

red rope bulletin 29 *autumn 2015*



It did not matter that it was raining, cold and misty, the mountains of Glencoe looked majestic, stern, rugged, foreboding - full of mystery and legend. In short, they were magnificent and with wonderful clean air. That's what 10 Red Ropers found when we were up in the Glen during the first week of June.

The contrast between scenes of the mighty Glen and the chaotic scenes just weeks earlier at Nick Clegg's office in the heart of crowded, pollution filled London, when Liberal bigwigs realised that most of their Lib-Dem traitors were about to be booted out of parliament, never to return, could not have been more stark!

We stayed at The Alex Mac hut which, although by the A82 road, feels nevertheless quite remote. It is just north of Glencoe, in North Ballachulish. Walking up hills in Glencoe Pass is extremely exhilarating. The sense of wilderness when you look down the Glen is awesome. Many of us went up Aonach Dubh, in the Three Sisters range, (892 metres) involving 800 metres of ascent. Others went beyond the CIC hut on Ben Nevis. (The lower photo shows the north face of the Ben from the hut.) The higher you get the more snow appears – even in June. Despite the mist the scenery and views were incredible.

The next day some of us went up Sgorr Dhearg, which at a whopping 1024 metres is a fine Monro and part of the legendary Ballachuish Horseshoe. It was June 4<sup>th</sup>, my birthday, which I share with Barbara who was also on the trip. I will always remember the day well.

The summit of the snow-covered peak looked formidable as we approached. You would have to be pretty hard to attempt it. That would disqualify Nick Clegg, not that we would have him on a Red Rope trip anyway. However, it would also disqualify me!

Dave Symonds read my thoughts. "The snow is on the north face. The snow on the south face is probably minimal or non-existent. If we go to the south we can take it easily with an assault straight up that path we can just about see." He jabs out his arm. I thought, "No, it's a suicide job. Dave seems to think he is some sort of military strategist, perhaps the reincarnation of General Vasili Chuikov, commander of the legendary 62<sup>nd</sup> Siberian army at Stalingrad".

*(I did not think I was General Chuikov, mainly because I had never heard of him! DS.)*

Anyway, three of us: me, Dave, and GPS whiz David Levine attempted the summit, and do you know what? We made it. What a birthday treat! Much better than the standard birthday activity of being flat out in Wetherspoons! Some members of our other team including Deena, Dermot and Damien then did a second Monro as it was close by and not too difficult, but one was enough for me. We made a steep and boggy descent into the wonderful Lorne Forest.

But the next day was just as good if not better! Ann and I went up the Pap of Glencoe. The Pap is on the edge of the Aonach Eagach at the very heart of Glencoe. It may not be a Monro but it remains a must for any Glencoe visitor. Both Ann and myself were very pleased as we did it on our own, with no back up, and we survived an appalling rain storm. We embraced on the summit. The sense of achievement, the views, the exciting scramble over those last rocks before you get to the top. Marvellous!

Thanks to Dermot for being trip organiser and Deena who organised the food. Everyone on the trip was great including Pam and Rob the mountaineer, the man who gets to higher places faster. Rob and I had some unusual political discussions – not about Nick Clegg though – discussions made all the more fascinating as we did not see eye to eye.

So for those of you who missed out and were not on the trip, cheer up – after all the bastards have only got a 12 seat majority. Sign up for the next one!

**NG** *(middle right photo)*

## stop press...

**The club cannot function without members volunteering to take on positions of responsibility. Two long serving members of the National Committee are standing down after this year's AGM, both of whom have done excellent work, which should make it easier for their successors to hit the ground running! If you are at all interested in either position email Steve or Don for details of what's involved:**

**Steve Wright, Membership Secretary**  
[membership@redrope.org.uk](mailto:membership@redrope.org.uk)

**Don Kinniburgh, Ramblers Rep**  
[ramblers@redrope.org.uk](mailto:ramblers@redrope.org.uk)

# red rope: what's in a name?

*John Dickie has tabled a motion proposing a change to the club's strap-line which currently reads 'The socialist walking and climbing club'. John's original idea was to omit 'socialist' and add 'for lefties'. This led to a lively debate on the national email list. Here is a selection of the comments:*

I'm proud to be a leftie/left-winger/to-the-left/socialist/red. Don't care much what it's called. What does matter to me is the permission to be lower ability than Rope. Mid 80s some of us in Red Rope jokingly called ourselves Pink String as we were so much less ambitious than most Red Ropers seemed to be. I'd feel comfortable with 'Reds Dawdling a Couple of Miles Along a River Bank Feeling At Peace Because We're Reds/Lefties/Socialists Together'. Not literally but... I once suggested Left Outdoors but that didn't appeal. Maybe Reds Outdoors? Maybe Red Rope still to keep things simple? **Jackie**

*I was led to understand that 'pink string' was a jibe about RR political 'softness' not walking/climbing abilities.. Many members in London have never been climbers, and some of us have a physical condition limiting our walking ability a lot - sometimes for a very long time. Does RR really have a rule about the level of walking ability? Blimey... I've never heard of it..The only rule I've ever heard was that a walk goes at the pace of the slowest walker. That sounds more like the socialism I persist in being committed to. **Dot***

The thing I really like about Red Rope is not just the 'pay according to your means', but the whole ethos – non sexist, non-racist, supportive to parents, helping people without transport, walking the pace of the slowest, the wonderful and sometimes wildly inaccurate advice, checking when people are back at base, and though I am a confirmed carnivore (or awkwardivore), I respect the aim to eat ethically too.

In contrast to other groups I was a member of Red Rope was a place I could relax without having to constantly have the feminist dialogue, and know that we all supported each other. I know it's never perfectly fair, it never can be when humans are involved, but you aim for perfect, which is the next best thing. The other thing I have loved is all the adventures I would never have had if Red Ropers hadn't shared their time, transport, kit, experience and keenness.

You are an inspiring lot! My adventures may not have seemed big to you but they were big to me! Tea shops are nice but a bit of big adventure to tempt some younger members is also good.

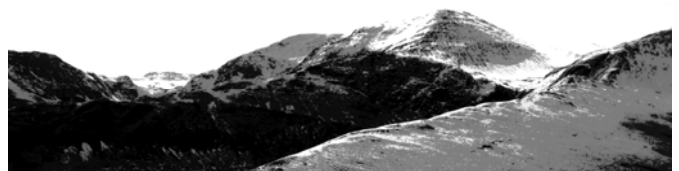
So if we could work something that said 'ethics' or 'fairness' and 'adventure' into our name or strap-line, that would do it for me.

And I don't care if conservatives join, or whether we are labelled green or red or purple spots – a bit of Red Rope attitude might just rub off on them – who knows! **Lizzy**

*I agree with many of the other comments that the word 'socialist' is likely to put people off and I do wonder who we are actually wanting to attract. I joined London Red Rope about 20 years ago in my early 40s via word of mouth and was not particularly looking for a socialist group I just wanted to do some walking. I liked the people that I met and many of them are still members so we have all grown older together. I can't imagine people in their 20s and 30s wanting to join a group of people that are predominantly in their 50s, 60s and 70s. The recent new members we have had in London are in a similar age group to the rest of us and I suspect they heard of Red Rope via word of mouth as I did.*

*As well as Red Rope I belong to a local walking group which has a Sunday walk once a month and is open to anybody living within quite a large radius of the Archway area in North London. This group also attracts people over the age of 50 so I wonder if it's only older people who are interested in walking groups.*

*The Internet rules these days and I'm not sure there's any point in printing leaflets. People of all ages organise their social lives via the Internet and 'meet up' groups. In fact there is a 'meet up' group in London called Ken's Walks which regularly attracts up to 50 people on a Sunday afternoon walk. If we want to survive then I suggest that we get up-to-date and use the Internet in a suitable way. I like 'Red Rope Walking and Climbing Club' but I do wonder if the byline should be "for oldies!" **Veronica***



I would say 'for the left' would appeal to young people more than 'lefties' as this also feels a bit outdated to me. The other thing is that many radical young people who identify with left-wing politics are moving beyond the old terminology of left and right, which is something that has proven to work well for Podemos in Spain, although this is may be not that relevant as they are probably not your target audience. **Danny**

*For me the word "Leftie" is a self-deprecating word, one that people use to cover their embarrassment at being socialist. I feel that now is the time to stand up and be clear and positive about being a socialist, not a time to soften our position. However, we should listen to Danny and other younger members. Perhaps the words "on the Left" or "Left-wing" are now more accurate than "socialist" as a description of our political aspirations. Whatever we decide, I do believe it is our political position that unites us and provides all the supportive, tolerant, considerate attitudes that are so rightly valued within our club. The experience of Podemos might be very relevant, and does raise an important issue.*

*This extract from "Defending Marxism" has a warning:*

*"... it is not the first time that such arguments have been raised within the left. Traditionally, the social democrats say that language and program should be "softened" and moderated in order to attract the middle layers in society.*

*Unfortunately, what began as a concession in language to backward political prejudices, finally ended up in political concessions to big business and assimilation into the system they claimed to be fighting against."*

*( <http://www.marxist.com/podemos-what-is-it-and-where-is-it-going.htm> )*

*Red Rope is a good, strong name. Let's not become "Fluffy Pink Rope"! **Jon***

I'd support Sarah's suggestion (next comment), which focuses on the principles by which I would like Red Rope to operate rather than the political identification of our members. Many of us consider ourselves socialists (or anarchist in my case) but others who would support our policies – such as income-related charges and collective organisation – are probably not socialists/communists/anarchists in the traditional sense of those terms. We even have members of the Labour Party ! **Barbara**

*What about 'Red Rope Walking and Climbing Club with Socialist and Green Principles'?*

**Sarah**

I joined because it is a socialist club. Like many (most?) Green Party members I'm a socialist. If you want a club that is vaguely a bit liberal or a bit environmental then there are lots of other clubs out there. I suspect that more young and old people would be attracted to the club if it did a bit more socialist outdoor politics. **Chris S**

*The Socialist Movement lives. (Syriza!) Well said, Chris. The dinosaurs strike back. **Julian B***

You could have a green economy tomorrow with exactly the same old inequalities of wealth, lack of social justice and exploitation as we have today, so it is perfectly possible to be green and a Tory (Zac Goldsmith having inherited gross wealth from his dad) so to say Red Rope is a walking and climbing organisation for 'lefties and greens' will raise some issues. It might need refining somewhat...for socialists and greens committed to social justice and a sustainable future environment' (???)...

I say this as (I hope) someone committed to a socialist perspective and a vegetarian for 45 years ...of course Hitler was a vegetarian ...would that make him eligible for Red Rope membership as a green?

All this indicates that name changing is more profound than first suggested. Who are 'we'? What is Red Rope for ?...etc.....Your reference to the Parliamentary Labour Party is relevant, since it's now what I call a 'consumerist', not progressive, party.....'Give the people what they want, even if what they want is UKIP style racism.' ...so does Red Rope become consumerist?...find out what younger folk want and then change Red Rope to give it to them?...the 'consumer is king' is, as you suggest, a very reactionary dogma in that context... **Roger**

*I have reservations about the term 'lefties' too. 'Left-leaning' might be a better term? Roger, your piece is interesting but if you exclude 'socialist' because it's too outdated and 'green' because you might net a progressive Tory or two who have we got left? I would want the club to appeal to the outdoor-minded leftward-looking people many of whom, whether you like it or not, would identify with 'Green' before 'Red' or 'Socialist'. This is probably not the place to enter a long discussion about whether Green values are inherently redistributive/socialist but surely there is a strong streak of that within it? **Rob***

# annual gathering of members: sept 25-27



This year we return to Gradbach Scout Camp in the western Peak District for our AGM weekend. (See notes with booking form on RR website for location, transport and other details).

Our venue, a converted farmhouse, is set in 48 acres of grounds (including 25 of woodland) through which the River Dane flows. It has good facilities for sleeping, eating and meeting and sleeps 36+. There are three/four bunk-rooms, separate washrooms with showers and toilets and a modern and well-equipped kitchen. The house has electrical storage heating. There is also excellent camping.

The AGM business will be dealt with after breakfast on the Sunday morning, so that the whole of Saturday and Sunday after the meeting can be devoted to walking, climbing and training. The party, quiz and comedy will happen after the Saturday evening meal.

Gradbach has the great advantage that both walks and climbs are available close at hand and there is no need for long drives (or to drive at all!) to reach them. For climbers the Roaches, said to provide some of the best gritstone climbing in the country with some famous classic routes, are accessible by footpath from the scout camp – about two and a half miles.

As regards walks, the Dane Valley long distance path (LDP) for example – 40 miles long, and extending from Buxton to Middlewich in Cheshire – passes close by and can be followed in either direction. The Gritstone Trail and the Staffordshire Way LDPs intersect with this a few miles to the west, as do several other paths nearer to base which could be followed over hill or through woodland to provide a circular walk.

The circular Roaches Walk (described by one writer as 'the best walk in the Peak District') also starts from Gradbach but loops south as far as the southernmost tip of the Roaches. A great ridge walk, it also includes the Hanging Stone

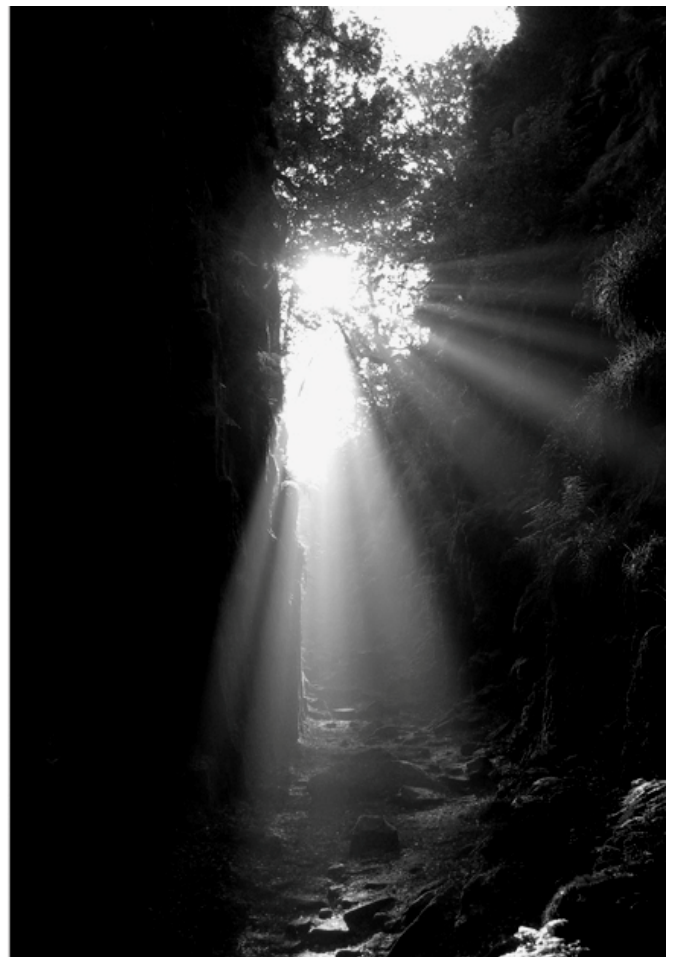
(a large, flat overhanging gritstone slab) and the stunning 'Lud's Church', (*photo below*) a narrow natural cleft in the rock 100 metres long. A short diversion from the path can also take one to the little village of Upper Hulme for a pub stop! In fact, several local villages linked by paths are shown on both map and websites to have pubs available for walkers. The New Inn in Flash claims to be 'the highest pub in the British Isles, 1518 feet!' Closer to base the tiny hamlet of Allgreave has the Rose and Crown and little Danebridge, further down the valley, the Ship Inn - with 'spectacular moorland views'.

Red Rope last visited Gradbach for a successful and well-supported AGM weekend seven years ago in 2008 and September 2015 promises to be even more enjoyable.!

**OS Map OL24: The Peak District White Peak Area. GR: SJ 994659**

**Don Kinniburgh**

**P.S. Key words:** walking, climbing, party, quiz and comedy. Book early to avoid disappointment!



# consultation on red rope training policy

In 2014 we launched a new training policy. Full details can be viewed on the club website. Go to the resources section above food and recipes.

The policy consists of

- Encouraging club member to undertake training courses provided by the BMC by offering a subsidy to any member to attend such courses. In return members have to sign an undertaking to share their skills with other club members. Only one member has taken advantage of this offer. He attended a climbing course.

- Publicising BMC courses within the MIS for club members to attend. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland also run similar courses.

- Paying for members to register with Mountain Training to do a formal outdoor qualification. See [www.mountain-training.org](http://www.mountain-training.org)

- Helping members who require a reference to do Mountain Training courses.

- Publicising subsidized courses run by the BMC at Plas y Brenin in North Wales.

- Encouraging club members to apply to the New Leaders fund at Plas y Brenin to undertake a formal outdoor qualification. This funding is dependent on where you live. Glenmore Lodge in Scotland has a similar fund.

The club has set up a budget £1000 p.a. to spend on training activities. All subsidies for club members are dependent on the availability of club funds. Two events have taken place this year. In March eight members attended a weekend course in Nant Peris on advanced navigation including a night navigation exercise. Lupine Adventure provided the trainer. (Lupine is a worker's co-operative. See [www.lupineadventure.co.uk](http://www.lupineadventure.co.uk)) Members had to pay an extra £20 training levy in addition to the usual accommodation charges. This course represented good value for money compared to usual navigation courses.

In May seven members attended Nant Peris again to do the Mountain Skills course run again by Lupine Adventure. This is new course set up by Mountain Training to provide instructions for walkers who are new to mountain walking. Anybody doing the courses approved by Mountain Training has to pay a registration fee.

The national committee agreed to waive this fee and was successful in obtaining a grant from the BMC to buy each course participant a copy of the official navigation book for mountain training. The club was successful in obtaining a grant from the BMC to defray the cost of this course. The feedback from the Mountain Skills course was very positive. I would like the club to run this course again in 2016, possibly at Clapham in Yorkshire, so as to encourage club members from other parts of the country to attend. If anybody wishes to be the organiser please contact me.

Two members who have been on training courses have agreed to provide training at this year's AGM. It is hoped that this could be a feature of all AGM's. The national committee has agreed to waive 50% of the accommodation charges for anybody willing to organise a training course. The organiser does not have to conduct the training course but would be able to do walks or climbs while the training is taking place. The club needs to have training events organised so that applications can be made to the BMC for help with funding. The deadline is usually the beginning of April.

I am interested to hear from climbers in the club, particularly if they are willing to be an organiser of a training event. The BMC runs a variety of courses for climbers which could be subsidised. The national committee is also considering how the club can record details of the training needs and skills of club members on our database to help promote training within the club.

I would like to hear the views of club members on the current training policy. The key questions are:

- What improvements could be made?

- Why have so few club members applied for a subsidy to attend BMC training courses?

- How can the club help with the training needs of climbers?

- How could we encourage members to organise training courses?

Please send your views to **Dermot McKibbin** [training@redrope.org.uk](mailto:training@redrope.org.uk) before 18 November.

**P.S. See next page for details of 2 training events taking place at the AGM.**

# assorted infos

## National Trips 2016

We had a wonderful week at Mill Cottage, near Aviemore, in February. I was excited that my sister Sarah and I would be introducing our nephew, Varian, to Scottish winter trips. It didn't disappoint. When the snow swirled around our feet on the Cairngorm plateau after a long day on Ben Macdui we just had to stop and admire.

I had taken 'The Living Mountain' by Nan Shepherd to re-read but didn't get time for it. February trips are busy with early starts, route planning, enjoying the company of others and great meals! We planned in some skill sharing at the start of the week and although many of us had practised our ice axe and crampon skills before, this time it was different with near vertical patches of rounded ice. It wasn't long before we were winter boots shopping in Aviemore for Varian! He, Sarah and I will be back next year. (Photo below by Varian)

For February 2016 we have booked Inverardran Cottage in Crianlarich. It is easy to get to and a great base for walking at all levels. The cottage is comfortable for a winter trip and has a spacious dining area/conservatory. There are 11 Munros nearby and the Ben Lawers visitor centre car park, at 450m, gives easy access to many more.

[sarah.bates@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sarah.bates@yahoo.co.uk)

We have rescheduled the North York Moors trip for Easter. A good time to explore the moors and coastal paths from the hostel in Rosedale Abbey. This trip is in place of a Scottish trip.

[Adrian.a.jones@mwhglobal.com](mailto:Adrian.a.jones@mwhglobal.com)

The Ling Hut trip in May/June is booking up so get your form in quick for a week in magnificent Torridon.

[Pravski@yahoo.com](mailto:Pravski@yahoo.com)

And finally, something different for October: a week in Mawgan Porth on the North Cornish coast, between Newquay and Padstow. Coastal walks without the burning sun of summer, seas still warm enough for swimming and body boarding and loads of footpaths inland. Should be a good one! Details in the MIS. **Becky Bates** [Nationaltrips@redrope.org.uk](mailto:Nationaltrips@redrope.org.uk)

**LMC Hut Beddgelert: individual and regional bookings** Barbara Segal [bed-night@redrope.org.uk](mailto:bed-night@redrope.org.uk)

Cae Ysgubor is now ready for use. Bristol/SW stayed there at Easter and it's a great hut in a great location. Requests for regional trips in 2016 to CY or the LMC hut at Blea Tarn need to reach me before the Red Rope AGM (but preferably sooner) as these will be arranged with LMC at a meeting in October.

Individual Red Ropers can now use the hut without prior booking, though you will need to let me know, as payment goes through Red Rope. You will also need to obtain a personal key fob for the hut, which requires a deposit of £20. Issuing fobs can take up to a month, so allow plenty of time before your first trip. Further details are on the Red Rope website. Please check with the latest version of this as the procedure for obtaining key fobs is likely to change. Queries re. the LMC huts and their use should come to me – please don't contact LMC directly. **BS**

**Training at the 2015 AGM** There are 2 free training events on the Saturday, both limited to 8 places.

### Navigation training

This is aimed at improving navigation skills at all levels. There will be indoor session in the morning and practical exercises later outside. Bring the White Peak map OL24 and a compass. Meet Terry O'Brien outside the main entrance at 9.30 a.m

### Use of the 'confidence rope'

How to tie on to the rope, body belay, using spikes to belay and roping up another person. Meet Malcolm Donne, main entrance, 9.30 a.m.





*Sketch by Jean Luce* [www.jeanluceartist.com](http://www.jeanluceartist.com)

On July 13<sup>th</sup> the Ramblers launched a major new project which might be of interest to some in Red Rope. They call it the 'Big Pathwatch': a national survey of the condition of every right of way on foot - footpaths, bridleways and byways - in England and Wales.

The survey is to be conducted entirely by volunteers, and the Ramblers aim to involve 100,000 people, not just their own members but anyone who enjoys walking in the countryside. It is hoped that by 31<sup>st</sup> December all, or almost all, of the UK path network (excluding Scotland and Northern Ireland where the law is different) will have been surveyed.

The result should hopefully be a national picture of the state of our paths, showing for example how well they are looked after by local authorities and landowners, and which councils are meeting their responsibilities and which are not. Such a survey has never been done before.

There are in addition other planned spin-offs, besides of course positive publicity for the

Ramblers (and they hope some new members). The whole exercise is designed to increase public awareness of footpaths, and of the rights and duties of path-users, as well as to promote the use and understanding of walking maps.

The recording process is based upon one type of map: the Ordnance Survey Explorer, at the scale of 1:25,000 (4 cm to 1 Km). The data finally has to be uploaded electronically using a smart-phone app which can be downloaded from the Ramblers website or (if like me you haven't yet got round to buying a smart-phone) sent via the internet. The data may not be sent manually.

Anyone interested in taking part has first to choose a one-kilometre square from the blue grid lines of an Explorer map of their choice, and then register themselves and their square on the Ramblers' website. Within four weeks they should then walk all the paths in that square, noting what they find. Not just fallen trees, broken stiles or signposts, unsafe gates, missing way-marks, overgrown paths, cows or bulls or dangerous road- or rail-crossings, but also positive features like teashops, toilets or attractive wildlife; anything in fact that they consider important. All these findings can then be uploaded.

(Because the whole recording system entails walking all the paths in a one-kilometre square, it is ideally carried out by individuals or small groups of walkers rather than by larger parties like Red Rope daywalks – unless of course these do not mind walking several short stretches of path often separated by road!)

I have only just chosen my own first kilometre square and registered, so am not yet in a position to report either on how many obstructions were encountered on its paths, or on how I got on with sending in my findings. The project has only just started, so it is only to be expected that glitches will occur. If anyone else has embarked on a Pathwatch project, it would be interesting to hear their experiences and to compare notes. (For further details [www.ramblers.org.uk/pathwatch](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/pathwatch))  
DK

**[bulletin@redrope.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@redrope.org.uk)**

Thanks to all contributors! Next deadline is the end of January. I did the cover painting based on a photo of Loch Fleet by Michael MacGregor.

**Happy trails, David Symonds**

# easter in balgowan

# humphrey southall

This was a small but friendly national trip, seven of us spending eight nights at The Cabin, the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland's hut which is in the hamlet of Balgowan, near Newtonmore in the upper Spey valley. The high tops of the Cairngorms are about twenty miles away, but there are big hills aplenty much closer by, in the Monadliath, the Drumochter Hills and the Creag Meagaidh massif.

Damien, Sherry and I set off from London in Sherry's car on Easter Saturday, stopping for lunch near Scotch Corner and on the edge of Perth to stock up on food. Dave from Nottingham and Deena from Sheffield joined us that evening but Becky from Leicester and Sarah from Norwich were delayed by a day.

We were lucky with the weather, as all our days were walkable while the previous and following weeks were both a bit grim: there was a fair bit of snow the day we left, and its always good to leave **not** wishing you could carry on walking! On the first day, we just went up Creag Dubh, a local not-quite-Corbett, walking from the hut, but then Becky and Sarah arrived and got us going up Munros, starting with the particular Geal Charn – there are many – which overlooks the headwaters of the Spey (and the rebuilt Beaulieu to Denny power line).

My own two most memorable days were near the end of the week. On the Thursday most of us got up four Munros, made easier by being able to start from the Drumochter pass where the A9 takes you up to 1,500 feet. On the Friday, we drove west to Creag Meagaidh, walked four miles up the glen to the lochan in Coire Ardair, and then Becky, Sarah and I climbed through snow to "The Window", a very high pass, then walked east along a very windy ridge, including two Munro summits. Sherry was going on to be warden of the Alex Mac hut in Glencoe for a week, so Damien got a lift south with Sarah, and I took the train back from Newtonmore. **HS**

*Photos: the inaugural use of the emergency shelter!  
Sherry and Sarah descending the Grey Corries.*



# banding structure and membership fees

As a motion to the 2015 AGM, the NC is proposing to reduce the present eight band membership fees (A to H) down to just 5 bands. This will help members calculate their correct band, enable a broader income range to be covered (including a high earner band), and reduce the administrative burden. The new membership band charges being proposed are as follows:

**Band 1 £12, Band 2 £18, Band 3 £27, Band 4 £40, Band 5 £48.**

The band rates selected ensure that total income to the club is not diminished; ie our target income with the proposed banding structure is the present income, plus the recent BMC affiliation fee increases, which are significant. Taking account of income tax and national insurance deductions and converting to weekly and monthly incomes these equate to:

**Band 1 £0 -180, Band 2 £181- 275 , Band 3 £276 - 400, Band 4 £401- 615, Band 5 £616 plus**

**Band 1 £0 –780, Band 2 £781– 1192 , Band 3 £1193 - 1733, Band 4 £1734 - 2665, Band 5 £2666 plus**

No changes are proposed to the method used by members to calculate their relevant income.

Trip fees are to be calculated on the same 5 bands as proposed above. Revised rates, in line with the above , will be announced at the AGM

If accepted, this proposal will be implemented for renewals/joiners received after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015, irrespective of the actual renewal due date.

The above is just a summary. The AGM Motion, which will be circulated before the AGM, gives further details of just how the band rates have been calculated and equate to weekly/monthly income.

If this 5 band motion is rejected, and the membership would prefer to keep the current 8 band system, revisions to the band fees will still be necessary simply to cover rising costs. These will be as follows:

Annual Fee	Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Present fee	£10	£12	£15	£18	£22	£27	£33	£40
Proposed fee	£10	£12	£16	£19	£23	£29	£35	£42

## trip travel arrangements

There have recently been problems with travel arrangements on some national trips, so this is a reminder about club procedures as set out in the Trip Organiser's Pack. The issues have been about cars, so this note does not cover people making the whole journey by public transport.

Our trips are organised collectively and it is up to the trip organiser, not individual members, to decide how people travel: "the trip organiser is responsible for organising the most efficient use of transport", and they should "plan to fill cars with 3 people as early as possible on journeys".

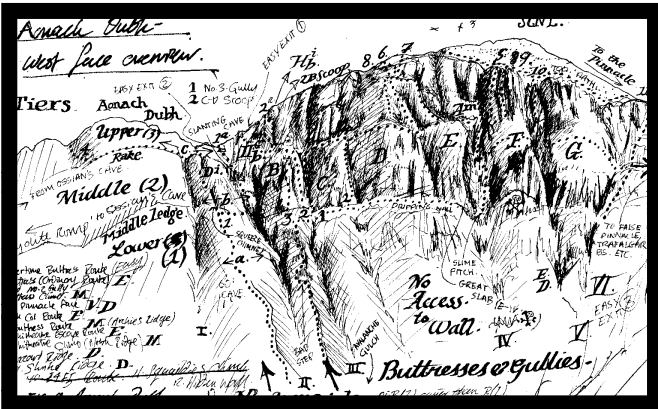
If an organiser asks you to bring your car on a trip, you are entitled to a mileage payment based on three Band E travel charges once there are at least two people in the car.

However, "anyone choosing to drive on their own ... will not be reimbursed" – and if your travelling independently leaves an empty space in a trip car, you must also pay a travel charge as that car's driver still has to be paid. This is about both saving club money and avoiding environmentally damaging unnecessary journeys.

It often makes sense for trip cars to make short detours to pick members up, but substantially lengthening two or three people's already long journey to save one person time does not make sense and there is definitely no right to be picked up from home: "ask passengers to get to pick up points using public transport". As the guidance to trip treasurers notes, public transport costs getting to a rendezvous are reimbursable only if "agreed in advance with trip organizer".

**Humphrey Southall**

# ballachulish, glencoe, early march 1984 ...



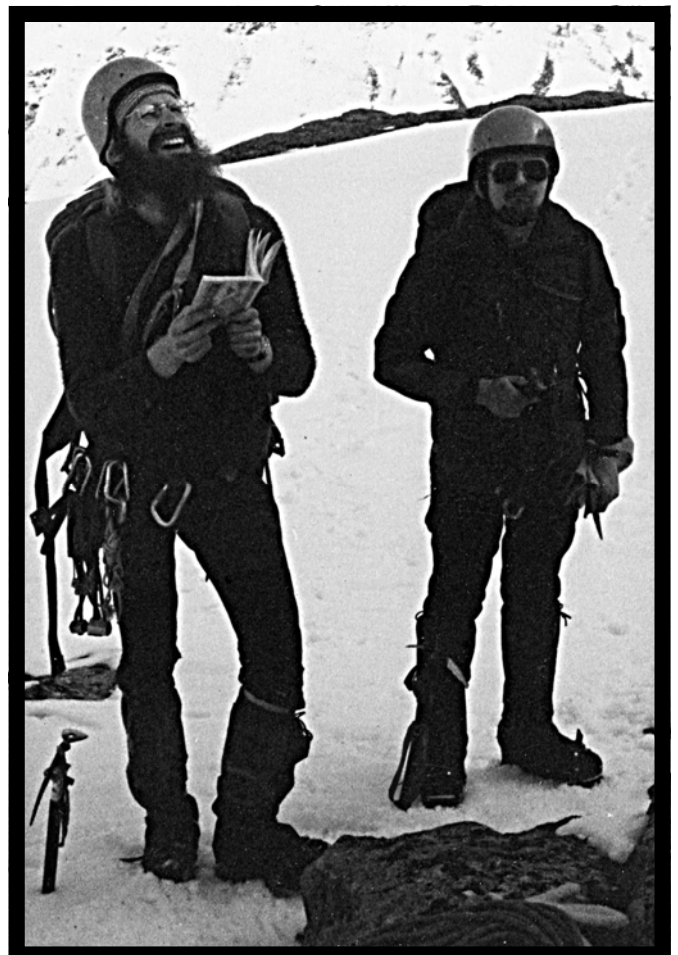
## Impressions of a new member

The first day was warm. At my suggestion we all went up into the Lost Valley to practice rope work and ice-axe braking. We eventually had some fun glissading on our bottoms, but it was a pity we didn't get higher. It would have been better to split the group: some were content with a gentle slope, others needed something faster.

That night's meeting was awfully long. I found the whole thing very frustrating as I really didn't want to do a navigation exercise. Terry wanted to climb. I suggested the Sron na Lairig (an easy grade 2 climb with a long walk in and out). Several others said they'd like to do it too. We very nearly agreed on the plan but Gill and George weren't happy with the arrangement. After a lot of discussion it was agreed (in the absence of Mel and Terry, who had gone to the pub) that we should all go navigating. We would set off the next morning in different direction around Beinn a'Beithir. Next morning's later party comprised Caro, Terry, Martin and me – all people who would have preferred to climb. George was ill, Mel wasn't happy with his crampons. If we'd known, the four of us, we would have made an early start for Sron na Lairig. Still it wasn't a bad day. We walked up the Georr Aonach zig-zags to Stob Coire nan Lochan. As we gained height we broke through the cloud. The crag gleamed in the sun. The snow was good and firm as we cramponed up to Boomerang Gully. Unfortunately we missed out the first short ice pitch as I thought there would be ice ahead. There wasn't – only an easy snow plod, rather troublesome with the ropes. A really good view from the top though, and time to enjoy it. Those who'd gone to Beinn a'Beithir were late back. That was the week's first epic.

Sketch © Alex Roddie/ Chris with amusing guide book (!)

The following day, Tuesday, Kate and Terry and I planned to go to Stob Coire nan Lochan. Terry had a bad night however so, acting on Terry's suggestion, I invited Steve. We took the quickest route up the Coire and headed straight for Twisting Gully, a classic grade 3 ice climb of which I'd read a gripping account in Murray's *Mountaineering in Scotland*. The ice was good! Steve led a pitch, thrashing a way up his first lead. Despite our threesome enduring some rope tangles, we were only 95 minutes on the climb. Descending Broad Gully, we met Martin, John and Shirley. Steve and I decided upon another climb – a short one – Pinnacle Buttress Groove, which gave us two delightful pitches. I got a good peg in at the stance, supported by two chocks. The start of the second pitch was steep and I was glad that Steve didn't want to attempt to lead it. It was dark and raining when we got down to the road. We hitched a lift to the Clachaig hotel, where we dried out. Wednesday I dosed. My gear was wet and it was raining. I mooched around Fort William with Gill, a bit desultory. I cooked that night - a late meal and another late night. The forecast was bad so I didn't expect to be getting up early.



Next morning broke cold and clear! Kate, Martin, Steve and I headed once more for Stob Coire nan Lochan, which looked much whiter than Stob Coire nam Beith. Kate and I started up S.C. Gully – another famous classic grade 3 climb. It was cold and gently snowing. The ice was perfect. It wasn't difficult. It was varied, with a nice rocky step to the right at the bottom of the big ice pitch. Anchors at the top of the pitch were two good chockstones. We were very quick. I hacked my way through a small cornice, to be greeted by an icy north wind.

There was time for another climb. We chose the difficult right hand variation to Twisting Gully. We chose well! The steep pitch was excellent, vertical grade 4. Spindrift avalanches enhanced the excitement. I remember fine snow lodging between my glasses and my eyes as I hung on my axes, obliging me to make a steep, blind move. Since that day I've always worn a peaked cap when winter climbing. I placed a good peg and two chocks at the top of the pitch. I wanted to be sure of my anchors as I feared Kate might come off. In the event, she found it steep and hard but climbed well. (Kate was a relative novice, having just recently undertaken a winter climbing course with a local guide.) The rest of the climb was precarious - fresh powder snow on ice. I moved slowly, scooping away powder with my adze. Fortunately the placements underneath were very sound, even for my terra pick. It had remained cold and was snowing heavily.

As we neared the road in the dark, Martin flashed his headlights and I returned the flash. We were surprised to find that the car had gone when we reached the road. The next half hour, walking, hitching in the freezing rain, was the coldest part of the day. But Martin came back for us and we stopped for a welcome quick drink at the Clachaig before evening meal. It had been a satisfying day for us all. Even Martin didn't seem greatly to mind sitting for an hour while Steve tunnelled a cornice. Four hours in North Gully! I was in good spirits that evening, only sorry to learn that others had been worried about me and Kate after Martin had dropped Steve off.

Friday was almost another doss day. It had snowed heavily during the night, my gear was soaking, I was tired. But it was our last day and I felt that I wanted to make something of it. I thought a scramble up Dinnertime Buttress into the teeth of the gale would nicely round off the holiday. Jean and Lisa volunteered to come with me and we set off from the roadside just after noon. I hadn't checked the guide book properly, either for approach paths or, more crucially,



*The Diamond & Church Door Buttresses, situated just below the summit of the highest peak in Glencoe, Bidean nam Bean. (1150 metres) © Inchree Chalets*

possible descent routes. I knew what I intended to do: skirt Stob Coire nan Lochan from the Aonach Dubh ridge, and descend Coire nam Beith. It was feasible enough, but I really should have checked the alternative route into Coire nan Lochan. I didn't anticipate that we might be late. I didn't imagine that Lisa could be as slow as she was. But, given the wild conditions, I should have at least doubled the estimated guide book time, which would have meant us arriving at the top of the buttress around 4.30. As it turned out we didn't get there until after 5.00.

It was a great experience! The views through the flying snow were stunning. Diamond Buttress by starlight (for now the night was clear and still) was magical. But it was miserable for all those down below, worrying about us when by midnight we still had not returned, and more so for poor Lisa. She was very frightened and who can blame her? Dinnertime Buttress, although easy for me and Jean, felt like a big mountain climb. In retrospect I think we ran much bigger risks than I would have chosen had I considered things better. Having climbed the buttress and seen how icy it was at the top, I should certainly have abandoned our plan to contour above the crags of the West face of Aonach Dubh. I told the others we did nothing dangerous, we were just very slow. In truth, we were lucky!

**Chris Drinkwater**

# Pauline Appleton

6 Jan 1959 - 19 Mar 2015

Red Rope members were deeply saddened to hear of Pauline's early death, caused by cancer of the mouth. She was a member of Red Rope for 15 years and contributed so much and was loved by so many. These words can only suggest a little of her generous nature and general wonderfulness.

She joined Red Rope with her son Rowan. He accompanied her on many Sunday walks and Red Rope trips, impressing us with his stamina and the speed at which he could walk, and delighting us with his willingness to join in the fun and games. The quality of her mothering was evident in the solid and loving relationship they shared. On one New Year's trip when Rowan was about 7 or 8 years, he fell asleep before midnight and awoke about 1 a.m. very disappointed that he had missed the celebrations. Pauline, although tired and ready for bed, consoled Rowan and played games with him until about 2 a.m. to make up to him for missing the witching hour. She met Hugh through Red Rope and they got together about eight years ago. When they moved into their house in Rosendale Road as a family they very generously hosted a memorable Red Rope Christmas party.

She was a qualified herbalist and we benefited from her vast knowledge when she led 'herb' walks, teaching us the properties of the various herbs and plants. With her eye for detail could spot the smallest of plants (some not much bigger than a pin head) and this seemed to reflect her ability to value the preciousness of everything. She would also occasionally supply some of us with lotions and potions, and fabulous herbal teas when we were in need of a boost.

As well as her enormous appetite for socialising and great love of being in the company of others Pauline and Hugh worked very hard as active members of Red Rope. They both held positions on the committee for many years. Pauline was our Email Moderator and Hugh our Treasurer, though I think Pauline had to twist his arm!

As a socialist walking group, working out the cost of the trips, especially transport, is no easy task. Pauline did much to make sure that it was possible for London members, especially those living on low incomes, to use public transport so they were able to go on trips.

A couple of years ago we had our own '**redropegate**', a crisis over a map reading training course which, in our email exchanges, quickly spun out of control and became quite serious. No matter how hard some members tried to calm the waters, it was Pauline as email moderator who managed to write a thoughtful and intelligent email which contained the situation and put the world to rights.

I remember walking with Pauline and two other Red Rope members on Marloes Sands in Pembrokeshire. It is a vast beach surrounded by huge cliffs. On that day the sun was shining as the four of us walked for some time in silence together, side by side. The connection with nature and with each other was exhilarating and like so many other connections Pauline made over the years, they will live on inside us in our hearts and minds, as will the gorgeousness of her spirit ... as we walk on.

**Sara Leon** 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015

*Marloes Sands*







*Alan Armstrong, Barbara Segal and David Symonds spent two weeks trekking in the Dolomites this July, starting in the Tre Cime area (lower photo) then exploring the Antelao and Sorapiss massifs. Pravin Patel used via ferrata routes in the same area, parts of which are an open air museum - the Austrians and Italians were involved in a lengthy, tragic conflict there during WW1. We stayed in some great huts, met some interesting people and were gobsmacked by the scenery. Recommended!*