



Countryside Access and the Environment: What Should Labour Do?

Comments from a recent discussion on red_rope_national@lists.riseup.net

My views are that the new Labour government should

- 1) Restore the funding that was cut to local authorities since 2010.
- 2) Introduce a countryside access and right to roam bill and
- 3) Address the massive concentration of land ownership if net zero targets are to be met.

Labour's election manifesto pledged to plant three new national forests, bring in nine new national river walks, stop use of bee-harming pesticides and help local groups to buy land to create green space.

After the election their "bullet points" were to clean up rivers and lakes, boost food security, nature recovery, stop flooding and have a "zero waste" economy.

All very laudable but vague and insubstantial.

Government funding to local authorities has been cut in real terms by 40% between 2010 and 2020. A restoration of funding would have many good spinoffs, but one effect would be to have more dedicated staff and resources to maintain and re-open rights of way. And make them accessible too.

Labour quietly dropped a commitment in 2023 to bring in a wider Right to Roam Act like that which exists in Scotland. To have such a provision in England and Wales would open the countryside to the wider population with benefits to mental health and general awareness of our precious environment.

The argument that England is too intensively farmed for better access does not wash. Both Scotland and England have about the same amount of land in agricultural use (69%).

Our Scottish members know best how it operates in Scotland in practice, but there are also responsibilities that come attached to these rights which take account of preventing damage to farmland etc.

Headline news about rubbish and damage caused by overnight campers shouldn't stop us from promoting this: it should be an issue for public education not bans.

The UK has pledged to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a target which may well be too late for the planet. But even this is likely to be thwarted by the powerful lobbying of the petrochemical industry unless the government acts against them.

And the current land ownership also makes this target difficult. 1% of the population own half the land in England. England's two largest natural resources that absorb carbon dioxide ('carbon sinks') are part of that. Around a thousand landowners own a third of England's woods and 124 landowners own 60% of England's deep peat. Information is vaguer for Scotland and Wales, but it's estimated that only 433 people or companies own a half of private owned rural land. Many members of this powerful lobby will resist change. www.whoownsengland.org.uk

www.whoownsscotland.org.uk

The government should insist that the finances of the big landowners are transparent to the wider public. Compulsory land management plans should be used to force reluctant landowners to act in the interest of the environment and the wider public. Failing that the government should be implementing public ownership of large areas of land where owners resist change.

Pete Watson

I agree that it would be great to extend access to the countryside as much as possible but one aspect of this debate which may be overlooked is simply keeping the level of access we should currently enjoy.

Barbara Segal and I had a 3 day walking holiday recently in Shropshire. We generally had a good time and were lucky with the weather. However, on a few occasions we came across paths which were heavily overgrown with various combinations of nettles, ferns, brambles and Himalayan balsam which was over head height. Ironically on one occasion this was immediately behind a clearly waymarked smart stile, although we came across others which needed to be replaced. We also found a cultivated field where a bridleway should have been, leading us to walk about a mile on a busy road. This is a beautiful area which benefits from the income derived from walkers. It's unfortunate that the council hasn't done more in terms of maintenance. I have complained to Shropshire Council, although I know most councils had their funding from the Conservative government seriously reduced. It would be refreshing if Labour could address this issue, as well as cleaning up our badly neglected rivers and coasts.

David Symonds

I agree that restoring lost funding to local councils would improve access. It's getting tricky cycling along Chester canal towpath in some places due to overgrown hedges on one side and potholes on the other. One tiny slip and you're swimming home! However, I think maintaining canal towpaths is the job of the Canal and River Trust/ Inland Waterways. So this is maybe a more general conservation/ environmental/ heritage funding issue. I would think it comes under 'preventative medicine' as well, considering the health benefits of getting out and about. **Robin Hemuss**

I agree that funding for local councils to maintain footpaths is important, as well as campaigning for wider access in law. The provisions in the Labour Party manifesto were pathetic. Possible grants to the bodies responsible for waterways (and for cycle paths in general) would also be worth campaigning for. Continuing cuts and this year's weather has led to many more rights of way being impassable.

In the meantime, some local Ramblers' groups are maintaining local footpaths, as well as continuing their campaign on identifying and registering rights of way that are in danger of being lost. See <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/support-us/dont-lose-your-way>. Many Red Ropers are also members of the Ramblers, but the latter may well welcome the help of non-members in these tasks.

While still supporting the Dartmoor wild camping case and high-profile trespasses, the Right to Roam campaign seems to be shifting its focus to 'reconnecting' with the outdoors, with an emphasis on environmental issues around rivers, trees etc. Our local group is focusing on litter picks. All of this is important but possibly not quite what their title implies. But local groups may vary. **Barbara Segal**

I am glad that this discussion has ended up as much about footpaths and local government funding, as about "right to roam". There is disappointment that the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, passed under the previous Labour government in 2000 and promoted as creating a right to roam, did not seem to change much, but basically laws by themselves cannot create paths. This was shown by the 2023 London region Easter trip to the Forest of Bowland. All the way through the campaign for the CROW Act, Bowland was always the "cause celebre": a big area almost completely closed off to walkers by an absence of

rights of way, and the attitude of the Duke of Westminster, who owns 23,500 acres of it.

Thanks to CROW, and so long as you have 1:25,000 mapping, pretty much all the Bowland moors are now tinted yellow as access land, but was it great walking? Unfortunately, there were two big problems: not many paths on the moors, so you spent much time stumbling through heather and boggy bits, and a lack of rights of way leading up onto the moors across farmland, so you could get on or off the moors only where public roads went up onto them. That's what we learnt on the first day of the trip; on the second some of us went south from Bowland to Pendle Hill, others north to Ingleborough, because the paths were better; the third day it rained and we did a low-level walk through fields and along the river near Slaidburn. And that was THE big walking area that CROW opened up for us!

So was CROW a complete waste of time? Maybe not, for two reasons: it may not have opened up many areas, but it does secure access to very large areas, making it harder for land owners to fence them off. Simply having open land clearly marked on maps is a significant win in itself, not so much in well known areas like the national parks as more locally: most of us already knew about open land within a mile or so of home, but now we can see what is a car or bus ride away, or near where we are staying on holiday.

I am conscious of this partly because it does not work well around London, where there is very little CROW access land but, especially in outer London, enormous areas of country parks, open spaces, nature reserves and so on, few clearly marked on maps (even Hampstead Heath and Richmond Park are not marked as access land, never mind Harmondsworth Moor or the "Heathrow Colne Valley Biodiversity Site").

I want to talk about local government funding, but while it very obviously needs to be improved it is hard to argue that the first call on additional funding should be re-hiring the rights of way officers or countryside officers that got cut, before improving funding for schools or social care. So does anyone want to talk about the big areas of army ranges mostly closed to the public, despite being owned by them? Post-CROW, these must be the biggest upland areas that are inaccessible. **Humphrey Southall**

In reply David Symonds suggested that if Labour had been brave enough to propose an increase in the extent of progressive taxation, and the introduction of some kind of wealth tax, there would have been more money for a variety of useful initiatives. As many commentators, including Evan Davis have pointed out, having little other than a faith in increasing growth in the economy doesn't seem much of a strategy.

Janet Saunders mentioned that the walkers in one of the groups she belongs to take secateurs with them - the plants in the photo below might need a flame thrower to shift them! Many thanks to all contributors.



How public access works in Scotland

It is, of course, entirely a matter for English people to decide what works for the future of public access in England. However, it would be daft not to look at how the very different access framework works in Scotland and perhaps take some learnings from that.

There's a perception that access in Scotland is much easier – a lower population density, less intensively farmed land and more uplands. These are all true, but ignore the fact that 70% of the Scottish population actually lives in the Central Belt, which doesn't look all that different from England.

So what is there to learn? Scottish access is, in principle, much more equitable. It was a lot simpler and cheaper to implement without a complex mapping process. Access rights apply to all non-motorised activities and to all land and inland water, with just a few exceptions – such as private gardens, quarries, construction sites, etc. As with all rights, you only have them if you're responsible, with guidance set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Land managers also have a legal duty to respect access rights and the Code sets out their reciprocal responsibilities.

Prior to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, access in the uplands was not generally challenged. However, getting through the lowlands was tricky without a protected rights of way network. One big difference the legislation made was to create a right of access on every field margin, making it possible to get around responsibly.

Clearly some activities have caused more concern than others. These include wild camping, dogs, shared use paths and access around livestock. Conflicts arise and there are irresponsible members of the public as well as a few anti-access farmers. Local authorities and national parks all have a duty and powers to uphold access. The Act and Code give a clear framework and set of tools to help resolve issues. These range from consistent, agreed messaging for signage, to the courts when all else fails. Education and promotion of the Code is key.

Here's one example of how the system works. Scotland has many sensitive, valuable habitats and rare species and wildlife, yet there is no nature conservation exemption for access. Instead the public can be requested to modify their behaviour to act in a responsible way. Through signage and the work of ranger services, you may be asked, for instance, to keep to paths, with dogs on leads, during the ground nesting bird season. Land managers can help by designing paths which avoid the most sensitive areas. Access rights still apply on the land, but the vast majority of people will use a path if there is one, reducing disturbance. A pragmatic approach is the best way to get compliance.

The Scottish legislation isn't perfect, and now austerity and budget pressures are undermining both access management and support for landowners. But nobody is calling for fundamental change. In my view England has much to gain by moving towards a Scottish approach, but reflecting the different culture south of the border.

Helen Todd, Red Rope Scotland

RRers are welcome to contact me directly if they have specific questions – helen.todd@ymail.com

Red Rope East Anglia: subsidised First Aid training!

The landscape of East Anglia is perhaps more gentle than other more mountainous regions of Britain but this has not protected our group from some painful slips and scrapes recently. So, as a group we were particularly pleased to see that the Red Rope National Committee is offering financial support for members to learn new, or refresh old, first aid skills.

Jackie and I volunteered, as regular walkers, to sign up for this and set about looking for a suitable course. We discovered that several local providers offered 8 hour (1 day) or 16 hour (2 day) courses which lead to the Outdoor Pursuits First Aid L3 (VTQ) certificate which is a qualification recommended by Red Rope. We decided that 8 hours would be enough for our needs and were able to book places on a course at a local outdoor activity centre ([Home - X Adventure Activities](#)), to be held on April 1st. As it turned out everybody else cancelled, the joke was on us, with the happy result that we had one-to-one tuition with the two instructors.

We had a morning of inside learning with a lecture, followed by some practical demonstrations focusing on CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), and it was interesting to see how much advice and method had changed since last time we had done any first aid training over a decade ago.

In the afternoon, the learning moved outside and we acted out various scenarios imitating some common illnesses and accidents and had to do our best to work out what to do. The day ended with a more formal test which I am glad to say that we both passed.

While we very much hope not to have to use these skills on our Red Rope comrades, it feels great to have had the opportunity to update our first aid knowledge and to feel well informed and supported. It has been an incredibly positive and useful experience and we'd encourage other RR members to take advantage of the National Committee offer to support training opportunities.

Alice Lyons and Jackie Sturton

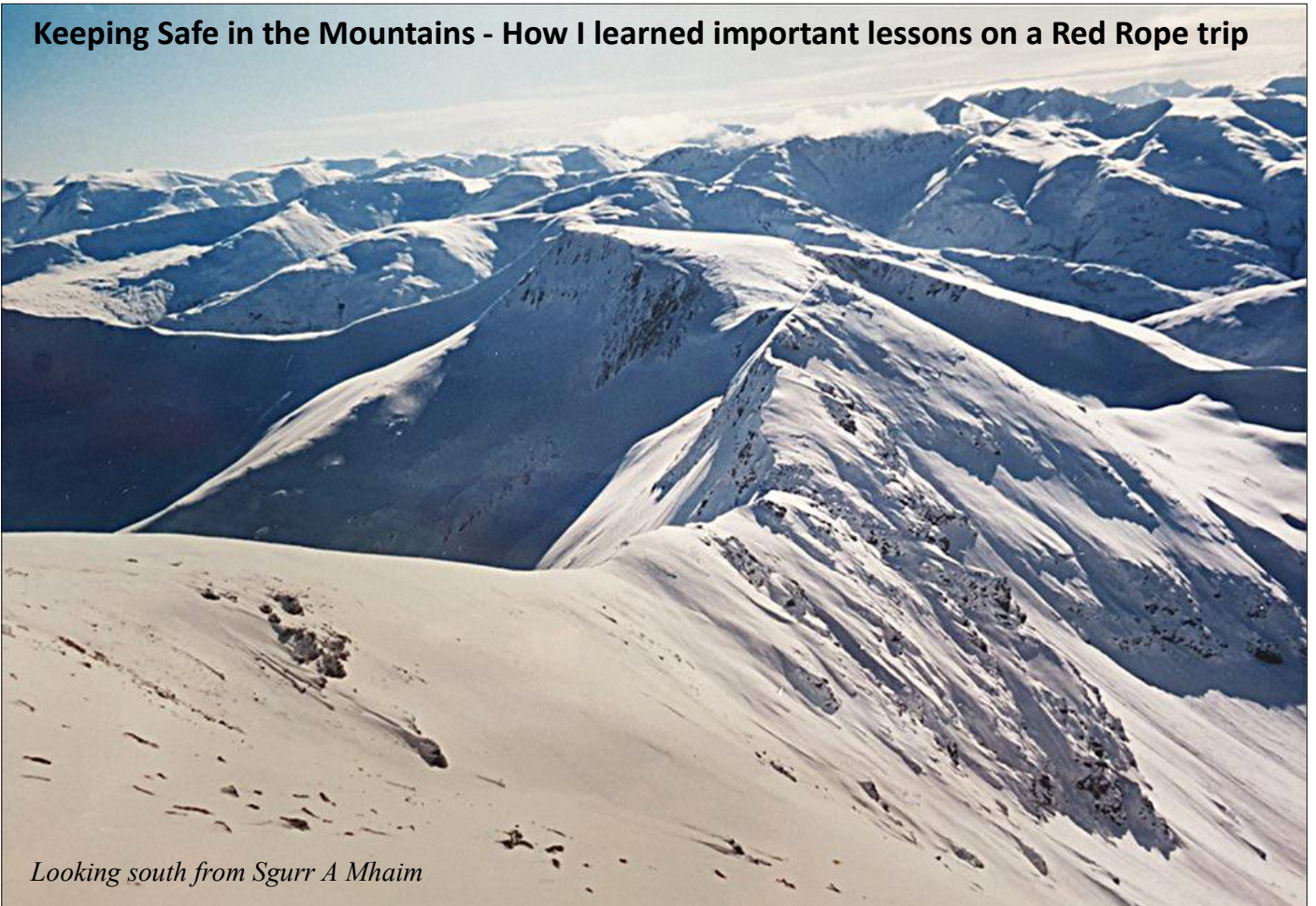


Alice and Jackie with their certificates

summer leaves fall
WINTER SLAMS SHUT
birds and bluebells
YELL IT'S OVER AS
spring leaps from
AROUND THE CORNER
and shakes your
FLAKY HAIR-DO
and you learn
HOW TO BREATHE AGAIN
you learn
TO BEAT DISEASE AGAIN
you learn
TO BE FREE AGAIN THEN
summer leaves fall
summer leaves fall
summer leaves

David Symonds

Keeping Safe in the Mountains - How I learned important lessons on a Red Rope trip



Looking south from Sgurr A Mhaim

When I was asked to write an article about safety, it wasn't long before my mind turned to one of my first Red Rope trips in 1995. It taught me some important lessons that I still try to apply to my walking nearly 30 years later. It was the last day of a winter national trip to the Alex Macintyre hut a few miles south of Fort William – Friday 3rd March 1995 to be precise. Looking back we made several mistakes. We got into some difficulties, but with a lot of luck we got down safely in the end.

Deep snow in the mountains

It had been a wet week, but on the last day it dawned clear and bright. The snow was so thick and fresh on the mountain tops, that it looked like an over iced Christmas cake. Somehow it was decided we would go down Glen Nevis and start climbing one of the mountains there. I don't remember much planning (MISTAKE). Just as we were about to set off several people decided to join us, making us wait whilst they got ready. This happened several times, so we did not start walking until 10.00am (MISTAKE).

Slogging up Sgurr A Mhaim

The first ascent up Sgurr A Mhaim, is a long continuous slog of a climb of 1000m. Some of the group turned back during

Slogging up Sgurr A Mhaim

The first ascent up Sgurr A Mhaim, is a long continuous slog of a climb of 1000m. Some of the group turned back during this ascent. We didn't reach the summit until 1.30pm. At this point, realising the lateness of the hour, most of the group turned round. But three of us decided to try to complete the Ring of Steall. Abandoning my usual caution, enthused by the inspiring view shown in the photo I agreed to carry on. We were not really thinking it through: how far we had to go, the amount of descent and re-ascent, the difficulties of the terrain, or how much the deep snow would slow us down and tire us. (MISTAKE)

A wonderful walk

From then on the walk was wonderful, ploughing through deep snow, even on the crest of the ridge, and then tumbling down steep descents, before climbing back onto the ridge. I kept looking across to Ben Nevis – was that "fair weather" cloud, or was a front starting to come in? So there was a sense of urgency and we hurried on. We reached the last top An Gearanach after 5.00pm, hoping to at least get off difficult ground before it became completely dark.

Our path blocked

I had recently been on a course and was aware of the avalanche hazard. So I persuaded my two fellow walkers that we should initially keep to the defined ridge. Unfortunately this led us into a trap.

Darkness was falling, the ground was thick with snow and vegetation, and we could no longer see our way ahead. But we were aware of cliffs, and the Steall Falls, below us. We tried traversing both ways - without success. I was for carrying on and trying to find a way off (MISTAKE). Luckily the more experienced member of the party over-ruled me, and we decided that we should re-ascend. That this required 300 metres of re-ascent over difficult, energy sapping ground, was a big blow to our morale. It was now dark.

Can we continue?

At this point the third member of our party sat down and could not continue. (MISTAKE – we had not checked each other's experience of long mountain days, before embarking on this risky venture) Fortunately by carrying his bag, getting him to eat some food, and general continuous encouragement; we were all able to struggle slowly back up, until we reached the point where we had left the normal stalkers' path. Still worried about the avalanche risk, we gambled on the re-freezing now occurring after the day time thaw, which consolidated the ground sufficiently. It was then a slow careful plod down, following the zig zags and wondering if we would at any moment be avalanched.

Crossing the rope bridge

Finally we reached the rope bridge across the River Nevis. It was a precarious traverse in our heavy boots and thick gloves, negotiating the frozen metal cables, the frost twinkling in the moonlight. I braced myself for a fall into the dark water below. But without incident, we reached the further bank, and walked out to the top car park.

A car awaits.

Luckily, and because Red Rope members do care when members do not return, a car was waiting for us. Its red rear lights guided us back. We reached the car 12 hours after starting off. We were both exhilarated and exhausted, but most of all relieved to have got down safely. At one point we thought we might have to spend a night out. It was now very cold, so I am not sure how we would have fared.

How to keep Safe.

So back to the point of this article - how can we keep safe when we are out on walks, particularly in the mountains?

Well a good starting place is the website "AdventureSmart". It has 3 key questions to ask yourself before setting out.

1. Am I confident I have the KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS for the day?
2. Do I know what the WEATHER will be like?
3. Do I have the the right GEAR?

We should consider asking these three questions before each time we set off. In a group, the questions need to be applied to every member of the group. Answering these questions before setting off, will help ensure we have made a plan that keeps us safe.

Please go to the AdventureSmart website, as it has a lot of useful information. It has separate sections for winter/autumn, and spring/summer.

<https://www.adventuresmart.uk/>

Weather forecasts. The Met Office specialist forecasts and MWIS are perhaps the best known:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/specialist-forecasts/mountain>

<https://www.mwis.org.uk/forecasts>

Travel at the speed of the slowest person.

On a hill walk always take a paper map, as well as a GPS or smart phone. If you are going out for a day, take a battery power pack as well.

Practise navigation - try going on a course if necessary.

If you have a map app. on your phone make sure you know how to use it, and download the maps you need, so they are still there if you have no signal.

'Blizzard bags' are more than simple foil blankets, they have a multilayered honey combed structure, which gives them good insulating properties, resulting in a lot of warmth in a light and compact package.

<https://www.blizzardsurvival.com/product-category/bags-blankets/blankets/3-layers-blankets/>

Make sure you eat and rehydrate well during the day, and before you set out. Take enough food and water with you for your walk and for emergencies.

You can easily see how a series of minor setbacks or mistakes can lead to disaster. This could be from setting out late, to losing key equipment: glove, crampon, ice axe; to making an ill-considered decision to press on, when there isn't enough time, or members of your party lack the experience or stamina.

As we peered down into the gloaming above the Steall Falls that evening, we could have been in big trouble. But I want to end on a positive note. We can minimise risk, but we can't entirely eliminate it. Walking has given me some wonderful life affirming, shared experiences — and challenges!

Glyn Rowlands, Mountain Rescue Volunteer
writing in a personal capacity 20.08.24

Red Rope safety issues, checklist and accident prevention

Please remember that on trips and day walks we have not only a group duty of care but also individual responsibility, both for our safety / accident prevention and also comfort and enjoyment.

Walks descriptions/grading

If offering or planning a walk as a group do your best to describe it either from your experience or what you can see from a map or guidebook. Be honest if you don't know. "A 12 km route over Big Hill, via Twee village. Should be back about 4ish. Easy walk." This isn't a helpful description to someone who doesn't know the area or their ability. Factors affecting accessibility of a walk are:

- Distance, height gain and loss over the day, gradients, numbers of ascents and descents.
- Conditions under foot – paths, tracks, roads, open moor, boggy or stony ground, icy, snowy, river crossings or bridges, exposure on ridges.
- The effect of the weather on the choice of route, availability of shelter, short cuts, avalanche forecast.
- Size of the group, pace, fitness, experience, tiredness, number of breaks.

We should all make our own decisions about whether we can do/enjoy a walk and, if in doubt, ask.

Equipment, food and clothing

Whilst what we take with us is very much a personal choice and most of us try to make our rucksacks as light as possible, it is worth checking, especially with new people, who's got what.

So, for instance there should be:

- more than one map
- a group shelter (or in good summer weather a minimum of a bivvy bag or foil blankets)
- comprehensive first aid kit (plus individual 1st aid necessities)
- Individual spare clothes, food and drink

Make sure any communal stuff is shared out and if the group splits during the day one party doesn't take all the safety gear.

On the walk let's look after each other by:

- Pointing out trip and slip hazards such as slippery bridges/stiles, icy patches, hidden holes, other folks' walking poles or ice axes.
- Taking breaks to eat and drink, and adjust clothing, and be aware if someone is flagging.
- Stopping to read the map or look at your phone - much safer than doing it on the move.
- Checking if folk seem unconfident on rough ground or around cows in fields.
- Being aware of what Mountain Rescue teams call the Golden Hours between 3 and 5 when most accidents happen because people may be tired or rushing to get back.

Few of us want to get into detailed risk assessments or "elf and safety gone mad" territory. However, we can do something about foreseeing most hazards and preventing some incidents. **Yvonne Hosker**

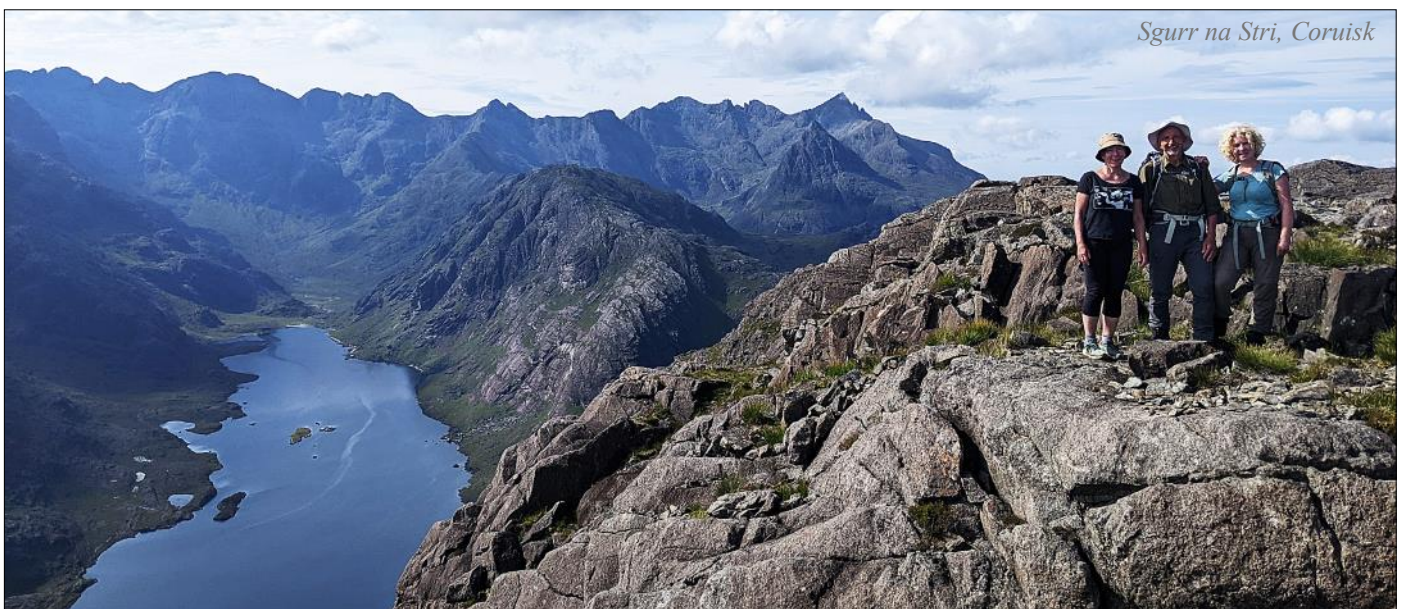




Photo by Maia Forrester

Taking the Plunge!

I had already booked on this trip with some trepidation, expecting Scottish Red Rope to be hard core mountaineers who would leave me behind. But I had fond memories of Coruisk.

As I remembered the hut is beautifully located above the harbour, below the hills, and adjacent to large flat rocks perfect for early morning yoga. The conveniently located harbour ladder down to the sea enabled early morning swimmers to descend gracefully, and incredibly, intermittently, there was a phone signal. What was lacking was gas.

There was much pulling of beards and people upended into the storage unit, turning taps, wiggling hoses, and trying engineering solutions, to no avail.

It transpired that nursing care was needed. Linda's healing hands eventually coaxed the cylinder to release its contents. After 2 days of improvisation catering suddenly became straightforward. The food was superb. People climbed huge hills and did daring things on scrambles equivalent to going up a down escalator (rolling boulders).

Coruisk, Isle of Skye, July 2024

There appeared to be a via ferrata without holds on Blaven and some French students were led to safety by Matthew and Ian. I couldn't even look at the pictures.

Others of us complained about the heat and fell gratefully into water at every opportunity. Luckily there were many, including a sculpted acqua chute through some rocks into a plunge pool, which provoked surprise and delight, and had the added benefit of being entirely safe. Basking on warm rocks afterwards completed the mineral spa treatments and we purred like Scottish wildcats as we took full advantage of the luxury of the sunshine and the gentle, drying breezes.

I expected to be traipsing through bogs, looking for rare sightings of the Cuillins through mist, and hoping for companions who wouldn't be at loggerheads after several days cooped up indoors listening to the rain on the roof. This was very much not what I was expecting, but a most pleasant surprise. **Trudi Warner**

Trudi endured two hearings as a result of holding a placard saying 'Jurors, you have an absolute right to acquit a defendant according to your conscience' outside a trial of climate protesters last year. She will write a piece about it in the next bulletin. (See 'Defend Our Juries' website.)

The 2024 National Gathering

Our AGM weekend was changed to a Zoom meeting during Covid, but although it meant that we had more attendees we missed the opportunity for members from different regions to meet up with each other, particularly newbies - hence the **National Gathering**.

This year we returned to Thornbridge Outdoors, near Bakewell, staying in the Lodge which was a purpose-built cabin that had large bunks and plenty of room and was popular, apart from the communal areas where hard surfaces and limited space made noise a real problem. The weekend was filled with walks, climbing and chatter! Stuart Bloom from Sheffield RR lead a walk and joined us for the Saturday evening meal, followed by a quiz. The treasure hunt, ably organised by Jon Marsden, had so many anomalies making the scoring contentious in places but enjoyed by all. Noise in the dining room aside this was a great venue in many ways, with very comfortable bunks.

Several attendees were having big birthdays so plenty of cakes were supplied for a get together organised by Becky Bates. Gill Cox and I provided the evening meals which seemed to go down well, although Gill's three course meal was outstanding.

While this venue has been a success for two years the National Committee have decided to change the venue to Dovedale House, Ilam on 13th – 15th June 2025. We are staying in the Peak District as we felt this was easier for everyone to get to. It accommodates up to 50 people so we hope you will take the opportunity to sign up for it. Information will be available in the MIS, with plenty of reminders during the year.

Gill Platt



National Trips Update

Trips continue to be very popular and the four new 2025 trips are booking up quickly so be sure to keep your eye on the MIS for new announcements. The 2025 programme will be finalised at a Trips Group Zoom in late September so if this reaches you in time get in touch if you'd like to join us. Our most recent Zoom considers health and safety on trips.

Health on Trips

Following comments from concerned members we need to tighten up on kitchen hygiene and food preparation. This was discussed by the trips group and a new guidance sheet has been prepared - many thanks to Janet Saunders. <https://www.redrope.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2-RR-Kitchen-hygiene-guidance-0824.pdf>). It will be shared at each trip to remind us all of the issues which can arise staying in remote/basic accommodation and when sharing a kitchen as a group.

Safety on Trips

Concern over accidents on recent trips brought detailed discussion at Trips Group/NC and changes to our practice. We accept that not all accidents can be prevented but there are often threads common to incidents which are within our control at the planning stage:

Was the pace of the walk agreed? Different expectations can bring frustration and stress

Was the Route Card completed together, or shared? Our Trips motto 'No-one does a job alone' has never been more important

Was gear checked before leaving base? Let's avoid those 'Oh no I've left my lunch at the hut' moments by pinning the gear checklist on the door <https://www.redrope.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/4-RR-Personal-kit-checklist-0824.pdf>

An emergency shelter is invaluable during delays. Everyone should also keep their own survival blanket in their pack. [2 or 3 Layer Blankets – Blizzard Protection Systems \(blizzardsurvival.com\)](https://www.blizzardsurvival.com)

Thanks also to Yvonne Hosker, who wrote our new 'Guidance for Safety on Trips'

<https://www.redrope.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/3-RR-safety-guidance-0824-1.pdf>

This should be shared at the pre-trip Zoom meeting with at least one paper copy taken on trips.

COVID 2024 No one should go on a trip if they display Covid symptoms, have tested positive for Covid, or have any other infectious disease. If any member on a trip wants the group to take a pre-trip LFT then the whole party should comply. Normal compensation rules apply if you cannot go on a trip due to illness.

Becky and Sarah

nationaltrips@redrope.org.uk



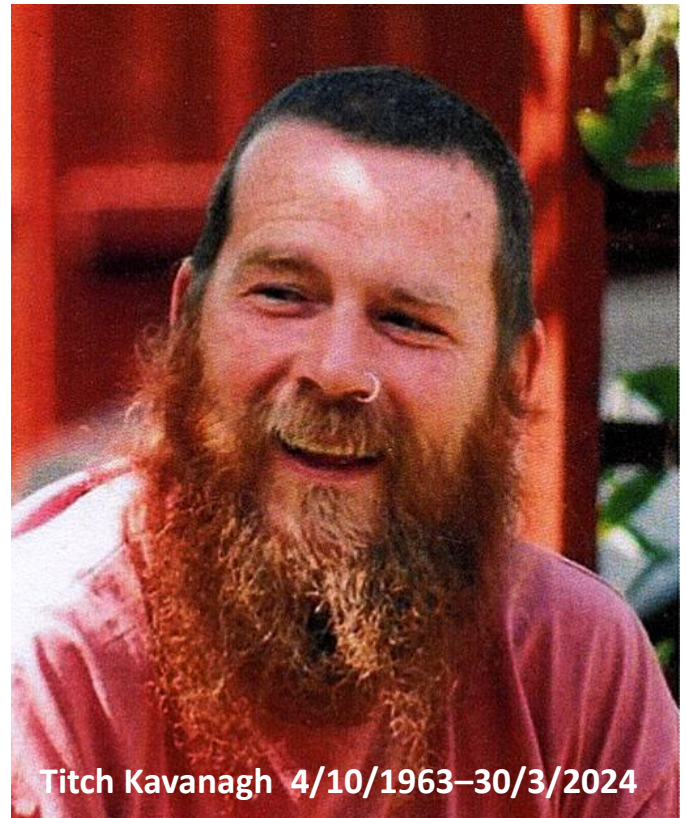
Sue Whittle was in Greece in April . She said of this photo, "Climbing in the shade today. Led 5c+ which was the best route we've done so far."



I had the best mountain walk I ever did on the trip to Torridon, Scotland in May. It was along the Beinn Alligin ridge including two Munro peaks and then along the three "Horns". A beautiful sunny day in the beautiful company of Pete Clark and John Aldous. Scaling the second of the Munros we looked down to the descent/ascent along the Horns.

Sweaty palm time! But surprisingly "do-able" as long as you used your hands and feet in the right order! Medal of honour goes to Pete Clark who did the whole thing with a damaged shoulder.

Pete Watson



Titch Kavanagh 4/10/1963–30/3/2024

"Titch was born in Essex. After an apprenticeship in car mechanics he went to the Lake District to work in outdoor education, where he met his partner Judy Connor. They moved to Bradford in 1991 and had 2 children. He was a support worker for the homeless and a loving partner and dad. Climbing, running and cycling were all big hobbies.

He went on many expeditions, from climbing unclimbed peaks in the Himalayas to many trips in the U.K. with Red Rope. He cycled from Argentina to Canada with Judy in 1985 - 6 and helped campaign for better cycle lanes in Bradford.

In 2005 Titch had a near fatal ice climbing accident on Cader Idris, Wales, which shaped the next 20 years of his life. He suffered serious head injuries, visual impairment and broken bones. He remained involved with many community groups and Red Rope, but his physical and cognitive impairments strongly affected the rest of his life."

The information above is from a leaflet produced for a celebration of Titch's life in April. There were 12 speakers, including 2 Red Ropers. A common theme was his sense of humour, companionship and sense of community. It finishes saying, "We know how badly he will be missed and how much his silly, caring and defiant energies have been passed on." Titch showed huge fortitude in adversity and will be remembered with great affection, and admiration, in Red Rope.