



o u t d o o r
FOCUS

the quarterly journal of the OWPG | **autumn** 2020

STOP PRESS!

BIG WEEKEND 2020

Many thanks to all members who have reserved their places at this year's Big Weekend and AGM.

You will have done so on the basis of the assurances that I received from the Field Studies Council that we would be able to hold a full and fulfilling event at the Malham Tarn Centre.

Well, if we have learned one thing during recent weeks and months, it is that nothing in the world of COVID is ever set in stone. Regrettably, it became increasingly clear that these original assurances were at odds with the evolving reality, once all the Malham staff got back to work. This reality was that the Malham Centre would not be able to assure COVID-compliant conditions in which we could actually hold an event that would be in any way satisfying for members.

The Field Studies Council has now agreed to transfer our event to its larger centre, near Grange-over-Sands (www.bit.ly/OWPG-GOS), where we will be able to gather all members together for both formal sessions, such as the AGM, and for our annual awards ceremony and dinner.

I very much hope that all those who have booked will be happy still to attend, despite the change in venue. However, any member who does not wish to do so, will be able to claim a full refund, in line with our "COVID disruption" policy.

From a personal perspective, I have to say that – much as I love the Dales and the Malham area – I'm very excited that we are now moving to Grange, as this was a venue, which, in the normal scheme of things, would have been out of our reach as a Big Weekend venue.

For those who don't know the area, Grange is a delightful little town on Morecambe Bay, tucked just under the southern Lakeland fells and with fantastic views out to sea and across the bay.

We're all working hard right now to finalise a new programme of activities to take advantage of this amazing location. The crème de la crème in this regard – if we can pull it off – would be a walk across the sands of Morecambe Bay, with the Queen's Guide. We await clarification as to whether this may be possible as it is subject not just to tide times, but also to the tidal range on any given date.

I have to say that when Linda and I and several Guild members did the walk with Cedric, the previous guide, a few years ago, it truly was among the most magical walking experiences of my life.

Our special guest, Karen Lloyd, will transfer her narrative non-fiction outdoors-indoors 'practical' activity from Malham to Grange – as the author of *The Gathering Tide: A Journey Round The Edgelands Of Morecambe Bay*, she'll be very much in her element.

Ronald Turnbull will also be guiding a walk up Hampsfell, which is a limestone fell an easy distance from the centre.

While I'm disappointed that my Settle & Carlisle walk will have to be for another day, I'm now planning to lead a walk through the Neolithic and Bronze Age landscape of Birkrigg Common, near Ulverston, which will feature in a forthcoming book I'm working on.

There'll also be a walk in the Silverdale AONB, which is a very special little corner, near Arnside. Other potential activities include a trip on the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Steam Railway, combined with a Windermere cruise, as well as promised photographic and social media workshops.

WHAT NEXT? If you have already booked for Malham and are now are happy to attend at Grange, all you have to do is let me know by emailing me at stan@gravity-consulting.com.

If you no longer wish to attend the Big Weekend, then, once again, email me (as above), but also copy in Ron Turnbull, who will organise your refund, or – if you prefer – apply some of your payment to your next year's subscription. Remember, you **MUST** copy me into this email, or I shall end up pestering you!

If you still haven't booked to attend the Big Weekend, there's still time. Just go to the Big Weekend page on the OWPG website and download the booking form and send it to me absolutely no later than September 4.

ACTIVITIES I aim to have a revised activities form for members on the website by early September.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible very soon!

Stan Abbot, Big Weekend Organiser

Cover Malham Cove | David Taylor

NEW MEMBERS...



KITIARA PASCOE

is an outdoor obsessive who likes to walk, MTB, freedive, sail, swim, run and get lost in as many big forests as possible.

From 2014 to 2017 Kitiara sailed double-handed 20,000 miles from the UK to Panama and back on a 1974 Nicholson 32. She'd never sailed before and gained a healthy respect for the ocean. This voyage sparked a continued interest in the power nature has over our mental health and was

the basis of her first book, *In Bed with the Atlantic* (Fernhurst, 2018) and her second, *Mindful Thoughts for Sailing* (Leaping Hare, 2021).

Brought up in the New Forest and now based in Devon, she's a full-time freelance writer. She splits her work between corporate content for outdoor companies and magazine/web articles on active pursuits. Despite her boat-related books, she predominantly writes about land-based adventure. It's drier and the beds are better.

STEPHEN NEALE

is an award winning, Essex-based writer, known for books on land access problems in the UK and Ireland, and notable solutions. Works include *Wild Camping* (2015 & 2020) and *England Coast Path* (2020), published by Bloomsbury.

Stephen's collective fictional and non-fictional works on the nature, landscape and histories of Essex received multiple awards, including the OWPG prize for Digital Production of the Year

(joint winner 2016).

Stephen works with local councils as a commercial drone operator to regenerate tidal cities, towns and villages in England and Wales.

He is a former lecturer in journalism at University of Essex and South Essex College, has worked as a BBC journalist, and a freelance finance writer for the Chinese state news agency Xinhua.

He is also a freelance journalist for the *Guardian*, *Telegraph* and *Daily Mail*.

www.stephen-neale.com



MARTIN DOREY

is a surfer, writer, campervan driver and environmentalist. He founded the anti-plastic charity The 2 Minute Foundation after his #2minutebeachclean social media campaign went around the world in 2013. He writes books about plastic and waste (and protecting the environment) as well as camping and camper vans and is currently writing a series of books about slow travel by

motorhome and camper van called *Take the Slow Road*. The first book, about Scotland, came out in 2018, with England and Wales in 2019 and then Ireland in 2020. At the time of writing he is in post-Covid France, exploring routes through the Alps for *Take the Slow Road France*. During times of lockdown he lives in Cornwall with partner Lizzy, a botanist, uphill cyclist and semi-professional and reluctant map reader.



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If you'd like to contribute to the next edition of *Outdoor Focus* please send an email with your article idea to me at davidtphoto@gmail.com. The deadline for copy is the 15 November 2020.

The Outdoor Writers and Photographers Guild is the only UK-based association of media professionals working largely or entirely on outdoor subjects. Our members cover every field of activity and all corners of the globe. They include writers, journalists, film makers, photographers, publishers and editors, all with a passionate interest in the outdoors. For more information visit www.owpg.org.uk.

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From Minehead to Poole Harbour

Paddy Dillon walks the South West Coast Path

Forty years ago I hitch-hiked from Cumbria to Penzance in a day and first set my eyes on a small part of the South West Coast Path. A couple more trips got me acquainted with the cliff coastlines of Land's End and The Lizard. In the summer of 1990 *Trail Walker* magazine was published and from the first issue I was their go-to writer for long-distance trails. It wasn't long before I was walking trails back-to-back for successive issues of the magazine and in the summer of 1991 I set my sights on the South West Coast Path.

I can't say I was in it for the money and my notes were simply scribbled into a notebook. It took me 28 days to cover the 630 mile trail and despite writing it up as four magazine features and being given basic expenses, my costs were barely covered. My editor cracked a deal with the old David & Charles publishers and I was given a moderate cash advance to convert all my magazine articles into a book with a ridiculously long title – *The Trail Walker Magazine Guide to the National Trails of Britain & Ireland*. That kept me busy for a couple of years!

In 2002 I was in the Cicerone office and I mentioned that I'd used their two-volume black and white guide to the SWCP. It had been written by Martin Collins, published in 1989, but apparently it wasn't selling well and was in

need of a complete overhaul. Martin didn't want to do it so it was offered to me. I'll be honest, I didn't think producing a new edition would be a big earner for me, but I took it on as a project because I really liked the trail. The brief was to write a single guide, illustrated in colour, incorporating OS Landranger mapping from start to finish. It's a good thing that the coastline is exceptionally crinkly or the maps would never have fit the pages.

I signed the contract in April 2002 and the deadline was December 2002. It was already an exceptionally busy year and the only way I could fit in the time to walk the SWCP was to do it in two trips. Minehead to Penzance came in May, with Penzance to Poole in July. All my notes were taken on a Psion palmtop, with pictures being old-fashioned transparencies. Somehow, I managed to deliver the complete manuscript at the end of August, on my way to the airport to fly to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. The book was published in 2003 and I didn't expect to hear anything more about it for maybe ten years or so.

It came as a surprise to be asked if I had any update notes for the trail before I'd even been advised of sales figures or received any royalties. It turned out that the book had almost sold out within six months and it needed reprinting. As the

The coast path makes a circuit of the Isle of Portland, Dorset Coast



A rugged coast seen from an easy path near Ilfracombe, North Devon Coast

years passed, the book was reprinted every year or so and it quickly became established as my best-selling guidebook. Changes were made at every reprint, with some site visits made by myself and other information was supplied by readers or by the SWCP Trail Manager at the time, Mark Owen.

Walking the SWCP a second time gave me the idea to walk all of Britain's National Trails a second time. The old guidebook I'd written for David & Charles had gone out of print and the publishers had changed course, losing interest in walking titles. I invoked the 'reversion of rights' clause in my contract and they assured me that they had no further interest in the book, so with their blessing I took the idea to Cicerone. With new life breathed into it and the shorter title of *The National Trails*, it's done very well and been through two editions and four print runs since 2007.

Two things happened in 2010. A new outdoor writer called Ruth Luckhurst contacted me, complaining that as I'd written a guide to the SWCP, that basically closed the door for her, even

though she lived in the south-west. I disagreed and pointed out that I'd only written the Cicerone guidebook, and any other writers and publishers were still free to put their own spin on the trail. Mark Owen contacted me around the same time, wondering if I would be prepared to write a series of guidebooks about walks along the SWCP, which would also venture inland. He mentioned that this project would have to go to public tender, which meant that any bid I made, building in the unavoidable costs of transport and accommodation, could easily be countered by a local person who wouldn't have those expenses. I tipped off Ruth Luckhurst, and surprise surprise, she made a successful tender and did a splendid job of the series, using it as a springboard to write many other books.

Eventually, after eight impressions of the first edition of my SWCP guidebook, Cicerone decided that a new edition was required, so I blocked out most of August and September 2014 in my diary and spent 48 days on the trail. Astute readers will realise that this is much longer than the 28 days I first spent on the trail. Let's



A yacht makes its way towards Salcombe, South Devon Coast



▲
The ferry between West Looe and East Looe, South Cornwall Coast

▼
A walker on the coast path at Outer Froward Point, South Devon Coast

say that I'm in less of a rush these days and have more time for the scenery. I'm also reminded of something that Raynor Winn wrote in *The Salt Path*, when she and her husband walked the SWCP a year after me, penniless, hungry and homeless, as they reached the halfway point at Porthallow.

'Power-walking superhero Paddy Dillon passes this point on day twenty-four. On our twenty-fourth day we left Tintagel, a lifetime ago, another world. This was our forty-eighth day. By day forty-eight, Paddy's arrived in Poole, taken the slow train home, hung up his boots, been to the pub, bored everyone with walking stories, mown the lawn and is already planning the next trip.'

Don't worry; I've disabused Raynor of any notion that her description of me is true!

Times change and while researching the second edition I carried a digital camera and a tablet that doubled as a word processor and GPS unit, loaded with OS mapping, a pdf of my first edition and an editable text file. In theory, I should have been in



digital heaven on the trail, except that I suffered what I can only describe as 'total systems failure'. The camera lens suddenly stopped focusing and the state-of-the-art electronics couldn't be overridden manually. Trying to order and collect quality digital tech without disrupting a carefully-planned walking schedule in a remote part of Cornwall was hard work. No sooner had I obtained a new and eye-wateringly expensive lens, than the tablet stopped working, and without the ability to search the internet, finding a replacement while walking through driving rain on the cliff coast near Land's End took a great deal of imagination. However, I overcame these difficulties and was only inconvenienced for a few hours at a time while making lengthy detours inland to purchase new tech and I stayed true to my schedule.

Anyone familiar with Cicerone's guidebooks to the National Trails will know that most of them now come with companion map booklets containing highlighted extracts of

OS Explorer mapping. I was always told that a map booklet for the SWCP wouldn't really be possible, but in 2016 I was suddenly asked to supply GPS data to help produce not one, but three map booklets for the trail. It's odd to think that my original brief was to turn a two-volume guide into a single book, only for it to morph at this late stage into a book and three map booklets. I keep telling people to pack lightweight and low bulk and although I started with good intentions by reducing a two-volume guide weighing 480g to a single-volume weighing 360g, my coverage has since grown into four books weighing a total of 830g!

My pack weight is currently weighing heavy on my mind, because when I started writing this feature, I wasn't entirely sure when I would next set foot on the SWCP. As I finish writing, I've already been given my marching orders and I'll be walking the trail even as you read these words! I have something of a backlog to work through, with my guidebooks to Jersey, SWCP and the Isles of Scilly all needing site visits.

Fortunately they can all be visited one after the other, so I'm just going to walk and walk and not stop walking for a thousand miles or so. This will be my fourth trek along the SWCP and it will take my guidebook into its third edition.

I like to think that nothing will stop me, but I've never walked through a pandemic before and I assume that a sudden change in the 'rules' could bring me to an abrupt halt. Unless and until that happens, I expect that signing the guidebooks of my grateful readers at a distance of two metres is going to be my main problem. I never managed to figure out why a guidebook to such a long trail is such a best-seller.

Guidebook

The South West Coast Path by Paddy Dillon (Cicerone)

First edition print history: 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2013. Second edition print history: 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020

South West Coast Path map booklet, Minehead to St Ives (2017)

South West Coast Path map booklet, St Ives to Plymouth (2017)

South West Coast Path map booklet, Plymouth to Poole (2017)

Bonus Feature

The Salt Path, by Raynor Winn (Penguin). Contains frequent references to Paddy Dillon's guidebook and wildly inaccurate imaginings of Paddy's character.



COUNTRYSIDE AFTER COVID

Andrew McCloy ponders the future

Authors at Gritstone Publishing, Britain's first publishing co-operative, have produced a thought-provoking series of blogs on the theme of 'countryside after covid', covering topics as diverse as rights of way, grouse shooting, litter and public transport.

Gritstone is run by its authors, including four Guild members, and specialises in publishing non-fiction and fiction titles relating to the landscape and the countryside. Andrew Bibby's recent blogs have addressed the thorny topic of how grouse shooting affects our upland landscapes and whether it has a sustainable future; and why footpaths need to be kept open and maintained if the Government's new walking strategy is to be successful. He also looks at how public spending in the wider countryside is vital if the rural economy is to get back on its feet.

Public transport expert Colin Speakman has blogged about how we risk losing many of our rural bus and train services - with potentially catastrophic long term consequences; and how innovative sustainable transport ideas, including radical visitor traffic management approaches in popular areas like national parks, must be at the heart of a lasting green recovery if people's travel behaviour is to change.

Andrew McCloy examines what's behind the upsurge of littering in the countryside and how a lack of basic environmental awareness, coupled with a selfish, throwaway mentality, is in danger of ruining the very places people come to enjoy. He suggests that those making and selling the likes of disposable barbecues and cheap, single-use 'festival' tents should be forced to cover the clean-up costs.

To read these and other blog posts from Gritstone go to: www.gritstonecoop.co.uk/aftercovid



NEW ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Andrew McCloy on a useful resource for members

A key benefit of belonging to the Guild is the sharing of advice, tips and information between members, so we're delighted that Jacquetta Megarry of Rucksack Readers has produced a new advice note that will be especially useful to those still learning their trade. *Getting Published: Mistakes to Avoid* is based on her article in the last issue of *Outdoor Focus* and presents a succinct round-up of the pitfalls to avoid when pitching an idea to a publisher, as well as sage advice on what to do (and not to do) once you're signed up and at submission and proofing stages. Amongst other things, Jacquetta advises you not to hand over your manuscript too prematurely, don't try and control when your book will be published and not to overestimate your own importance! She also says that publishers welcome authors who are proactive with marketing and recommends you develop a strong social media presence.

Meanwhile, Ronald Turnbull has updated the advice note *Tax and Self-assessment* to reflect the new Making Tax Digital scheme that is due to start in April 2023, at which point you will have to keep your accounts in a digital format that automatically sends income and expenses information to HMRC four times a year. He suggests members should consider setting up a digital system around a year in advance, running from the start of your accounting year. The advice note also contains other useful information for members on allowable expenses, payments on account, capital allowances, accounting software and VAT registration.

OWPG advice notes are only available to members and can be accessed via the members' area of the website.

COVID THOUGHTS

Allan Hartley on how lockdown affected him

My guidebook updates that I had put a lot of effort into over the past year are now shelved. Royalties will also be affected. Overseas trips/tours partly guidebook-related, partly tour-eading were cancelled. UK based tours for Scotland, Wales, Cornwall were also cancelled.

Stock photography sales dropped off the cliff

Apart from the material stuff I've been fortunate not to have been affected health wise by the virus, even though I am on the above average at risk. Also fortunate that I have several country walks with a few minutes of my front door here in High Bentham.

So what have done with my time? I've produced a 160-page A3 picture book celebrating my 50 years of mountaineering in the Tyrol. There's another book in that, I just need to strip out a lot of the personal stuff into around 100 pages off A4+ format. I have also spent ages scanning slides from ages ago. Some of my best selling stock images are of places years ago, particularly Dubai, steam trains and mountain huts. I have also revised some early digital images that show a marked improvement over the originals. Result of all this is that I have another 500 stock images.



Everest panorama

Plaques or plague?

Tony Howard questions the trend for countryside plaques

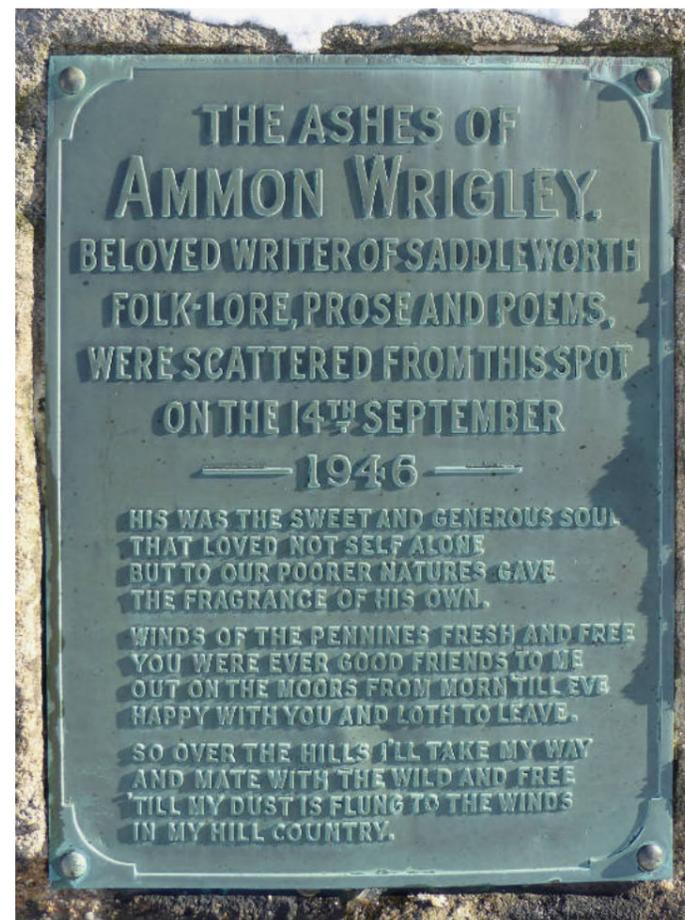
We have a war memorial on our hills, very dominant above our main village, a proud reminder of the sacrifices of our forefathers. On our northern skyline on a considerably smaller scale and perhaps unseen by most walkers on the Pennine Way there is a memorial plaque to the late bard of Saddleworth, Ammon Wrigley. It's located below the path on the rocks of Standedge overlooking the valley of Castleshaw where he used to live. I have no problem with that either, though other plaques have appeared alongside, some with family connections, some seemingly not. I couldn't possibly comment.

Come to think of it, not far from there on Pule Hill, some poetry by the poet laureate Simon Armitage, who lives not far away, was neatly inscribed into the rock a few years ago. Presumably many like it, but there are some I know who don't. Should it be there? Is it graffiti or art? And rightly or wrongly does it encourage others to do likewise?

But I digress. To come to my point, of late I have noticed ever more plaques on the hills, and I am not enamoured of their increasing intrusion into what I believe should be sacrosanct wild places. The first such unexpected occurrence was when I was bouldering on a small local hilltop crag many years ago only to discover a plaque staring me in the face. No one had died there, it was just someone's favourite spot. The same thing happened in the Yorkshire Dales when, close to the top of a somewhat rickety climb I came face to face with a plaque "in memory of... who was killed in a fall". Quite off-putting just before the final moves.

In the interim I had also seen a plaque at the foot of a climb on a popular boulder in Chew Valley. Not a nice way to start a route. And not long ago on some moor edge rocks high above there I noticed three plaques, one with a message after the deceased's name reading, "Left for glory, right for shopping, don't be a dickhead". I'm saying nothing! More recently on the far side of the same moor, once again whilst bouldering, I discovered two more plaques on a small crag. And only yesterday whilst climbing at Ravenstones, a remote and dramatic crag looming over the confluence of Holme Clough and Birchen Clough with its cascading waterfalls, there was yet another incongruous plaque at the start of a climb, to 'baby...' and 'grandad...' which had no apparent connection with the location.

All of which reminds me that, on moor



edges visible from where I live, there is not only a cross in memory of James Platt, Member of Parliament, killed in 1857 by the accidental discharge of a gun, but also a large cairn atop the Fox Stone, a moor edge rock. It was built in 1972 to commemorate the death of two young local climbers in an abseil accident on the Sella Towers in the Dolomites. The plaque beneath is discreetly placed and, unlike the cairn, isn't obvious. I feel unable to be critical of it, though whether or not that's because I knew them, or because, like the memorial to Ammon Wrigley, the plaque itself isn't intrusive, I'm not sure. Conversely across the valley where two of the Peak District's best climbers were killed in 1963 in what is thought to have been the biggest avalanche recorded in England, there is no plaque. Their deaths are still remembered by friends and recorded in climbing books. Anyone searching for some kind of memorial may instead find one to Walter Brookfield, a campaigner for rights-of-way.

Tony is the author of *Troll Wall* www.bit.ly/troll-wall, *Quest into the Unknown* www.bit.ly/quest-into-unknown, and author of and climbing and trekking guidebooks to UK, Norway, Jordan and Palestine.

However, to get to my point, it seems plaques are appearing all over our hills in increasing numbers, but should any be there at all? In the Italian Dolomites there are sometimes small shrines in the high valleys where plaques and mementos can be placed in memory of friends killed in the mountains. At Tanagawa, a notoriously dangerous winter climbing area in Japan I once visited, there was a long, high memorial wall built specifically for the placing of plaques. And here in the UK including in Chew Valley, we have memorial forests, but if the Ammon Wrigley plaque is permissible (and I don't see why not, he earned his place in local history and it's in a discreet location linked to where he lived), why not all the others?

Does the location, the person and/or the wording matter or is it all none of our business? Should we all be guardians of wild places or does the right to roam confer freedom to do as one wants? If so, does that freedom include not only the right to place plaques and other memorials in any location, as well as, *vice versa*, the freedom to remove them? Or should the maxim 'take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints' be the only code to live by?

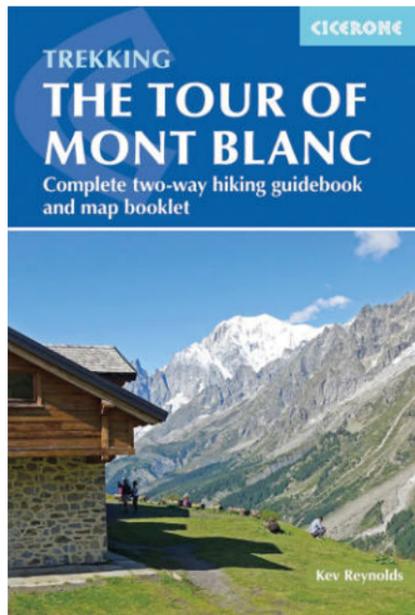
Footnote

Whilst writing this I contacted the Peak District National Park Authority who said, "Plaques are not illegal, all previous plaques fitted should have been granted permission to have them fitted and as I understand there should be no further plaques erected. Of course the National Park is a large place and has many landowners. Some private landowners may have given their own permissions. Anything that has not been granted permission by the landowner may be removed by them."

Addendum

The commemorative Fox Stone cairn which is on OS maps was destroyed in July but friends of the deceased quickly rebuilt it. The plaque was untouched. During Covid lockdown Chew Valley and it's surrounding hills have been beset by hordes of people causing at least two fires and leaving litter everywhere.

Book reviews *Roly Smith*



Trekking the Tour of Mont Blanc

Kev Reynolds
Cicerone, £17.95 (pb)

Surely there could be no finer guide to the TMB than “King of the Alps” Kev Reynolds. The fact that this, his classic guide to the 105-mile, two-week walking tour round Europe’s highest peak, is now in its fifth edition just proves the point.

The TMB is also justly rated as one of the world’s finest mountain treks, crossing over 10 passes and with a height gain and loss of around 33,000 feet – that’s way higher than Everest. According to the well-respected and award-winning author, the TMB takes the walker through “some of the most exquisite mountain scenery of all.” The author’s concise description of the route and alternatives (which include the classic 11-day anti-clockwise route and the 10-day clockwise version); where to stay from campsites to the humble refuges, dorts and gîtes; hints on the weather, language and mountain safety are all provided.

But a joy of this beautiful, comprehensive guidebook are the wonderful photographs of the various stages of the route, mostly by the author but including many from others. Just taken on their own, they will tempt you, along with an estimated 10,000 others each summer, to embark on this classic trek.

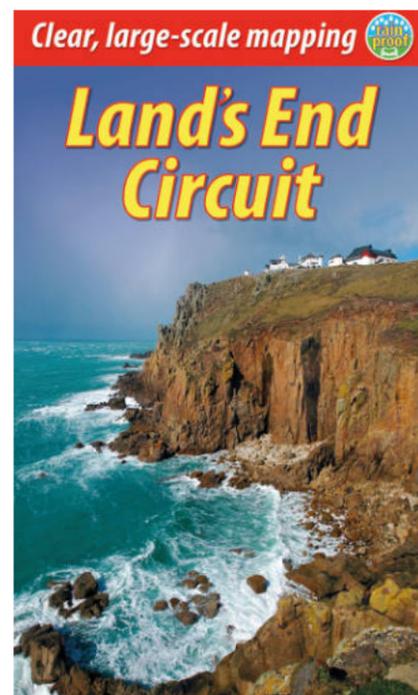
Produced to Cicerone’s usual high standards, the only beef I have is in the quality of the reproduction of some of the IGN 1:25,000 maps, which cover the Italian and Swiss sections of the route in the separate map booklet, which is included with the main book. Cicerone’s customised 1:25,000 mapping for the rest of the route and in the main book is just fine.

The first recorded pedestrian tour around Mont Blanc was made by Horace Bénédict de Saussure and friends in 1767. If you needed any more encouragement to follow in their and the author’s bootprints, the bronze statue in Chamonix of guide Jacques Balmat invitingly pointing de Saussure towards Mont Blanc should be enough to convince you.

Land’s End Circuit

Max Landsberg
Rucksack Readers, £12.99 (pb)

The full 630-mile length of the South West Coastal Path can be a little daunting to all but the most dedicated of walkers. So this truncated 42-mile circuit of the Land’s End peninsula, with the optional addition of a nine-mile, cross-country route using the pilgrimage route of St Michael’s Way to make it a circular walk, should find many takers.



St Michael’s Way follows the route taken by medieval pilgrims to Marazion and eventually to Santiago de Compostela, avoiding the rough waters around Land’s End. It was re-established in 1994 and is waymarked by scallop shell signs.

Produced in Rucksack’s usual pocket-friendly style on rainproof paper, Land’s End Circuit has everything a walker should need, from easy-to-read, large-scale, 1:35,000 Lovell Johns mapping, to tips on geology, history, weather, wildlife and where to stay and eat.

The author is a leadership expert and outdoor enthusiast, and that shows through in his description of the route, which is sprinkled throughout by fascinating fact boxes about points of interest. There’s a special section on tin mining, which was once such an important feature of the Cornish economy, and which once employed 30,000 workers, many of whom were children. All that’s left now, of course, are the characteristic circular chimneys and remains of the engine houses which punctuate the south coast of the county and which now form part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

With comprehensive sections on public transport and how to reach the start of the route by air, train and road, you need look no further than this attractive, comprehensive guide if a circuit of the Land’s End peninsula is on your wish list.

The Compleat Trespasser

John Bainbridge
Fellside Books, £6.99 (pb)

This is a revised and expanded version of the author’s original title of the same name which was published in 2014. It brings things bang up-to-date with an attack on the Government’s threatened re-introduction of a law of criminal trespass.

Perhaps best known as an ardent defender of Dartmoor, Bainbridge has been an inveterate trespasser ever since his youth in the Black Country, and in this entertaining volume, he recounts many of his encounters with irate landowners all over the country.

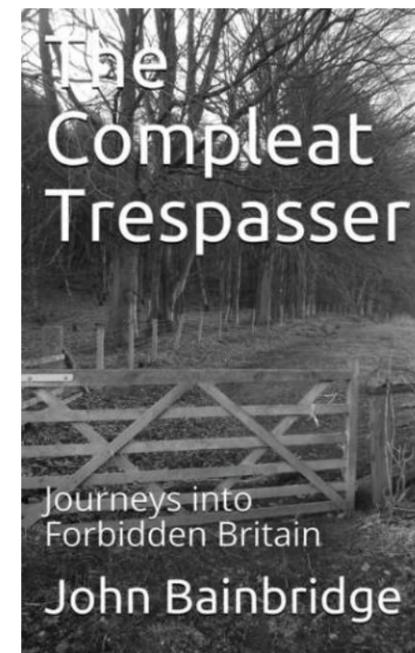
They include his account of when an irate gamekeeper caught him and

his friend Jack trespassing on a large Devon estate and promptly peppered him with his shotgun. “I resisted Jack’s suggestion that we head for a hospital or the constabulary,” he writes. “Both options seemed unsporting. Trespassing was a game we played, and we had to abide both by its rules and consequences.”

The book includes a comprehensive history of how the land was stolen from its people, starting from the iniquitous Enclosure Acts of the 18th and 19th centuries and ending with the tax-dodging absentee landlords of the 20th century.

A series of trespass walks made throughout Britain by the author over the years are entertainingly described, and the book ends with a passionate plea that England should follow the example of Scotland with its Land Reform Act, which gave ramblers north of the Border the right to roam anywhere, within reason, in the countryside.

A timely revision and reissue.

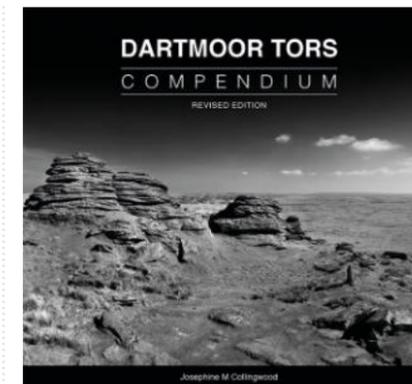


Dartmoor Tors Compendium

Josephine Collingwood
Tavicornity Publishing, £25 (pb)

As the author says in her introduction, many books have been published on Dartmoor, but this one is different.

It is the first one to comprehensively list, photograph



and describe all of Dartmoor’s most outstanding physical features, its 154 named granite tors. And in these days of colour-with-everything publishing, to do so in mainly black and white took considerable courage from its Okehampton-based publisher, author and photographer.

The risk was well worth it. If there is a better collection of moody and magnificent monochrome pictures of Dartmoor’s distinctive and characterful tors, I have yet to see it.

The range of images – from the elephantine bulk of Hound Tor, Manaton (“the King of Tors”), Haytor, and Saddle Tor and the extraordinary chequerboard and cross-bed jointing of Higher Tor and Watern Tor, to the cross-topped Brat Tor and church-capped Brentor – is incredible. One of my favourites (and the author’s) is Heltor Rock, which rises incongruously from rich farmland in the north east corner of Dartmoor. Collingwood even went to the trouble of photographing one of the most northerly, Winter Tor, near Belstone, after a rare Dartmoor snowstorm.

If you are planning a visit to Dartmoor, whose National Park celebrates its 70th anniversary next year, you could not have a better companion and guide. Each book comes with a handy Romer scale bookmark. Highly recommended.

A Passion for the Dales

David Joy
Great Northern Books, £19.99

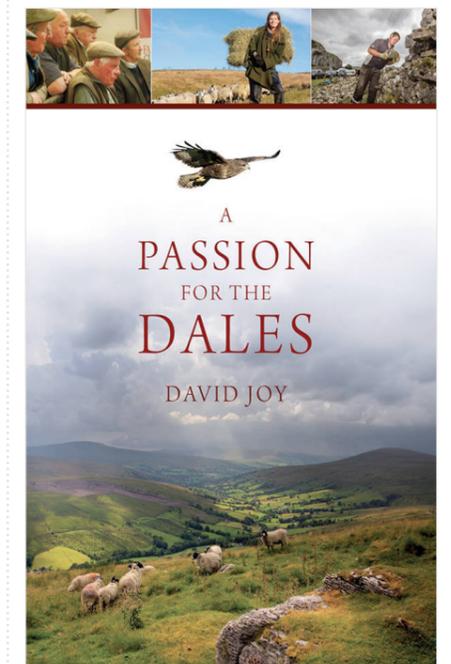
Few people are better placed to express a passion for the Yorkshire Dales than David Joy, editor of Dalesman magazine for many years.

And this sumptuously illustrated volume goes a long way towards expressing that deeply-held love for a landscape which Edwardian fellwanderer Alfred Brown described as being “as close to heaven as you can get on earth.”

Starting from the Dales’ fascinating geology, the author, like his distinguished predecessors, Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby, then concentrates on life in the Dales. An outstanding feature of the book are the wonderful black and white images of past life in the Dales, featuring photography by the late lamented Bertram Unné and the author, the grandson of a Wharfedale farmer, himself.

He pays appropriate tribute to his partner during his many years at the Dalesman, OWPG Golden Eagle winner WR (Bill) Mitchell, and pioneer industrial archaeologist Dr Arthur Raistrick. The author’s passion for steam is given a full head by accounts of the famous Settle-Carlisle route, plus the Wharfedale, Nidderdale, Grassington and Wensleydale branch lines.

A landscape is made by the people who live in it, and Joy fully acknowledges this, adding that his overwhelming desire was to share his discovery of the Dales and its way of life over the last 70 years. He has succeeded brilliantly in that ambition.



Wordsmith

the man with the world's best job

Kev Reynolds discovers a hidden house with literary connections

There's a house in the woods overlooking the village where I lived for nigh-on fifty years that became a literary hothouse during the last decade of the nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. There's a track leading to it, but the house itself cannot be seen. The best you can hope for is a brief glimpse from half a mile below – if you know where to look, that is.

It must have a terrific view, for being perched on the greensand ridge on the Surrey/Kent border the outlook is dominated by the Weald which reaches out to Ashdown Forest, before melting into a blue haze of distance. A big view it is, to be sure. And there are plenty more like that along this stretch of hills.

Hilaire Belloc... was also drawn to the house in the woods...

Nature writer W.H. Hudson used to visit the house in the woods during springtime. He'd study the wild flowers, identify birds by their call and once discovered natterjack toads in a pond at the foot of the hill. In summer he'd imitate the song of nightjars and entice them to sing back to him.

Edward Thomas would be there sometimes, as would be W.H. Davies, the Welsh 'Supertramp' poet who'd stomp his way on his peg-leg across the greensand hills from Sevenoaks Weald. John Galsworthy too, 'a bald serious man' on the cusp of a literary career that would lead to his being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1932. Hilaire Belloc ('a short, thick-set man who never stopped talking') was also drawn to the house in the woods by the owner's invitation. So was Joseph Conrad who became a favourite with the family, and I can imagine discussions running late into the night as Edward and Constance Garnett (whose home it was) sprawled with their guests beside the 'gigantic stone fireplace [partly] screened by low oak beams and inglenooks.'

I can picture them now, the fire crackling, sparks climbing the soot-black chimney, while a heavy clock ticked away the hours as conversations drifted from books to politics, via the scandals of the day; then back to books again until the last of the burning logs died down and dawn crept into the woods outside.

The name Edward Garnett probably doesn't mean much today, but in his time his advice carried considerable weight among the literary cognoscenti. Born in 1868 he was brought up in a home surrounded by books – his father was a biographer and poet, as well as assistant librarian at the British Museum – and for two years after he left school the tall, gangly young man with pale blue eyes made no attempt to

find a job, but instead spent his time reading.

He began his career as a publisher's reader for T Fisher Unwin. Despite a lack of qualifications, by the time he arrived at Unwin's he had accumulated a vast knowledge of books and an appreciation of literature in all its forms which developed into a talent for spotting emerging writers. Among those he nurtured or befriended (either with Unwin, Heinemann, Duckworth's or – most famously, with Jonathan Cape) were D.H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, Stephen Crane and the American poet, Robert Frost. He was also partly responsible for getting T.E. Lawrence's work into print.

Among his many successes was his editing of *Sons and Lovers* from whose manuscript he cut several passages and censored others, by which time the novel was ten per cent shorter than when D.H. Lawrence delivered it.

But it wasn't only writers who found their way through the woods to seek the help of the Garnetts, for a family of Russian Jewish exiles came to them following the Turkish massacre of Armenians in 1895 and stayed there awhile before moving down the hill into our village. There they upset the locals by tearing down fences to feed on their fires in The Old Dairy Farm, where they squatted until being driven out.

David grew to become a prominent member of the Bloomsbury Group

Six years older than her husband, Constance Garnett was a political activist who taught herself Russian while pregnant with their son David. Here in the snug conservative woodlands of Surrey and Kent, she befriended the anarchist-philosopher Peter Kropotkin, and the revolutionary Sergey Stepniak, the man who had assassinated the head of Russia's secret police on the streets of St Petersburg in 1878. It was Stepniak who encouraged her to translate the works of Ivan Turgenev, after which she went on to tackle almost all the books of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. Between 1895 and 1934 she had successfully translated no less than 71 volumes of Russian literature.

So, the house in the woods was a centre of literary and philosophical activity, while Edward and Constance's son David grew to become a prominent member of the Bloomsbury Group as well as a novelist, bookseller and publisher in his own right.

Like several members of the Bloomsbury Group, David Thomas was bi-sexual, one of his lovers being the painter Duncan Grant, and when Grant's daughter Angelica was born to Vanessa Bell (sister of Virginia Woolf) on Christmas Day 1918, David was also

present. Not long afterwards he wrote to a friend: 'I think of marrying it. When she is 20, I shall be 46...' And so it came about that in 1942, when Angelica was in her early twenties, she found herself wedded to a man who'd been a lover of her father.

An unconventional lot were members of the Bloomsbury Group!

But neither could Edward and Constance Garnett's lifestyle be considered normal for the period. Dismissive of Victorian morality, they defied convention by living together first before being wed at the Brighton Registry Office, and seeing themselves as outsiders with no wish to fit into the social norm, they built their house in the woods because it could be 'remote from a village and ... not part of any existing community.'

Having spent more than forty years nourishing some of the finest literary talent of the age, in 1935 Edward turned down Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's offer to be made a Companion of Honour, and refused to accept the award of Honorary Doctor of Literature from the University of Manchester. For Edward Garnett, the man who lived in the house in the woods, was determined to be an outsider to the very end.

After he died in 1937, his ashes were buried in the garden which Constance, now living as a recluse, tended for almost a decade more. And whenever I walk in the woods there today I imagine the ghosts of writers, anarchists and revolutionaries drifting among the trees...

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Tom conquers the virus

Roly Smith salutes OWPG member Tom Waghorn

An encouraging ray of hope lightened the prevailing gloom surrounding the coronavirus pandemic in May.

Eighty-seven-year-old Tom Waghorn, founding and longest serving member of the Guild, returned to his Whitefield, Manchester home after 10 days in intensive care in hospital – and surviving the dreaded virus. His daughter Helen Crossley said: "My Daddy is an incredible man. He's 87 and has dementia and symptomatic Parkinson's. In April, he was diagnosed with Covid 19 and pneumonia. But on May 18, we were finally able to welcome him back home.

"My Dad's a strong character, and it was his determination and stubbornness saw him through this terrible illness. I'm incredibly proud of him in so many ways."

Tom himself told me they were the most traumatic weeks of his long life. "Things looked pretty grim for me at one time in the North Manchester General Hospital," he recalled. "A doctor phoned Helen to say: 'Prepare for the worst,' and there were hints that I could 'go' in the night.

"What the medics didn't reckon on was my mental toughness, honed by surviving some desperate situations on mountains, together with the cut-and-thrust of daily paper journalism. And I'm pretty stubborn too," he admitted.

When he finally left the ward on a wheeled stretcher to be taken to the waiting ambulance which took him to a short-stay rehabilitation centre, the nurses formed a guard of honour and applauded him out. They knew he'd beaten the virus.



Tom Waghorn – back home after beating the virus. (Helen Crossley)

In his younger days, Tom was a highly competent rock climber and mountaineer, climbing with fellow Mancunian legends such as the late Joe Brown and Don Whillans. He was also an adventurous world traveller with his late wife Barbara; a proud and professional journalist, and one of the founding members of the Outdoor Writers' Guild at the Old Swan Hotel in Harrogate in 1980. Tom always loyally promoted the Guild, nominating and recruiting many new members. He served on the committee for many years, and he was my vice-chairman for 12 years. He was always supportive and hard-working as vice chairman and missed very few meetings during that time.

Tom was also one of the greatest ambassadors the Guild has ever had, especially on Press facility trips. On these he always, without exception, produced good copy in the *Manchester Evening News*, where he worked for many years as chief sub-editor and feature writer. By his diligence and professionalism, Tom gained the Guild a high reputation among our various hosts and he was always a very welcome guest.

Tom was the consummate professional journalist, always with his notebook at the ready, especially if he could find a Manchester angle – which he usually managed to do. In recognition of his tremendous service to the Guild over 32 years, I was proud to nominate Tom as an honorary life member of the Guild at the AGM in Jersey in 2012. I'm sure all members will want to join me in congratulating Tom on his amazing recovery and wish him all the best for the future.

AT HOME ON THE RANGE

Stan Abbott talks to fellow Guild member Gordon Wilson about his latest Pyrenean guidebook and what it is about these mountains that draws him back again and again...

Q What was it about the Pyrenees that first inspired you to walk their length?

We first went to the Pyrenees in the 1990s when a colleague with a shared house there invited us. It bowled us over – so wild, so unmanicured, and with a human history as a ‘political frontier’ to boot. We were inspired by the refugee crossings in the wake of the Spanish Civil War, and the Second World War.

Q Did you initially set out with the intention of walking the entire length of the range, and how far did you get on your first ‘assault’?

Yes. We had climbed Mount Canigou one day via its rock staircase and were relaxing with a beer at the refuge below. Angharad noticed a French guidebook to the Haute Randonnée Pyrénéen – 800-plus km from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and said: “We could do this!” she said. I responded: “Great idea, let’s make it happen.” The guidebook was by Georges Véron, whom we later discovered to be the ‘founder’ of the HRP. We found the only English translation (of a 1980 edition) in Waterstones – several years before the first Cicerone guides to the traverse appeared.

Our first ‘assault’ was a week on the HRP through the high mountains. We made it, and that gave us the confidence to do the rest.

There are two official ‘routes’ and one ‘semi-official’ one. The former consist of the GR10 on the French side and the GR11 on the Spanish. Both try to deliver the trekker to staffed accommodation with meals each night, and to involve a minimum of scrambling. The HRP is semi-official, being the brainchild of our hero, the late Georges Véron, but a ‘standard route’ has evolved and is marked on maps. The HRP tries to keep as close to the frontier ridge as possible, but weaves from one side to the other. We have traversed about 80 per cent on the standard HRP, with the other 20 per cent on the GR10, GR11, and on trans-frontier trails connecting them.

A major point of my book is that you don’t have to be slaves to these routes. On our two through-traverses, plus those visits on which we have explored sections and variants more thoroughly, I would say we have walked well over 20,000 kms.

Q In your original book, *Space For Wonder*, you set out to provide a more accessible guidebook for a range of abilities and ambitions. How did you feel this differed from the more specialist titles then on the market?

I have the greatest admiration for the professionalism of the directional guidebooks to the traverse, especially those produced by Cicerone, and I’m pleased that the latest edition acknowledges Georges Véron more fully. I did want to get away from their implicit sub-text that they are about lone, mostly white, men (like me!) pitting themselves against nature. I wanted to say, “Look, there’s nothing special about Angharad and me. We love hiking anywhere in Britain, and if you love hiking too, you might also be inspired to do the traverse, and you CAN do it.”

Q You’ve made several more visits to the mountains since that first book – what is your focus now?

The first book was published in 2015. I thought I loved these mountains then. Now I know I do, and more so. A lot has happened to me since 2015: a broken leg on the moors near

where I live in 2016; radiotherapy for prostate cancer eight months later; a fractured hip while walking to the hospital (probably resulting from the radiotherapy). I’m now more cautious and slower, especially on descent. I also appreciate lower walks, although I can still get up high. All of this has its pluses. I look around more, I like to talk to people who live and work in the mountains, admire the skills of shepherds on the slopes, interest myself in the various controversies, such as the reintroduction of bears and the local politics.

Q What have been your other Pyrenean projects?

With fellow Pyrenees author Steve Cracknell (who lives in the South of France) I have interviewed people who live in the Spanish Vall de Cardós and, over the trans-frontier trail, in the French Ariège – two valleys separated by a few kilometres as the vulture flies, but culturally quite different. We’re looking for a publisher at the moment. With Angharad, I have also done the four-day Muntanyes de Llibertat trek. That was hard – Day Two took 15 hours. How did the refugees do it, often with snow on the ground, badly equipped, and sometimes carrying babies?

Q Your new book is out in eBook format and as print-on-demand. What can readers expect to find that’s new in each version?

In terms of the main text and images, they are the same. The eBook is great in that it contains hyperlinks to accommodation, paper map retail outlets, my own maps (including GPX versions) and points of interest. Readers should have it on their phone or other device while on the trail. The print-on-demand book (reformatted) substitutes QR codes for hyperlinks. I love it, but it’s weighty – use it for planning and fireside reminiscing.

Both versions feature and improvements and updates, as well as new material to convey what I was feeling, rather than just practical information. I found my prose descriptions in the original version a bit too dry, so I began to toy with rewriting parts of the book in verse. Suddenly, it all exploded in my mind and out it came – five narrative poems of special times on the traverse. They’re now on YouTube, with background images, and musical interludes provided by Angharad on accordion. My son-in-law in California, Brian, produced a ten-and-a-half-minute video, which also includes the six grandchildren reading the poems. People seem to like it. The Alt Pirineu Natural Park got hold of it and circulated it widely.

The Pyrenees: Trekking the Mountains of Hope and Freedom by Gordon Abbot. available as an e-book or paperback, on Amazon.

Mountains of Hope and Freedom: Poems of Wonder from the Pyrenees
www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6Vue2mAS7U

Q You chose to take a self-publishing route for *Space For Wonder*. Even in the short time since then, this route to market has evolved significantly. What would you say are the key lessons you have taken from the process that you can share with other members.

1 Get a publisher if you can! Sub-editing and proof-reading should never be taken lightly. I did originally try and get a publisher, but none were buying into my idea of what this guidebook should be.

2 Get others to read it and make it clear that you need critical comment. As someone said in OF recently, the author doesn’t always know best.

3 If you can crack the publicity and marketing nut without a publisher, please share your experience with me!

4 Examine carefully the restrictions that come with the way you publish. For the previous version, I ended up with a lot of books under my bed, because it was only economic to print a large quantity. For the new version, I chose Amazon eBook and Print-on-Demand. My idea was to sell the print version at £15-17 and the eBook at half that price, with a deal to provide it free with each purchase of the print book. However, Amazon sets the minimum price of the print book at £27.34 (way above anything remotely similar on the market) and won’t do the combined deal with the eBook!

Q You’re off to the Pyrenees again even as we speak. What are your plans?

I am responding while at our usual rented apartment at the head of the Vall de Cardós. We are doing day hikes of old favourites. We’re here for three weeks and came against all travel advice. Without speaking too soon, I think it’s safer from the dreaded virus here, among the mountains, than in England.

www.trekthepyrenees.com

BLAZING A TRAIL...

Jan Bakker on the creation of the Pamir Trail, a new long-distance hiking route



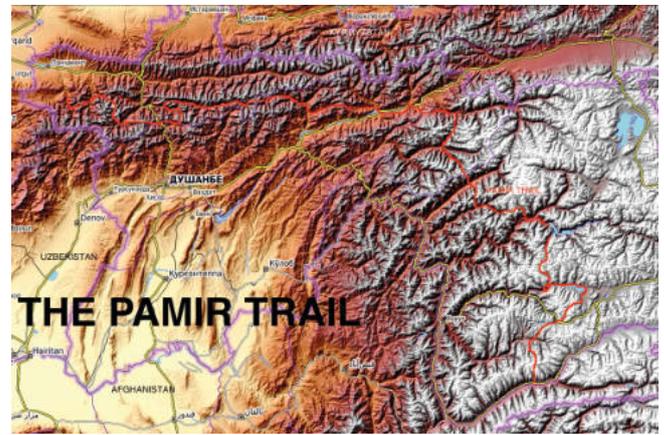
Trying to find the shallowest part of the stream to reach camp two

The Pamir Mountain Range in Tajikistan is among the wildest, least visited mountain ranges in the world. It boasts several peaks of over 7000 metres, the longest glacier outside the North and South Poles and it's a safe haven for rare animals species like snow leopard and Marco Polo sheep. The people in the Tajik mountains are warm, generous and welcoming to anyone who is visiting their mountains.

Despite being a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, Tajikistan doesn't have the fame of mountain nations like Nepal or Peru. Mountain tourism is one of only few economic opportunities for rural Tajikistan. Jan Bakker, co-author of the Cicerone guidebook *Trekking in Tajikistan*, wants to make a change by creating the world's newest long-distance hiking trail: The Pamir Trail. The Tajik mountains are connected by a vast network of trails, created by shepherds who travel here with their livestock. It is possible to create a more than 1000km hiking route from the Fann Mountains in the northwest of the country close to the Uzbekistan border all the way to the southern boundary of the Pamirs in the Wakhan Corridor. The route is designed in a way that it will benefit over 30 remote home stays and more than a dozen local tour operators.



Trekkers heading up the small pass that is the gateway to Langar Valley



The Pamir Trail consist of 67 stages with an estimated altitude difference of more than 25,000 metres. 29 stages have been tried and tested by Jan and his co-author Christine Oriol for their guidebook. To complete the route, Jan needs to verify and document the remaining 38 stages, divided over two reconnaissance expeditions in the summers of 2021 and 2022. These trips will result in a short film featuring the Pamir Trail and detailed route descriptions including photographs and topographic maps, to be released by the end of 2022.

Currently Jan is organising a fundraiser and he's building a network of trail experts to plan the recce expedition. The majority of the raised funds (about 75%) goes to the local tour operators, who carry out the complex logistics (food, guidance, transport) of these recce trips. The rest of the



Our camp just below the Langar Pass

money will be used to create topographic maps, content like film, photography and written stories and to launch the digital platform pamirtrail.org to inspire hikers across the world and share information how they can organise hiking the Pamir Trail themselves (where to find home stays, stock up food and which tour operator covers a certain section of the trail). The second phase of the project is all about capacity building and improving the infrastructure on the trail. For this we will seek additional funding.

Jan: 'The best way to explore the incredible mountains of Tajikistan is on foot. The Pamir Trail will enable trekkers to meet the locals, embrace their hospitality and let them benefit from this long-distance hiking route, so they can build a future in mountain tourism.'

For those interested in a partnership in this project or other enquiries, please get in touch by email: tramping.in@gmail.com. For donations please view the the Pamir Trail fundraiser page: www.bit.ly/gofundme-pamirtrail