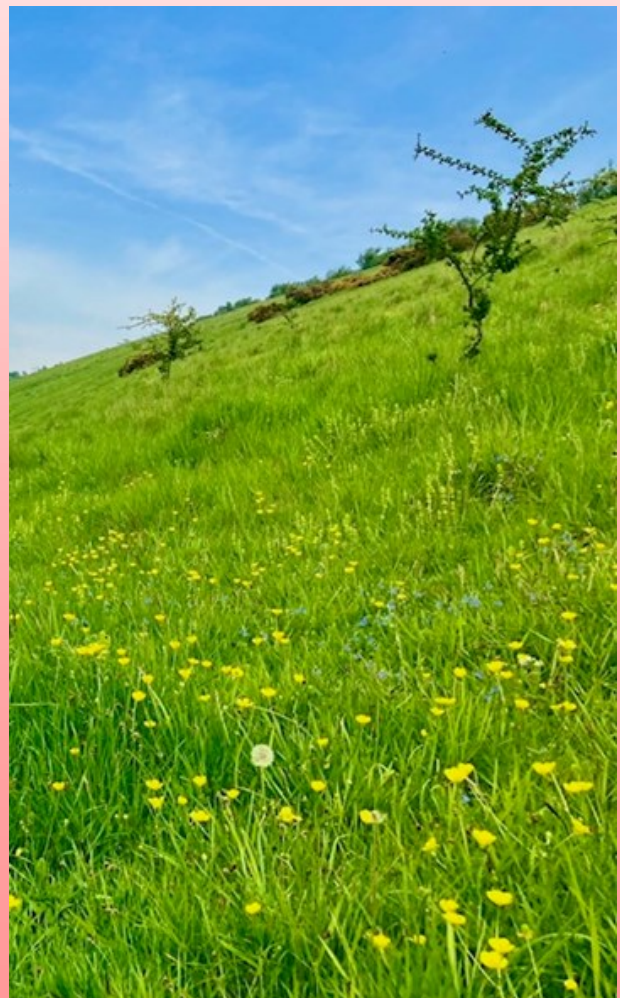
The group set off from the car park at Millington Wood and after a short distance along the road we crossed a stream via a footbridge and climbed up the hillside to join the footpath northward that incorporates the route of the Chalkland Way, Minster Way and the Yorkshire Wolds Way. After dropping and then regaining a little height as we crossed Nettle Dale, the route then turned left and took us along the southern side of Pasture Dale. From there we crossed a couple of fields to head towards Horse Dale and then walked along the southern hillside of Horse Dale.

At the end of Horse Dale a convenient bench provided a suitable place to stop for lunch.

After lunch we dropped down into Holm Dale where we walked along the valley bottom. At the head of Holm Dale we climbed back up on to the chalky farmland and took the footpath through Wold House Farm.

This footpath brings us out onto a country road, on the other side of which, just a short distance away, we re-joined the Chalkland Way to make our way back to the start point via Tun Dale, Frendal Dale, Millington Dale.

The group then headed to the Gait Inn at Millington a mile away for refreshments. The weather which had been reasonable all day by this time had turned warm and sunny so we were able to enjoy some refreshment in the sunshine in the Gait Inn beer Garden.





Holm Dale

One Man's Legacy

For many years now, there has been a gaping hole in the lexicon of mountaineering literature, that is, a biography of Tom Patey. This hole has now been filled with the excellent "One Man's Legacy – Tom Patey" by Mike Dixon, published by Scottish Mountaineering Press, at £30.

This book has been meticulously researched and is obviously written with the blessing of Tom's family, with his son, Ian, contributing memories and many photographs. Tom's life is detailed from his early years in Ellon, Aberdeenshire to his untimely, early death on The Maiden, in 1970. His many accomplishments in Scotland, the Alps and the Himalayas are described without getting overly involved in the technicalities of his many new routes. But what really comes across is a sense of the man. Driven, with boundless energy, a sense of adventure and making the most of every hour of daylight. He did, on many occasions, climb all day, socialise into the wee hours, then travel miles to make morning surgery in Ullapool, where he was the GP, with apparently no visible effects.

He was also an outstanding musician, who never travelled without his piano accordion and was always up for providing the entertainment into the early hours at a lock-in somewhere.

Mike Dixon does not gloss over Patey's faults. Like many driven mountaineers he was selfish and at times thoughtless. Like many in the 50's and 60's, he was known to pop the odd pill to stimulate performance and / or wakefulness. But it should be remembered that amphetamines were not banned until 1964 and up to that time were available in various forms over the counter at the chemist. Patey, as a doctor, would have known more than most the downside of pill popping, but went ahead anyway.

He climbed on rock, making some notable first ascents, but his forte was snow and ice, particularly mixed routes. He was also climbing in the time before rock boots, crampons and curved pick ice axes, so his footwear was usually nailed boots, which on snow and ice meant cutting steps. Also, much of his climbing, including first ascents was done solo. He obviously had some neck.

He was known to be often woefully ill-dressed for the Scottish winter conditions and never cooked, unless it was breakfast to get everyone out on the hill in good time.

To anyone of my generation, he was a mountaineering star, equal in stature to Brown, Whillans, Bonnington, et al and this book is an excellent read that I recommend to all with an interest in knowing how many of today's trade routes came into being.

Steve Bostock



*Dr Tom Patey below the crags of Beinn Dearg, Ross-shire, in 1969.
Picture: John Cleare/Mountain Camera Picture Library*

Flirting with the Himalayas

I've recently been reading Stephen Venables's autobiography "Higher than the eagle soars" (very good btw) and his early trips to the Himalayas were via the Karakorum Highway (KKH) and this got me thinking about the times I have been to these high places. This is more a tale of travel in high places than any summits gained, but I hope you find it interesting.

My first flirtation was in 1990 during a month-long tour around India. We found ourselves in Shimla, the summer capital in the days of the Raj and for some reason took a day trip into the local hills. I can't recall the point of the day trip, where it went or why, but I do remember shivering on a minibus as it traversed roads with two inches of snow. I was totally unprepared for the cold conditions; it was shorts and tee shirt weather back in Shimla and we weren't dressed for snow on the ground. Shimla is at 2276m and we had spent the first half of the trip ascending so I shouldn't have been surprised by the conditions, just better prepared.

Leh, the capital of Ladakh in northern India, is at 3500m and we flew in there from Delhi in 1994 on an Explore Worldwide 14 day tour. After a few days in Leh to acclimatise our small group of a dozen or so were driven into the hills to start a five day (four night) trek. The nights were cold, but the days were warm and pleasant, with cloudless sky; the going was dry and dusty. The trekking was fairly moderate, walking four to five hours each day, travelling westwards crossing north / south valleys draining into the mighty Indus to the south. Some of the valley sides were fairly steep but the path always took the easiest way up, usually with many zig-zags easing the gradient. The scenery was stunning and the views spectacular as we enjoyed good weather for the whole trek.

The trekkers carried day sacks and the rest of the gear was managed by a number of porters, as is usual on this type of trip. The campsites were idyllic, sometimes quite remote but usually on the fringes of a village, which gave us the opportunity to meet the locals, who were always friendly and welcoming. On the first evening I was washing off the dust of the day in a nearby stream when a red stain travelled down the water from up-stream as the cook's assistant dispatched two chickens for the evening meal. Food on the trip was always plentiful and appetising – and fresh! At the end of the trek we were bussed back to Leh for a few more nights.

After a day's rest mooching around Leh we had a choice, a day trip to visit a couple of large Buddhist temples or white-water rafting on the River Indus – it took us about a nano-second to decide. Eight of us were driven a few miles out of Leh to a suitable boarding point on the river, given 10 minutes instruction and bundled into an inflatable with two guys who, hopefully, knew what they were doing, one at the bow and one at the back steering.

We rafted for a couple of hours through three areas of rapids between steep walls with quiet, restful, smooth water in between. The last of the three was the big one, longer than the first two lengths and at Grade 3, harder. Mid-stream you couldn't see the boulders as gallons of rushing water totally covered them and these were avoided by following the instructions shouted from the rear of the dinghy; paddle right, paddle left, or paddle both. At changes in direction there was usually a boulder the size of a small house forcing the river, right or left with tons of water smashing into them before spilling one way or the other. These required more work to avoid as the water tended to send you straight at them. At the end of the trip, we were all very wet and knackered but with grins from ear to ear.

The following day we were driven out of the Leh valley southwards towards Manali, crossing the Taglang La. At the summit of this Col there was the following sign. 17582 feet is about 5360m so breathing was a bit of a struggle but what struck me was the term "Is not it?" on the sign. I think we would say "Is it not": but thinking about it "isn't it" is a literal interpretation of "Is not it" so the sign was grammatically correct if a little odd.

From the Taglang La it was downhill all the way, through innumerable zig-zags, to Manali, with a camp on the way on a high alp where we had an altercation with a local yak. We over-nighted again in Manali, having walked the last mile as the road was blocked by a land slip, before driving on to Chandigarh and the train back to Delhi and the end of the trip.



Image from Wikimedia under creative commons licence

Back in Delhi we had a couple of days sight-seeing before boarding a plane to Islamabad. Before taking off, the Captain came over the tannoy and told us that “God willing” we would land in Islamabad in just over an hour. It was not a comfort; I’m used to relying on the skill of the air crew to get me from A to B rather than the whims of a capricious supreme being.


From Islamabad, we had a flight booked to Gilgit on the same day, but that was wishful thinking. Back then, and maybe still, flights to Gilgit flew by line of sight up the Indus valley, so if the whole route wasn’t clear the plane didn’t take off and there was only one flight a day. That was the case for us, so we had to find some overnight accommodation.

Fortunately, we fell in with a group of Pakistani lawyers who were also off to Hunza (our ultimate destination) for their holidays, and they too needed a hotel. They organised a couple of cabs to Rawalpindi where the hotels are cheaper, negotiated for two rooms with us out of sight (westerners pay more), one for all of them and one for us, then got us back to the airport the following day and onto the next flight. Speaking the language, being erudite and fairly forceful obviously helped with all of this, we had really struck lucky.

We were also lucky in getting a seat on the right-hand side of the plane, as the route took us past Nanga Parbat and we got great views of the mountain at some distance as we passed.

Having landed in Gilgit, our new found friends sorted hotel rooms for us and them and a minibus up the Karakorum Highway the following day to Karimabad, the capital of the Hunza region. The KKH is a spectacular route blasted through the mountains by the Chinese, to cross the Khunjerab Pass to Kashgar, it is fairly narrow with many bends and slopes. Presumably, when built it was in good condition, but with minimal maintenance it had started to deteriorate, so there were many potholes to negotiate / avoid whilst also avoiding the manic truck drivers coming in the opposite direction. So, a relaxing drive, it was not, also we didn’t get to see much of the scenery as we were in the middle at the back in a very crowded minibus. After several hours of severe bumping around we arrived in Karimabad, the capital of the Hunza region, where our friends and us just about filled all the available accommodation. All the accommodation was fairly basic, no en suites here and no hot water. Water came from a glacial stream so washing your hair was a bit traumatic in the chilly water, leading in my case to a severe headache.

We had hoped to do a little trekking in the Rakaposhi area but unfortunately tourism infrastructure in the area was non-existent at that time and I couldn’t get anything organised. Travelling light, we didn’t have the equipment to go off solo, so we just mooched around for a day or so before heading back to Gilgit. Rakaposhi is the local ‘big hill’ to Karimabad



and on a fine day it can be seen in all its glory. Unfortunately, whilst there the cloud remained low and Rakaposhi was obscured, except for the lowest slopes.

From Gilgit we got yet another minibus to Skardu. The road to Skardu is far worse than the KKH, being un-paved, narrower and with the mighty Indus River waiting far below for any vehicles that slide off the crumbling edge of the road. Again, with manic truck drivers hogging the road it was not a relaxing trip.

As in Hunza we had hoped to do some low level trekking in the Skardu area but the day after arriving I fell ill with a raging fever, high temperature and severe shivers, that put me flat on my back for 36 hours. A medic with a large American trekking group staying at the same hotel couldn't diagnose the problem and suggested that we should get back to civilisation asap. Enquiries confirmed that flights out in the next few days were unlikely due to the weather conditions, so we hired a jeep and driver to take us back to Gilgit. An American lass we had met also wanted to get out of town so sharing with her reduced the cost of the hire, which wasn't extortionate in the first place. However, sharing

with her was a real blessing. Her Dad was the American Cultural Attaché in Islamabad and was driving up to Chilas to meet her. This meant we didn't have to travel up to Gilgit to get a bus but could turn left at the KKH and head straight down the valley.

Of course, by the time we got to Chilas my fever had subsided and the weather had improved and that night we were treated to a wonderful night sky, wall to wall stars and no cloud or light pollution. Fabulous!

The trip back to Islamabad was in the height of luxury, a chauffeur driven, air-conditioned, 4-wheel drive SUV. Also fabulous.

After a couple of nights R & R in Islamabad we returned to India for the rest of our trip.

Pakistan hadn't resulted in any trekking as had been hoped but we had met some great people, seen some spectacular scenery and driven the worst road I have ever had the misfortune to come across.

I've only had one other brush with the Himalayas, with a fuzzy view of Everest from a viewpoint in Darjeeling. I would have liked to do more trekking in these magnificent mountains but trips to other parts of the world have got in the way; I'm not complaining, I've been on some brilliant trips and you can't have everything. I'm way too old and unfit now to undertake the sort of trip I would want to do (Annapurna circuit, Concordia, etc) so will just have to accept my lot and rely on the memories I have.

Steve Bostock

Weekend Meets 2023

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 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

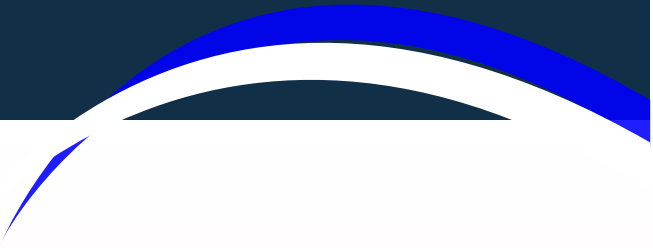
Attendance at any meet at the Coniston cottage including maintenance meets is by advanced booking only through the hut booking secretary, Claire Howarth.

October

- Oct 1st Langfield Common & 4 Reservoirs. Littleborough.
Peak District. OL15 0LG.
Car parking near The White House pub adjacent Blackstone Edge Reservoir.
GR SD 974 180 - Kath & Graham Willis.
- Oct 6th Coniston Hut – Housekeeping Meet. (2 nights).
Hut Booking Secretary
- Oct 20th Coniston Cottage Opening ~ 50th Anniversary Club Meet (2 Nights).
Accommodation Booking - Hut Booking Secretary.
Shared meal is planned for the Saturday evening.

November

- Nov 3rd Coniston Hut – Club Bonfire Meet. (2 nights).
Hut Booking Secretary.



Nov 19th Simon's Seat from Barden Bridge. Near Bolton Abbey. Yorks Dales.
Roadside Car Parking - GR SE052572 or Approx Sat Nav - BD23 6AT
Eve & Steve Bartlett.
Meet Time – 10:30am.

December

Dec 8th Emily Kelly Hut – Pinnacle Club, Snowdonia (2 Nights).
Nantgwynant. - GR SH.653.541
David Lomas.

Dec 17th Xmas Fuddle Walk - Barden Moor, Skipton. Yorks Dales.
Barden Scale. Approx Postcode BD23 6AP- Roadside parking -
GR SE051568.
Derek Field.

Dec 22nd Xmas / New Year Coniston Hut Club Meet (11 nights).
Hut Booking Secretary.

Dec 26th Ilkley Cow & Calf – Traditional Boxing Day Meet.
Cow & Calf Public Car Park. Approx post code LS29 9RF –
GR SE130467
Derek Field.

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



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Summer 2023

The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club - Founded 1941