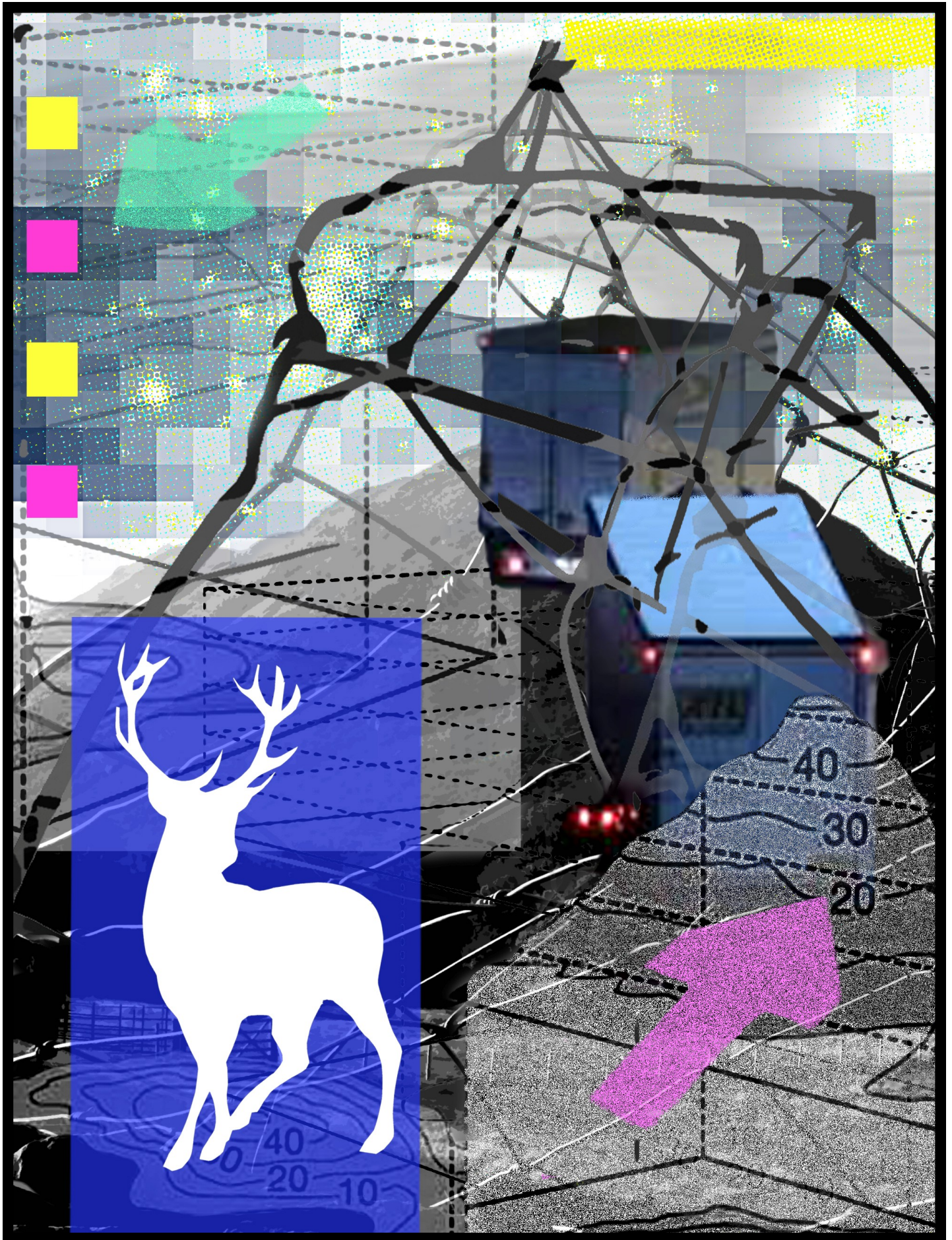




do you have to be red to be green ?

This article is intended to amplify some points mentioned in last bulletin's piece entitled 'red rope: what's in a name?' specifically...

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. It is perfectly possible to be green and a Tory - Zac Goldsmith having inherited gross wealth from his dad. **Roger Rees**

If you exclude 'socialist' because it's outdated and 'green' because you might net a progressive Tory or two who have we got left?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 outdoor-minded, leftward-looking people, many of whom would identify with 'Green' before 'Red' or 'Socialist'. **Rob Steel**

However, there seems to be a general acceptance that red and green are comfortable bed-fellows. The author of the 'red vs green' leaflet which I quote from next (published by The Communist Party of Great Britain [Marxist-Leninist] in 2014) clearly thinks there are major differences.

'People have as much need to preserve the planet as they do for food and shelter, so there is no question of a communist society leaving ecological issues unaddressed...many organisations are frantically casting around for ways in which it might be possible to keep capitalism while at the same time reining in some of its most disastrous consequences. The Greens tell us that each of us should learn to make the right 'consumer choices'. In reality, however, the vast majority of humanity do not have any choice about how the food they eat or the energy they consume is produced.

Nor are we able to opt out of the wars our imperialist ruling class is forever waging for profit and domination... it is all most people can do to make ends meet and, under the current system, the education that might make society aware of these issues is not about to be delivered.'

I posted this on the national RR e list, along with the quotes from Roger and Rob and asked for comments. **Richard Bennett**, of Edinburgh, responded by invoking the spectre of Private Eye's caricatured 1970s loony leftie 'Dave Spart' !

'Thanks for the leaflet from Dave Spart on the Red v Green debate. I was pleased to read that the CPGB (M-L) recognise the need to save the planet, although probably a different planet to the one Socialists and Greens are living on. Mr Spart's planet is probably out there orbiting with the one where Zac Goldsmith's wealthy uncle and his followers are living an idyllic life on small-holdings in villages magically interconnected by rapid-transit and where the supernatural Invisible Hand delivers optimal health and education services etc.

However, Mr Spart fails to notice that the means of production have generally disappeared off-shore and are under the control of the state - the Chinese state to be precise! Actually, I think most Red Ropers would identify as Green and socialist. Today Green Party members and, post Blair/Brown Labour party members (if not a lot of the MPs and councillors) have many opinions in common.'



Nigel Green then submitted the following:

'The 'Green vs Red' debate is a false dichotomy. However, as a member of the Communist Party of Britain, I hope Red Rope remains socialist. Indeed the emphasis on socialism (which hopefully one day will lead to a fully-fledged communist society) should be strengthened, not diminished.

However, we need to be clear why. Roger says you can have a green economy tomorrow, with the same old inequalities of wealth and exploitation as exists today. That is why socialism is important. On the other hand, according to Rob, many lefties would identify themselves as 'green' before 'red' or 'socialist'. In fact their views on this matter, far from being in opposition, are identical. They are both arguing, in effect, that you can build a green society without socialism.

Adverse climate change, environmental degradation, vast inequality, exploitation, endless wars leading to the plundering or waste of the earth's resources and refugee crises are the products of a neo-liberal global capitalist system. They are not caused by anything else. This system is presided over by a tiny clique of the ultra wealthy, comprising the industrial/military and financial complex, fronted by a coterie of rich politicians, on the make and on the take.

These processes are all interlinked. You can't decouple one, and say 'let's have a green planet,' without decoupling them all. The way forward is through an economy orientated along socialist lines. There must be substantial international cooperation based on economic and social planning, which can start via existing institutions such as the United Nations and the creation of trade blocs acting in the interests of developing countries. The superiority of socialist planned economies is that they put maximum overall efficiency of investment by society as a whole ahead of the concept of rapacious profits made by individual transnational corporations - profits being their only concern.

Socialist planning does not have to mean rigid top down decision making over everything. In the 21st century it means democratic common ownership with communities and workforces having the final say. It embraces diverse forms - public ownership by the central state, by regions, by municipalities, by cooperatives. Small private local businesses can retain an important function.

In its defence though, even the much maligned top-down Soviet planning produced decades of high economic growth, an economy mighty enough to defeat German fascism, and enabled the USSR to be pioneers in space.



Furthermore, to argue 20th century Soviet bloc socialist states had a poor ecological record is to miss the point. It was only in the last decade of their existence, or even since their demise, that climate and environmental issues started to be taken much more seriously by scientists and campaigners across the world. Soviet five year plans were not geared to safeguard environments because the issues and the science involved, rather like smoking, were only poorly understood. In any case, Cuba today, for example, has a very good environmental record.

Free market economics has no place in the struggle for a green, sustainable planet. Even with socialist planning the task of ensuring equitable development for all, as well as sustainability, will be very difficult. Difficult, but not impossible. As outstanding South African Communist Joe Slovo put it: "if socialism is not an answer, there is no answer at all." So watering down Red Rope's commitment to socialism just at a time when Jeremy Corbyn has been elected Labour Party leader would be a disaster.'

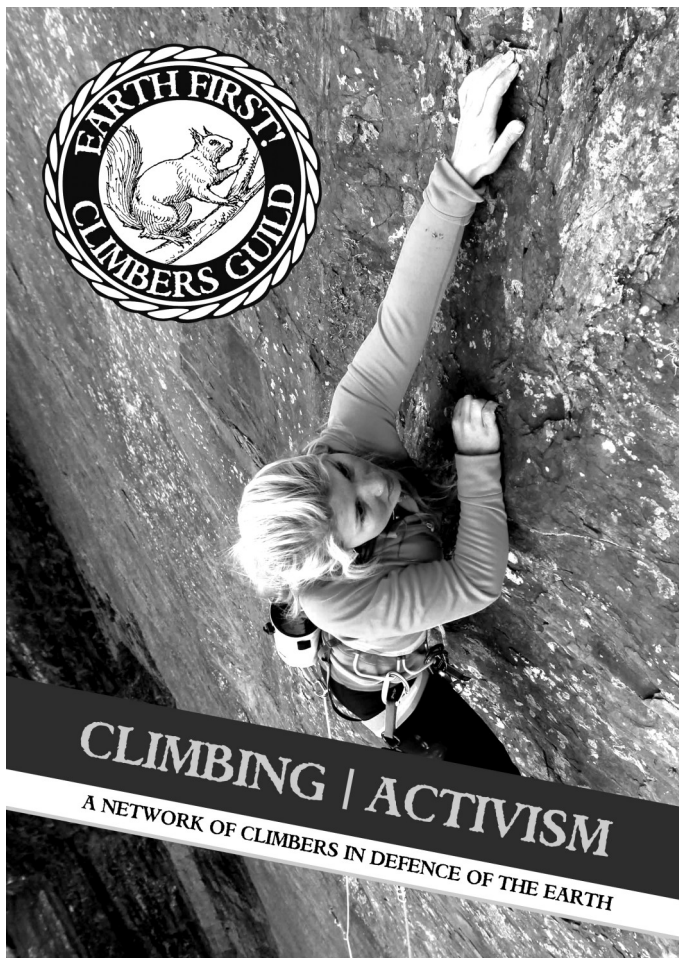
Thanks to everyone who contributed. Please feel free to respond. I think one further article on this vexed topic could be of interest! I did the illustrations and designed the front cover.

David Symonds

earth first! c. corax

Shortly after the 2015 EF! Summer Gathering in England, I helped form what I believe to be the first UK wing of the Earth First! Climbers Guild. At the Gathering were some workshops for climbers, including lessons in tying knots, climbing trees, ascending and descending ropes, putting up aerial walkways, and building tree houses for occupations. Our instructors were not affiliated, however, and the methods they taught were not documented or standardized.

During the Gathering, some of us plotted an action in solidarity with Kurds resisting construction of the Ilisu Dam on the banks of the Tigris River. Some climbing was required: We planned to drop a banner from a bridge that extends from Belper Mill, the former cotton sweatshop and UNESCO World Heritage Site that houses the modern offices of our target, Andritz Hydro.



C. Corax, is the largest British crow, all black in plumage, and noted for her hoarse croaking voice.
corvus.corax@runbox.com



We consulted our colleague, accomplished ropesman Mr. Sciurus to request his assistance. He felt compelled to decline, however, having only recently completed a term of deferred prosecution for possession of explosives. He was at a loss to suggest anyone else. Though we were relieved to accomplish the banner-drop using shot bags to throw ropes over the bridge, we perceived that there was generally a lack of organized expertise.

This had already been a problem for EF!UK. At midnight on October 29, 2012, our friends from No Dash for Gas scaled two 300-foot metal chimneys of West Burton Power Station, tying themselves to ledges at the top. After hauling up supplies of food, fixing solar panels, and building facilities for ablutions and sleeping, they rappelled into the flues to prevent relighting of the furnaces. The operation was a splendid success and shut down the station for a week. However, its preparation was made challenging by a lack of skilled climbers: Some of the activists had to be taught the most basic skills, including how to put on a harness and how to tie simple knots.

We formed the Earth First! UK Climbers Guild to develop, standardize, and teach safe climbing practice for occupations, blockades, and banner-drops, and to grow a strong culture of climbing for use in defence of the natural world.

But more than this, we hope to encourage bonds of solidarity and friendship amongst activists, and to find in climbing a way to re-engage with nature and re-wild ourselves. As a first step, we are building a network of deep green friends to meet for local and expedition climbing of rock, tree, snow, and ice.

Our first meeting was for two days in mid-September at Froggatt Edge, near Sheffield. Froggatt is a long, broken slab of grit sandstone formed in the Triassic period by the compression of silt and shale under water, and exposed by earthquakes. It is famous among rock climbers for its many excellent routes, which are ascended in the traditional style, without bolted security. Early the second day, light rain threatened to throw us from the rock, but the clouds soon passed. We were seven, and climbed together in pairs and threes. We learned much from each other, most importantly perhaps about the placement and removal of temporary security, and the building of anchors for belaying. At the summit of Heather Wall, our final route, we looked out over the Derwent Valley, north to Stannage Edge, the setting sun casting a blaze of light. We made plans to meet again.

Descending into the valley at dusk, we passed through the ancient woodland that girdles Froggatt Crag, and I reflected on the importance for the movement and our sanity of the simple enjoyment of nature. I had spent much of the summer in England, walking through its forests. One bright July morning I woke beneath a great sycamore tree in Savenake Forest, Wiltshire. I remember the sunlight through the leaves, the illumination of insects in the air, and little wrens darting over my head. It was the first time I had fully realized the fascination of forests: this dense, multi-layered structure, its three-dimensionality, the protective canopy of leaves, the shaded green light, the rich and shifting plurality of sound, and the welcoming bed of warm earth. Space there seems to relax into its natural form: In the city it is stretched and maintained in high tension, or compressed into a dense and rigid mass.

If you are in the UK or Northern Europe and would like to join us as activist, teacher, or simply as a climber looking for green-minded friends, please write to us at **CLIMBERS-GUILD@EARTHFIRST.ORG.UK**. No experience is necessary. **C C**

fox

Alert, the bird in her about to take flight
she stays listening
as I speak *funigalore* in fox dialect,
offer her bread and apple
at a distance. She takes bites and runs
watching me be a moonwalker,

slow, slow. Any move, she starts, her fur
a fibre-lamp picking up russet and gold,
tuned into leaf-curl, wind,
city warbling, voices and sirens.

Her eyes slink, plotting. Settled on a bench
she looks at me dog-like, but wild.
I am slipping between.
I say no to her question
but her muzzle comes in first through the door.

At the sink she is playful, then, teeth bare,
she clutches my jeans,

suddenly feral,
clashing with tables and chairs.

fox (ii)

A paleness slips along Nelson Street at dusk,
weaving and stopping like memory tracking
over wasteland.

A bus waits, its on-stage passengers lit from inside;
then round a corner I see her
and reach for the almost moonlit, black and white.

Fox is in her lair: brush-tail close and swept away
from dripping in colour.
She stays in still life.

The bus passes by. She runs alongside,
camouflaged by dark her eyes shine like night-lights,
bikes or cars. The natural world has everything
to hide.

fox (iii) for maria

Hand on mouth, she watches the fox
cross the grass, says...
*in Slovakia they are wild, live far away
from the city*, and she reaches out

past Bratislava, the Tatra tundra, crag-water
to thin air, where I follow her hand and eye
to where we both see a landscape begin,
far beyond language.

Kim Hastings, 1953—2015

*Kim was a member of Bristol Red Rope
for many years. Her obituary is on p14.*

good practice guide: walking with red rope

This article is focused on encouraging members to take responsibility for themselves when walking with the club, to look out for others and so engage fully with the experience of walking with a group in the outdoors.

These suggestions will apply to whatever environment you are walking in. Whether it is at <500m, >500m or >500m in winter or in Scotland, members need to be able to look after themselves in terms of possessing the appropriate level of fitness, skills and equipment and of course also be prepared to look out for each other.

Walking in a group with a range of abilities is different from walking alone or with a couple of mates, not least because you need to consider others in your group. Also, invariably, the larger the group the slower the progress it will make.

These are *suggestions* and not 'rules'. Let's have your suggestions for any changes to them. Send all comments to mikehargaden@btinternet.com. There is a lot more that could be said about each suggestion here - why not start the discussion now?

1. How we can prepare for the walk? Taking responsibility for ourselves.

Decide whether you are up to doing the walk within a reasonable time. Check what the walk involves in terms of distance, ascent, time it will take and any special features such as demanding terrain, 'bad steps' etc.

Know where you are going. Ask the walk leader to show you the route on a map or even get involved in planning the route.

Check the weather forecast to see what conditions you will encounter. In mountain areas use MWIS.org.uk.

Be properly equipped with the appropriate clothes and other gear you need for the terrain you will cover. Carry a reliable watch and sufficient food and drink. If you go out walking regularly consider carrying your own map and compass and even think about going on a training course to develop useful navigation skills.

Carry a waterproofed information card with personal details such as medical conditions and medication, contact details of next-of-kin, GP, and NHS number.

Offer to give advice on how to prepare for the walk to anyone new to walking e.g. by giving them a copy of these suggestions.

Walk at a pace which conserves energy, especially when starting the walk, when people often set off at too fast a pace. Try to avoid going into competitive mode and racing ahead - stay within earshot of the group.

Know where you are. Pay attention to the landscape so you have a good idea of your location so you can respond to anything that may happen.

Have a map easily accessible so you can follow the route. Check your position on the map each time the group has a rest stop.

2. Looking out for others.

Work to keep the group together, occasionally checking where the back-markers are. Do you need to slow down? Do people need a break?

Be aware of the possibility of forming two groups, perhaps a faster and a slower group, or groups taking different routes. Do so following discussion by the full group and not by the group becoming so stretched out that some people become detached from it. Ensure no-one's safety is compromised if the group does split.

3. What to do when problems arise.

Know how to find the route again if you are lost. Can you find 3 pieces of evidence to find your location? This is difficult if you have not been following the route.

Be able to respond to an emergency – assess the situation – make informed decisions based on hard evidence, learn how to offer basic first aid.

Carry a mobile 'phone. Be able to contact the emergency services and give them the necessary information such as a grid reference of your location. Consider registering your mobile 'phone with 999 so you can send texts.

Engaged Hill Walking.

The suggestions included here will engage members in taking responsibility for themselves, looking out for others and in doing so getting much more pleasure from their walks.

Engaged walking can be very therapeutic. It addresses the '5 Ways to Well-being' 1. Be active – obviously walking is an excellent activity. 2. Have positive connections with others, showing consideration for others in the group. 3. Learn new stuff - is there anything listed in the suggestions above that you feel you want to learn about e.g. navigation skills or First Aid? 4. Mindfulness (taking notice of the surroundings rather than sailing through on 'autopilot') 5. Doing things for others, perhaps leading a walk.

And of course by engaging more with the walk we leave our daily cares and concerns behind us for a few hours. You can access an online version of this article at redrope.org.uk/activities/training/Good-Practice-for-Walking.pdf

Mike Hargaden



new bands, fees and charges

On January 1st income bands, membership fees and trip charges all changed. In line with decisions at the last AGM we've reduced the number of bands from eight to five and aligned them more with average (median) national incomes and with tax thresholds. The new bands and membership fees are:

New Band	Relevant Income, weekly/ monthly		Membership Fee	Pre-2016 Bands
1	Up to £180	Up to £780	£12.00	A, B
2	Between £181 and £275	£781 - £1192	£18.00	C, D, E
3	Between £276 and £400	£1193 - £1733	£27.00	E , F, G
4	Between £401 and £615	£1734 - £2665	£40.00	G , H
5	Over £615	Over £2665	£48.00	H , +

Some bands (A,B,C, D and F) transfer directly to new bands but for others the new income thresholds mean that they could fall into one of two choices. So if you haven't already renewed your membership for this year you will need to work out your new band from the table above. The method for calculating 'relevant income' is unchanged and is described on our website. (RR charges have not risen for several years, whereas hut fees, for instance, have increased a lot; fortunately at the moment cheaper fuel should soften the impact.)

Trip and transport charges are amended as well. Trip charges become:

Income Band	Standard Nightly Rate	With 10% Early Booking Discount
1	£8	£7.20
2	£12	£10.80
3	£16	£14.40
4	£20	£18
5	£24	£21.60

For all newly advertised trips these rates will apply. A complication arises as several trips were advertised before the new rates were agreed and some members have already booked on to one or more of these – at the old rate for their old income band. The National Committee decided it would be unfair to ask trip members already booked to pay more, so all these trips will be run according to last year's charging rules. Throughout 2016 trip organisers must make it clear in the MIS which set of rates apply.

Transport charges are derived, as before, from the cost per litre of fuel but are distributed between the new five bands instead of eight. Band 3 will be the base rate for the charge per mile (as band E was in the old scheme), then band 1 will be 55%, band 2 78%, band 4 145% and band 5 170% of the base price. For instance, at £1 per litre at the pumps the rates per mile would be – 3.1p, 4.4p, 5.7p, 8.3p and 9.7p for bands 1 to 5 respectively.

All of this is also detailed on our new website under Join/Membership Charges and Activities/Trips/Trip Charges - both new and old trip and transport charges will be shown until July 1, 2016.

Steve Wright Membership Secretary

bmc subsidized training courses

There are two types of subsidized training:

Courses at Plas y Brenin (PYB) at Capel Curig in Snowdonia. See <http://www.pyb.co.uk/courses-bmc.php> for more details. You do not have to belong to a BMC affiliated club to attend these courses.

Courses for BMC affiliated club members only that are based in hut accommodation. These courses are open to all red rope members. These take place in various venues in England and Wales. See www.thebmc.co.uk/club-training-courses-2016 for more details.

PYB courses:

Winter Skills in Wales (2 days). There are 6 dates in 2016. The cost with food and accommodation to stay at PYB is £160. It costs £130 to stay in the bunkhouse or £100 for a non-resident.

Read to Rock: Indoor to Outdoor (2 days). 13 dates in 2016. To stay at PYB this costs £160; in the bunkhouse £140 and £100 for a non-resident.

Scrambling Essentials (2 days). 7 dates in 2016. To stay at PYB this costs £175; in the bunkhouse £155 and £115 for a non-resident.

Head for the Hills: Introduction to Hill-Walking. To stay at PYB costs £160, £140 in the bunkhouse and £100 non-residential

Red Rope members could opt for the non-resident rate and stay at the LMC hut, Cae Ysgubor in Bedgelert or the Blea Tarn hut in the Lake District see redrope.org.uk/activities/club-hut/

BMC Club Training Courses

[Navigation Skills](#) (NNAS Bronze): 23-24 April, £85 (nr Ingleton, Yorkshire)

[Navigation Skills](#) (NNAS Silver): 23-24 April, £85 (nr Ingleton, Yorkshire)

[Improve your Traditional Leading](#): 23-24 April, £99 (Langdale, Lake District)

[Training Novice Club Members](#): 14-15 May, £50 (Plas y Brenin, Snowdonia)

[Improvised Rescue for Climbers](#): 21-22 May, £99 (Coniston, Lake District)

[Trad Climbing on Sea Cliffs](#): 11-12 June, £99 (Pembrokeshire, South Wales)

[Improvised Rescue for Climbers \(female only\)](#): 11-12 June, £99 (Langdale, Lake District)

[Intro to Scrambling](#): 25-26 June, £99 (Borrowdale, Lake District)

[Improvised Rescue for Climbers \(Sea Cliffs\)](#): 10-11 September, £99 (Pembrokeshire, South Wales)

More courses to be announced soon, including First Aid (Feb & Sept), Navigation (May, July & Autumn) and Scrambling (July).

These courses do not include food, accommodation or transport. Unlike the courses at PYB any red rope member regardless of their band will receive a subsidy to attend one of the BMC training courses. This subsidy only applies to the cost of the course.

The current subsidy rates for the new income bands are:

Band 1: 50% of the cost.

Band 2: 40% of the cost.

Band 3: 30% of the cost.

Band 4: 20% of the cost

Band 5: 10% of the cost.

The maximum grant for all bands is £50.

These grants are subject to money being available in the club training budget. After you have attended the course, you need to complete a **training subsidy form** (redrope.org.uk/activities/training).

You will be expected to share your newly acquired skills with other club members. The club will pay the entire cost for any club member who attends the annual BMC novice's course in Snowdonia. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland www.mcofs.org.uk/events.asp also run training courses. These are only open to club members who live in Scotland. BMC courses are open to club members. Glenmore Lodge also run courses near Aviemore in Scotland.

Please contact P y B, BMC, Mountaineering Council of Scotland or Glenmore Lodge for further details. Any enquiries about RR policy should come to me.

The training section of the club website also contains details of help the club can provide to members who wish to undertake formal outdoor courses.

PLUS! 20 –22 May, organised by Merseyside RR

MMC hut, Llanberis, Snowdonia. Navigation training with top instructor Cat Foster. Contact Andrew Scott, organiser [tanzan708@gmail.com] for further info.

Send cheque & booking form (new rates) + separate training subsidy form and cheque (see above and RR website) to Dot Callaway, 78 Kenmare Road, Liverpool 15 asap. 8 places in total, 3 already taken. See report of similar event in Bulletin 27.

Dermot Mckibbin

Red Rope Training Officer (training@redrope.org.uk)



Skills sharing at the AGM: Malcolm, extreme left, doesn't seem entirely convinced by the participants suitability for rope-work. Dermot (peaked cap) was late for lunch after the session - he said he had been a little tied up, ho ho. Terry, leading the navigation training, obviously decided to ply his group with unlimited caffeine in an attempt to increase their powers of concentration!

2015 AGM: back to gradbach!

The meeting, in late September, was attended by 35 members. The membership at the time was 300. 10% have to be present to make it quorate, so there was no need for 'creative accountancy'!

It was well chaired, which meant all of the agenda was dealt with. A full account is on the website under 'Committee Minutes'. (See summary below.)

In general the weekend was very enjoyable, apart from some rugby fans having divided loyalties about missing the England v Wales World Cup match on Saturday night! They managed to resist escaping to the nearest pub with a telly and were rewarded with a terrific evening meal organised by Gill Cox and her assorted assistants.

Comedian Naomi Paul did well and Arthur's quiz was as quizzical as ever. 'Which fruit, beginning with a 'k', am I thinking of?' The answer wasn't a kiwi. It was a kumquat! Eat your heart out, Jeremy Paxman! Saturday's walks in the lush, rolling countryside near the Roaches were enhanced by a visit to an excellent micro-brewery.

David Symonds Photos by Sherry McIver

Motion x

John Dickie's proposed motion, re. changing the Red Rope tagline, had not been formally circulated. It had, however, been extensively discussed on the national e list and summarised in the Bulletin. John felt this had been worthwhile in itself and withdrew the motion.

Motion 3

Refund of trip charges for cancellations

Proposed by West Midlands Region

It is proposed that a full refund is given up to 12 weeks before a trip starts/ 50% refund up to 4 weeks before a trip starts/ No refund within 4 weeks of a trip. However, in special circumstances refunds larger than this may be given at the discretion of local club officers for regional trips and by national officers for national trips - circumstances such as ill health or losing a job.

Carried 22 for - effective from 1 Jan 2016.

(When a region organises a trip they have to commit funds for accommodation which are often not refundable. Cancellations can therefore lead to serious financial consequences.)

Motion 2

Brought by the NC following a rationalisation of the Constitution. It had 3 features: Separation of the Constitution into 2 parts, Constitution and Policy/Accept the Constitution as it has now been rewritten/ Accept the Draft Policies document.

Carried unanimously with 2 abstentions.

Motion 1

Banding Structure reduced to 5 bands, featuring a 'super-band' for high earners.

Motion carried 30 for, 1 against, 1 abstention.

To be implemented from 1 January 2016.

Stop Press, 13 February:

Steve Wright, Membership Secretary, is handing over to Linda Goss. The I.T. software is currently being updated. Steve will carry on for now but Linda will take over soon.

individuals staying at lancashire m.c. huts

This is a reminder that Red Rope members as individuals have access to the Lancashire Mountaineering Club huts in Beddgelert and the Langdales. Both huts are in great locations and the Beddgelert Hut (newly built) is extremely comfortable. But so far Red Rope hasn't come anywhere near to using our allocation of 200 bed nights per year. Full details of the procedures for staying at the huts are on our website <http://www.redrope.org.uk/activities/club-hut/> but here's a summary:

Keys. For Cae Ysgubor (Beddgelert) you need to obtain a personal electronic key fob, available for a deposit of £20. These should be ordered at least a month before your first stay at the hut. For The Loft (Blea Tarn, Langdale) conventional keys are available from Red Rope's bednight booker, currently Barbara Segal. Contact **bednight@redrope.org.uk**

Booking. You don't need to book your stay with LMC but you should check on their web-based calendar <http://lancsmc.org/lmc/calendar/hut-bookings/> to make sure there are no group bookings at the time you plan to go and let the bednight booker know of your plans as we need to keep a tally of the nights used.

Payment. The charges in the following table apply. You will need to provide your own food. A cheque for your fees, made out to Red Rope, together with a note of the number of people, nights and bands of those involved should be sent to the bed night booker. For Blea Tarn you should return the key at the same time. For regional trips, weekends will be allocated in October for 2017. Let the bednight booker know if your region would like to book either of the huts.

Barbara Segal bednight@redrope.org.uk

Nightly Charges		
Band	Cae Ysgubor	Blea Tarn
1	5.00	3.00
2	6.00	4.00
3	7.00	5.00
4	8.00	6.00
5	9.00	7.00

Merseyside RRers leaving Cae Ysgubor after an excellent weekend in October, 2015. Photo by Sarah Thwaites.

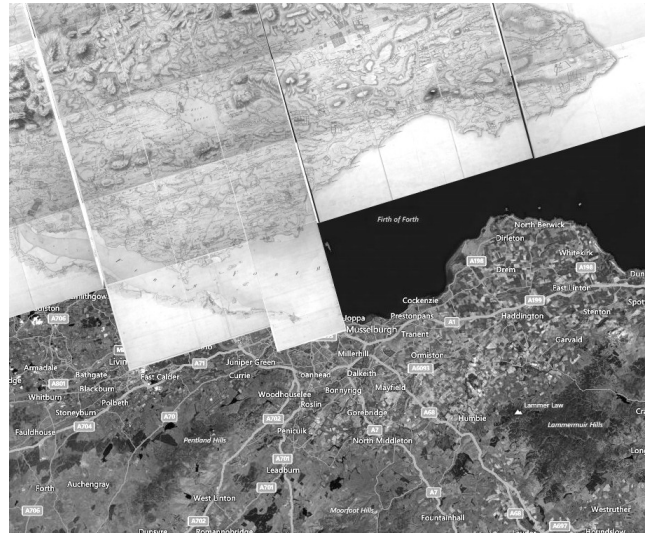


'Monument to OS' Mike Saunders

Mike's work features in a number of recent publications, and a pamphlet, *Detent*, is forthcoming from Gatehouse Press. He is currently writing about land, money and water. He runs indianlitter.tumblr.com with Angus Sinclair and works in Edinburgh Central Library's map department.

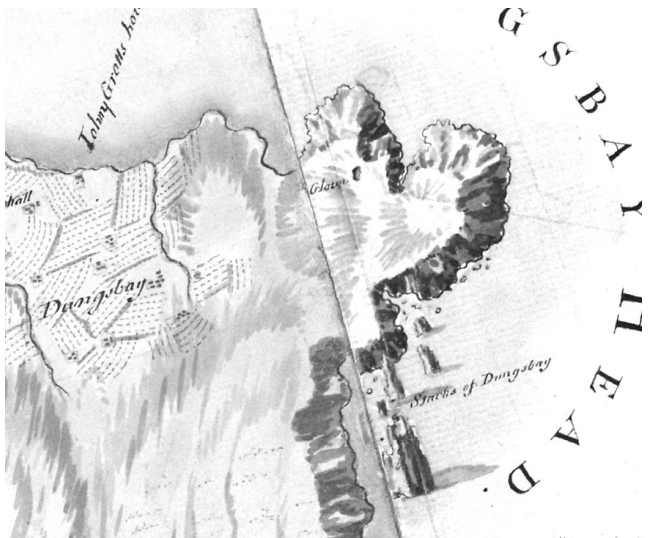
55.9889 x -3.4310

From the north travel trees in depleted clusters and folds, divided through isometric perspective. What was previously a forest or a wood becomes an elaborate swatch. Follow this into movement, at a remove, through differentiations of green, a knife-like transition, into a present at odds with its evolution. Today Inverkeithing constantly and actively funnels between multiple striking and paralysing inboxes while commuters egress at speed over Inchgarvie. What remains is a type of spine, in a process of constant replacement, structured within an unsustainable network. Not for the first time motion is measured within friction, or guesswork.



58.6698 x -3.0612

In specific detail crouched against foreign weather, to mark terrain, surrounded by canvas and the warm hoarse breath at night from three sides, poles above. Slice into existence a previous triangulation. Kept instead of a diary what once was never described this way, in degrees, in rock structures, in erosion and whatever can be seen from here: what looks like a sheer drop from the south is an ever flattening plateau from the northeast.



58.6874 x -3.5663

Continue with disorganised spirit, a somnolent & ragged flag, through variations: sleep, long arm of day, double dream of amalgamation. Left soot. Left unerasable traces (experimenting with height) from a bird's eye view (if birds saw perspective not as angled but as planar, a loose tube, threaded not like cotton but like a screw). Diagrammatic plates held in rusted place as if permanent: as if in a variation of permanence.





Dermot, Steve, Gill and Bob on Ostrava Col below Rysy.

Wednesday Oct 7, 2015

It's 2 pm. I'm at the eastern end of the White Tatras in Slovakia, with Bob Powell and Dermot McKibbin. Our plan is to walk from here to the Tatranska Magistrala, the main trail along the southern slopes of the High Tatras, as far as we can manage in a week, with trips up interesting side valleys and a few summits.

Today we're walking through the White Tatras to stay at Green Lake Hut (Chata pri Zelenom Plese). This is where we find out how unable we are to keep to the map or guidebook timings! It's supposed to take 4 hours but we take 5½, albeit with a coffee/tea stop en route and the last half hour has to be done with head torches, on an increasingly stony path. Fortunately, route finding is not a problem - trails in the Tatras are very well signed. But dusk is a good time for bears, so Bob halloos at every bend to let them know we're here!

The lights of the hut are very welcome, as is dinner a few minutes later – including a free beer! We meet the fourth member of our party, Gill Cox, who has come by train via Berlin and walked from the Polish border.

Thursday

Today's going to be a long day, with an ascent of Jahňací štít and then a longish walk to our next hut along the Magistrala. Jahňací's not that high – only 2230 metres - but involves 700m of ascent, a possibly tricky section with chain protection and then a walk/scramble along the summit ridge to the top. Bob's decided his back's not up to it yet, so he's going to walk direct to the hut Zamkovskeho (Zam for short). Route finding is easy and the walk to the climbing section very gradual and pleasant. The chained section is on a sloping slab and not as difficult as anticipated and we're soon scrambling along the ridge to the summit. The views are astounding, even with cloud wafting around. East are the White Tatras summits, north is a series of ridges into Poland, west close ups of Jahňací's near

neighbours, whilst south and below is a solid bank of cloud, obscuring everything. Descending by the same route the chain section seems a bit harder. We find walking backwards using the chain to help works best.

Back at the Green Lake there's time for a bowl of Borsch, before repacking our sacs and setting off for 'Zam'. This section of the Magistrala is no 'walk in the park' with a 500m ascent, a couple of short chain sections to cross a ridge and then hours over seemingly endless boulder fields and the weather has deteriorated. The guidebooks says it's 4 hours from hut to hut, but it takes us that long to reach the cable car station at *Skalná pleso* (now closed) and the light is failing fast.

So, it's head torches again, careful foot placing on the stone track and loud singing to frighten away the bears! After an hour we're starting to worry that we're going to miss dinner. Thank heavens for mobile phones. Bob's at Zam already and is able to convince the wardens that we really are coming and need feeding. We finally stumble into the hut about 7.30 pm, after some 10 hours of walking and 1250 metres of ascent.

Friday

A good night's sleep but the weather's not on our side and we decide to go direct to Zbojnícka Chata (Outlaw Hut!) via the Magistrala and the Vel'hi Studenta Dolina (Big Cold Valley). But before leaving we notice the electric fence round the hut to deter the bears, so it's not paranoia!

Today's a damp walk, in wet mist almost all day, but it's a pleasant with a splendid waterfall, a café for hot drinks and an interesting valley walk to the hut.

This is high up in the head of the valley and turns out to be the most basic manned hut that I have ever encountered - sleeping in the loft on mattresses on the floor, no showers, no washing facilities apart from a cold water trough and lavatories outside, designed on the 'gravity' principle. So smelly!. But what a fantastic atmosphere, with about 30-40 overnighters and plenty of beer. *Sculpture of a porter taking provisions to a hut.*



Saturday

Up early morning and the view of the surrounding peaks bathed in dawn pink is wonderful. The party's splitting again. Dermot and I are keen to tackle the Prielorn (means 'breakthrough') a notch in the north west ridge leading into the head of a valley towards Poland and described as the hardest signposted walk in the Tatras. Bob and Gill have decided to walk back down Cold Valley to continue on the Magistrala and meet us at Slievisky Dom.

The walk up to the Prielom is not long or difficult but surprisingly has several chain-protected sections on ground that's neither steep nor particularly tricky. Being a Saturday, there are several other adventurous hikers – Poles and Hungarians mostly. Eventually, it is clear enough to attempt the descent. There are two possible routes, a short iron hoop ladder into a nasty looking steep gravelly groove, or a chain down the rocky right side. We elect for the chain and rock and apart from one long step traverse with an intimidating drop, it's not too bad. In fact, the rest of the (unprotected) descent of the rocky side is harder.

Eventually we're down into the head of White Water Valley, contour round and climb back over the ridge Poľský hrebeň (Polish Ridge). One plan was to climb nearby *Východná Vysoká* but the mist is so thick that we decide it's not worth the effort although there are several other groups going up it.

Slievsky Dom is a real culture shock after three days up high. It's still 1670 m. above sea level but it's a real hotel – private rooms, proper beds, ensuite bathrooms, fluffy towels, trouser press. (I made the last one up). Of course that all comes at a price but at Slovak rates not too bad. It's so good to have a shower.

Sunday

At last a fine day! Sunny, warm and little cloud. The mountains around us are clear and sharp. Just right for photos. Southwards is a bit different. The Poprad valley is completely full of cloud and all that's visible are the distant summits of the Low Tatras.

Our walk along the Magistrala to Poprad Lake Hut is an easy splendid 5 hour trek with high mountains to the right and that bank of cloud on the left. This takes us to a viewpoint some 500 metres almost vertically above the lake and hut.

It's stunning with most of the western peaks close at hand – Rýsý, Kôprovský štít and especially the one across the valley – Satan! The descent to the hut is not as intimidating as it looks, or as the map suggests, as a beautifully engineered zig-zag path as been built recently with some 40 hairpin bends. Poprad Lake Hut is another mountain hotel but cheaper than Slievsky Dom. It's also almost empty as it appears that, being Sunday, everyone's gone home!

Monday

I can't believe it - it snowed overnight! The weather forecast said it would but we didn't believe it. Now there's 10 cm on the ground, the clouds are right down and it's still snowing. We decide to cut our losses and drop down to catch the train to Poprad, to be tourists for a day, stay there and see what tomorrow brings. The train journey through snow covered fir trees and thick mist is like being in Narnia!

Tuesday

It's stopped snowing but it's pretty cold and the cloud is well down. So Plan B comes into action - a train to Smizany and a walk westwards through the Hornad Prielom of the Slovak Paradise (Slovenský raj). And what a walk! The hardest non-mountain walk I have ever done with wooden ladders and bridges, chain-protected scrambling around slippery limestone outcrops above the river and metal grids cemented into the vertical rock with water below – sometimes a long way below. Almost 10 miles of commitment. Thank heavens we're the only hikers out today. After a long wait, we catch a bus back to Poprad, take our last Slovak meal and see Gill onto her overnight train to Prague. This was a fantastic week in stunning scenery with outstanding walks (when the weather permitted) and interesting places to stay. I really recommend it to walkers who like a bit of a challenge. We shall be back. There is unfinished business! **SW**

Chata pri Zelenom Plese, White Tatras



remembering scott, kim and chris

Scott Lewallen: It came as a great shock to hear that Scott, who was an active member of Red Rope in London in the 80's and 90's, had fallen to his death from a route in the Alps on 21st October, 2015.

Scott, an American by birth, who had settled in London, joined Red Rope in the early eighties. He was already a hugely experienced climber - in his first 25 years he had been mountaineering in the USA, New Zealand, Ruwenzori, the Karakoram, the Himalayas and the Alps – including an ascent of the North Face of the Eiger.

The club had really only just got going, and living near his home in Hackney were a number of keen but inexperienced Red Rope climbers. Never a person to boast of his achievements, he put his very considerable skills our way, encouraging us to Scotland for winter mountaineering and onto the sea cliffs for adventurous climbing. I went on our Scottish winter trips, as did he, and after climbing with him in Glencoe and on the Ben, he invited me to join him in what he seemed to love most - alpine climbing.

For some reason he also loved bivvying so no major ascent was complete unless there was at least one bivvy! Thus we did routes as diverse as the North Face of the Triolet - one bivvy - and The Cordier Pillar - one bivvy - and the climb that featured the worst bivvy of my life - the Gervasutti Pillar - three bivvies!

Despite the difficulties and hardships we would meet on route, he remained even-tempered and level-headed, but at the same time bold and audacious to overcome the physical challenges of the route and the alpine weather and environment.

Scott was adaptive and inventive, never much hampered by the plausible. He had a clarity of vision to go with his braveness, and remained decisive and unflustered when the going got tough.

On one occasion, on an expedition to Dhaulgiri, Scott was responsible for saving the life of a Nepali porter in a demanding rescue effort that lasted several days. By contrast, on another time on Ben Nevis, when his knees were troubling him on the descent - he turned round and climbed down backwards, then walked off the Ben backwards too.

He was a most generous person – not just with his money – but also with his time, attention and experience. He had a kindly dry wit and an endearing chuckle - he was a dear friend and I have missed him since I moved out of London. Our last climb together twenty years ago was another alpine ascent - the North Face of the Plan in winter. Though we failed he was very happy as we'd enjoyed two comfortable bivvies!

Colin Knowles

Kim Hastings: Kim died peacefully on December 29, 2015, in St Monica nursing home, Bristol, following a major stroke the previous summer. Despite major health challenges, she was a lively and keen member of Red Rope. We met on a RR walk after I arrived in Bristol ten years ago and so it feels right to remember her in this RR newsletter.

In befriending me Kim introduced me to the Bristol RR community and encouraged me to join. We enjoyed many of the pleasures and challenges of Sunday walks, together, making light of what would otherwise, for me as a townie, have been scarily long hikes! Without her encouragement I would not have braved walking through the night in the rain on the Avebury solstice walk. Despite her increasing difficulties with balance she was a fast walker, often outpacing me on long walks. When, over time, she slowed down she had the idea of doing shorter routes - finding ways to join in. Over our time together she challenged me to question my assumptions about disability as a limitation, teaching me that disability can bring useful insights and need not be seen as a deficit.

Among my memories of walking with Kim are several favourites which we enjoyed together and with RR friends. Among these are a summer evening walk along the river at Conham and up into the bluebell woods, to the pub at Hanham Lock, a picnic and walk from Freshford Mill to cream tea in the Peto Garden at Iford Manor, and her birthday outing to the arts trail in the Forest of Dean. I have many other memories of walking and talking, getting lost and finding our way, fish and chips on Clifton Down on summer evenings. Although the length of our walks got shorter their special quality of walking and talking remained.

Kim was a fine poet and leaves a portfolio of work well known to friends and writing circles. Her poetry reflects her extraordinary capacity to be alongside her friends and colleagues in times of trouble and in times to celebrate, to appreciate difference, and the unique lives of friends and those she helped.

In 2002 she helped set up *The Trauma Foundation*, a charity that supports refugees and asylum seekers. She continued to help, as a therapist, refugees who had experienced extraordinary suffering, often torture, up to the end of her life. As her hearing and her health deteriorated she fought her own battles with the helping professions, the health service, and with colleagues to sustain participation in the writing circles she loved, as well as in her friendships. Her refusal to give up often resulted in problems with friends and colleagues.

Her capacity to share depth of feeling and lived experience lent a quality and depth to friendship that was special and will be missed by all of us who were her friends and who walked alongside her.

Margaret Page (*Some of Kim's poems are on p.5*)

Chris Drinkwater: I was very sad to hear about the death of Chris through cancer, although I knew that he had been poorly for some years. We last communicated by email about a year ago now, I am sad to say.

I have some very fond memories of him from the 1990s and early 2000s in particular, and will also always associate him with the then annual RR May Day Bank Holiday weekend Gogarth climbing meets. He was a gentle, caring person, a graceful climber, with a lot of calm determination, who was probably at his very best on the snow and ice and sea cliffs.

I recall in particular also his awe on our arrival in Delhi in 2001 for the TNW expedition. I could tell that he loved the noise, bustle and colours of that city. He was entranced by it for several days with glee, delight and amazement, suggesting perhaps that at some level he thought he had 'found himself'. He continued to be that way for the 5 weeks of our time in India as we travelled, explored and climbed.

I also remember him fondly from our climbing trip to China in 2004, when we spent a lot of time in tents in deep snow, and in various snowy gullies, where rock fall was a real danger to the three of us (Titch, him and I). He was much calmer than I was about these ordeals and dangers.

Most of all though, and I hope that I am not being too over-dramatic, I owe Chris a lot. We were part of a week-long RR climbing trip to Lundy one September in the mid 1990s, with the weather mostly favourable. One day Chris and I went off to climb a fabulous south facing sun kissed (that day) E1 granite sea cliff slab, named 'American Beauty': and it most certainly lived up to its name, with Chris leading the magnificent full rope pitch, at 5a, with both poise and delight.

Next door to it was a climb called the 'Great Falls Road' (and this also lived up to its name) which was a 2 pitch HVS 4c over a Zawn (sea cave). We had the time, we were on an up, and so we abbed to its base, where to our added delight we were spied upon by a very curious seal for the rest of our time on the cliff.

Chris led the first pitch, and I began the second, which was a rising rightwards 4c traverse over the Zawn. About halfway over, as I moved up, my holds gave way. I dropped with an alarming shriek, and swung heavily back towards Chris. Thankfully, with him holding me, I ended up back on the belay with him. Unfortunately, by holding my fall, he sustained quite a severe rope burn to the palm of one of his hands.

After a period of calming down, with the seal still obviously wondering what we were doing and what all the noise and fuss was about, I managed, very slowly and carefully, to complete the pitch. As was his way, it was only on the walk back to the camp-site that Chris told me that I had nearly pulled him off the belay, with him explaining that although this had scared him, he did not want to tell me at the time, just in case it worried me even more. That was Chris in a nutshell and I will miss him, even though we had not seen each other for some time.

Andrew Phillips

I heard that Chris could "move like a shadow over the rock". One of the calmest, warmest, most thoughtful, patient and cheerful people I have known. My favourite memory is of discussing Heidegger whilst walking on a gritstone edge somewhere - the conversation being more memorable than the very beautiful location. That was my privilege and Chris's gift. Thank you, Chris.

Jon Marsden

The photos show Scott in 1990 and more recently; Kim at various stages of her life and Chris, lower front left, at the RR Ben Nevis winter trip in 2012. He wrote excellent, understated articles for the last two bulletins, which you may like to revisit, and was the club's BMC contact for several years before his untimely death. Many thanks to all contributors to this edition. Please send material for the next issue by 31 July.

Best wishes, David Symonds: bulletin@redrope.org.uk



summer on skye

ian walker

Ian (in the mosi mask!) is an accomplished painter, graphic designer, photographer and teacher. He spent a fortnight trekking with two companions on Skye last summer. He is not in RR but has kindly allowed us to use his work - as a fan of Paul Mason he has to be a 'fellow-traveller'! See Ian's photos and trip report at <https://artandphotography63.exposure.co/100-puddles>

