

Outdoor FOCUS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE OWPG / AUTUMN 2022



Outdoor FOCUS Autumn 2022

Contents

- 2** *New Members*
Meet OWPG's newest members: Andy Wasley and Graham Uney
- 3** *Natural Health Service*
The Open Spaces Society proposes a new campaign to access the countryside
- 4** *Long walk by the sea, anyone?*
Andrew McCloy celebrates the England Coast Path project
- 6** *Did video kill the radio star?*
Julia Goodfellow-Smith turns the podcast dial all the way up to 11
- 7** *Pen to Paper*
Hamish Brown keeps busy
- 7** *YHA News*
Around the world in 46 days? The YHA have a cunning plan...
- 8** *Don't walk on the water*
Ronald Turnbull on negligence, harsh contracts clauses, and iconic hedgehogs
- 10** *Book reviews*
Roly Smith reviews the latest outdoor titles, including *Arabian Light* by David Bellamy
- 12** *Coming home*
Huw Kingston finds it good to be back
- 14** *Romsdal*
Tony Howard aims high in Norway



Cover Andrew McCloy
Step by step the new England Coast Path is taking shape, including here at Marsland Mouth in north Cornwall. Read Andrew's article about the ECP on page four.

If you'd like to contribute to the next edition of *Outdoor Focus* please send an email with your article idea to davidtphoto@gmail.com. The copy deadline is 15 November 2022.

NEW MEMBERS



ANDY WASLEY

Andy is a writer, photographer and videographer based in Gloucestershire. He has been writing about travel for more than a decade, principally for LGBT+ titles, and is currently focusing on moving his career towards a focus on hiking and adventure travel (with plans under way for big hikes in Scotland, Sweden and the Falkland Islands). He has written features for titles including *Trail* and *The Great Outdoors*, and his travel and wildlife photography has been published internationally.

When not tramping up and down hills or glancing nervously at his deadlines, Andy is a freelance video journalist with the Press Association. He is also studying for a master's degree in nature and travel writing. Having recently moved back to Gloucestershire – where he grew up – he is looking forward to getting to know the Cotswolds again, with his husband Tom and cocker spaniel Loki.

www.andywasley.com

The speakers at the Kinder 90 event (Front, L to R) Craig Best, Yvonne Witter, Kate Ashbrook, Caroline Lucas (Back) Dave Toft, Roly Smith. Stuart Maconie was also a speaker. (picture: Claire Ball-Smith)

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.

All images and text copyright the authors. Unauthorised use and/or duplication of this material without express and written permission is strictly prohibited.

Editing/design David Taylor ISSN 2043-8591 print ISSN 2043-8605 online

"NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE" PROPOSED BY ACCESS CAMPAIGNERS



GRAHAM UNEY

Graham is a part-time guidebook author and occasional freelance journalist. He has had 17 books published to date, with his most recent being *Walking the Wainwrights*, published by Pesda Press in 2021. He is currently working on *The Nature of the Lake District*, which will also be published by Pesda Press, as well as updates and new guidebooks to Orkney and Shetland for Cicerone Press.

Graham lives in the Lake District, at the bottom end of Haweswater, and as a qualified Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor he runs a wide range of skills courses for walkers, mountaineers, and climbers through his business Graham Uney Mountaineering. He's a Full Member of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors and the Alpine Club, is a Trustee of the Mountain Heritage Trust, and is a Course Provider of the Mountain Training walking awards.

www.grahamuneymountaineering.co.uk



A new movement to campaign for a "Natural Health Service" through greater access to our countryside was called for at the 90th anniversary celebrations of the Kinder Scout Mass Trespass at Hayfield on 23 April 2022.

Kate Ashbrook, general secretary of the Open Spaces Society, told a packed audience in The Royal Hotel: "We need a new movement for access, and we need everyone to work together. Today is the opportunity for us all to get together to develop and implement our next campaign for access - a much broader movement than ever before - to provide a true legacy to Kinder."

Kate condemned the recent Government ditching of the promised "quantum shift" Review on Access, which had been initiated by the Treasury and would have given the opportunity to argue the economic - and health - benefits of access. "This is not just from increased spending by visitors," said Kate, "but also by savings through improving people's health and well-being - the Natural Health Service."

Caroline Lucas, the first Green Party MP, claimed that our green and pleasant land should no longer be regarded as a luxury for a privileged few to enjoy. She said the UK should follow the lead given by Scotland, Norway and Sweden, where the right to roam had long existed as a common right.

Caroline explained that she had tabled an Early Day Motion in Parliament celebrating the 1932 Kinder trespassers and calling on the Government to extend the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to include rivers, woodland, grasslands and the Green Belt.

"The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries on earth," she said. "I genuinely believe that by extending the right of access to the countryside, we'd see a renewed effort to protect and restore nature and biodiversity. It is high time for a rethink of our approach; to reclaim the earth which was taken from us," she added.

Stuart Maconie, broadcaster, author and president of The Ramblers, emphasised one of the legacies of the Trespass had been to illustrate the effectiveness of taking direct action where there was a justifiable cause. "No one ever got anywhere by going cap in hand," he claimed.

The meeting, which was chaired by Dave Toft of the Hayfield Kinder Trespass Group, started with a poem about "Our hills" by Gracie from Hayfield Primary School. Other speakers included Craig Best, General Manager of the Peak District for the National Trust, which has owned and managed Kinder Scout for 40 years, who reassured the audience that Kinder was "For everyone, for ever," and Yvonne Witter, leader of Mosaic, the collective representing BME communities and a member of the Peak District National Park authority. Keith Warrender of Willow Publishing also launched his comprehensive new book on the Trespass, *Forbidden Kinder*, and many relatives of the 1932 trespassers featured were present.

Fifteen other outdoor and conservation bodies had stands in a specially erected marquee next to The Royal. In addition, the Loughborough University School of Architecture staged an exhibition of prospective designs for a new Trespass Centre in Hayfield in the Village Hall, where the village Primary School also put on displays of children's poetry.

Later on the Village Green, Caroline Lucas, Kate Ashbrook, Craig Best, historian Julian Batsleer and writer Roly Smith took part in an informal Q & A session, and local band Recover played at The Royal Hotel.

LONG WALK BY THE SEA, ANYONE?

As the new England Coast Path takes shape, **Andrew McCloy** celebrates a bold and ambitious project and considers what it will mean for coastal access

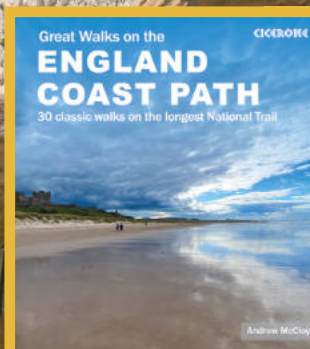


Imagine devising a continuous 2,800-mile (4,500km) walking route around one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. Now factor in military firing ranges, internationally important bird reserves, refineries, major cities, caravan parks, nuclear power stations and one or two rather obstreperous landowners. Plus an eroding east coast already succumbing to climate change. Oh, and preferably it has to be a publicly accessible strip or zone of coastal land, not just a linear path. Welcome to the mind-bogglingly complex but super ambitious work in progress that is the England Coast Path National Trail.

In the last *Outdoor Focus*, Paddy Dillon celebrated ten years since the opening of the splendid Wales Coast Path, but although the development of its English equivalent has been much delayed and is still unfinished, at over 1,900 miles longer it's an altogether different beast – and not just in terms of length. Ever since 2000, when the Countryside and Rights of Way Act granted new freedoms to mapped upland and commons, a right of access to the coastline remained a glaring omission; so when the Marine and Coastal Access Act was passed in 2009 it brought with it the promise of not just a new long distance walking trail around England's seaboard, but also a defined and publicly accessible coastal margin in which the new route would sit. This allows for so-called spreading room, so that the path can be rolled back or realigned easily in the event of, say, a significant cliff fall. At a stroke you have a flexible trail on or as close as possible to the actual shoreline, as well as wider and enhanced public access to the coastal edge. Inevitably there's a whole host of 'excepted land' that the trail has to deviate around, but the core aim is a walking route on not near the coast.

From theory to practice

So how do you go about actually creating a new walking route of almost 3,000 miles? In many places there were existing coastal trails, not least the South West Coast Path and other routes around Cumbria, Lancashire, north Norfolk and much of Yorkshire. Some needed improvement, others simply threading together; but there were still huge gaps. The first stretch, between Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbour, opened in June 2012 in time for the London Olympic sailing events; but then progress slowed considerably. The meticulous survey work (much of it by volunteers from the Ramblers) and public consultation took time; the government body tasked with the job, Natural England, was stretched and under-funded before it even began; a legal ruling



Great Walks on the England Coast Path by Andrew McCloy is published by Cicerone this autumn at £20 and features a selection of 30 day and weekend walks. It includes photos by Guild members Chiz Dakin, Fiona Bartrop and Vivienne Crow.

hindered progress; and then a global pandemic came along. Despite everything, and although the opening date has yet again slipped (now next year instead of this), over a third of the route is open, waymarked and walkable.

The ambition of creating a new National Trail which, when complete, will be longer than all the other 15 in England and Wales combined, is likely to bring considerable social and economic benefits. It passes close to and through large population centres, making it local, immediate and accessible (especially by public transport), hopefully encouraging more physical activity and an appreciation of the natural environment. And, if the prospect of walking around the Thames Estuary doesn't appeal, then think of the peaceful sandy bays of Northumberland or the rollercoaster chalk cliffs of Sussex and Dorset; Atlantic breakers crashing on Cornish headlands or the atmospheric marshes of Norfolk and Suffolk. These are some of the highlights in my new book of one-day and weekend walks based on the England Coast Path; but in fact the real achievement of the ECP is how it is likely to showcase some of the less well known or unfashionable coastal locations that are every bit as attractive and interesting to walk. So it is that I also feature the peaceful creeks of Essex, County Durham's limestone cliffs, the neglected coastline of Cumbria, Chichester Harbour, Spurn Head, Dungeness, Sefton's gorgeous beaches and the shifting sands of Morecambe Bay.

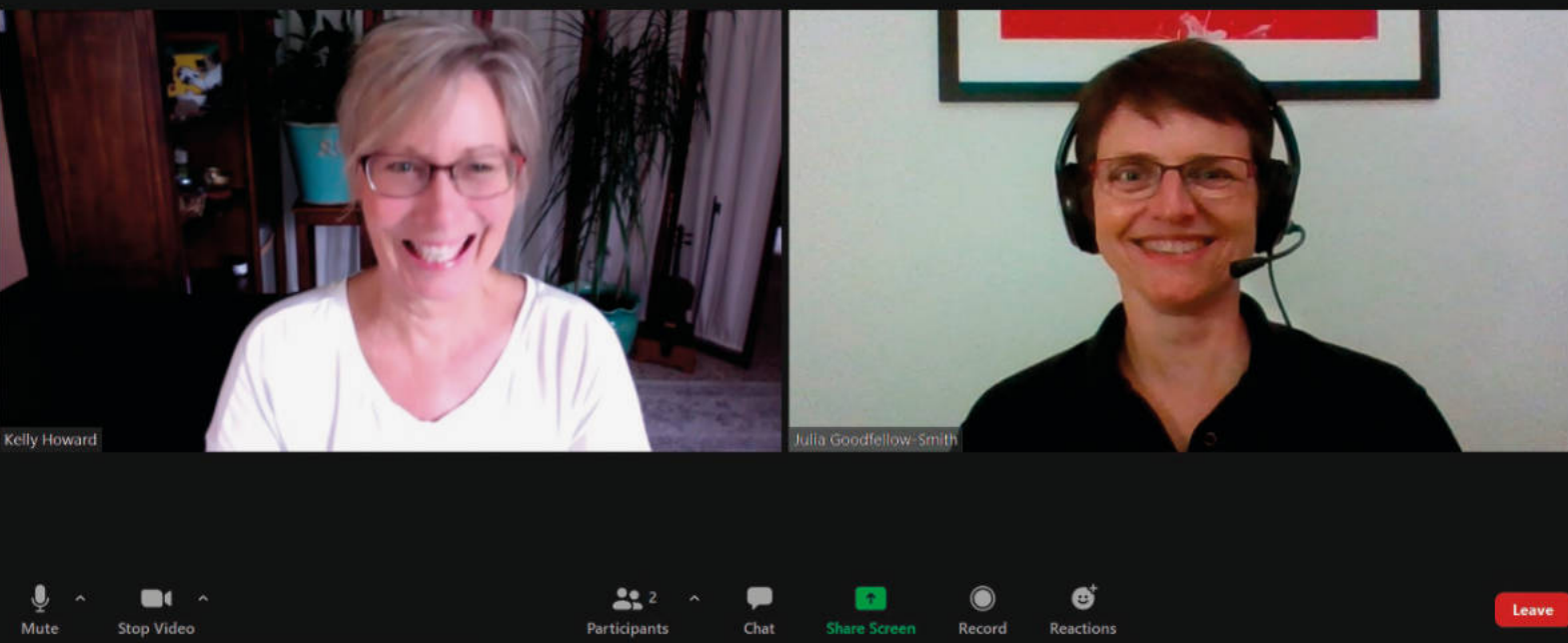
Stats and more stats

It's not just about numbers, of course, but for a sense of perspective the ECP will not only dwarf any other National Trail but is three times longer than the conventional Land's End to John o'Groats walking route. And while there may be other international routes that are wilder, longer and certainly more arduous, the ECP will be the longest *coastal* walking trail anywhere in the world, far exceeding the GR34 along the Brittany coast (1,100 miles/1,700km) or the Lycian Way around the south coast of Turkey (340 miles/540km). Likewise, the ambition to create a North Sea Trail around the seaboard of countries bordering the North Sea is still piecemeal and looks likely to stay that way for now.

And, if Paddy Dillon's feet are itching once more, how about adding the Wales Coastal Path for a continuous walk around the entire coast of England and Wales, from Gretna Green all the way round to Berwick upon Tweed? Just the small matter of 3,665 miles/5,899km.

The England Coast Path may not yet be complete, but against all the odds this incredibly bold, 20-year project has survived a pandemic and Government funding whims and looks set to deliver, for the first time ever, a coastal walking trail around the seaboard of an entire country. It will be some achievement.

For the latest update on progress opening up the ECP visit www.bit.ly/england-coast-path



▲ Julia being interviewed for the *Fit is Freedom* podcast

Did video kill the radio star?

Julia Goodfellow-Smith turns the podcast dial up to 11

The popularity of videos (AKA stories and reels) on social media is skyrocketing, but so is the popularity of podcasts. Podcasts are effectively radio shows targeted at an audience with specific interests, so video and radio stars are still slugging it out! In theory, if you feature on the right podcasts, your business will benefit.

How easy is it to get a slot on a show, and how effective are podcasts as a promotional medium?

First, unless you are invited onto a show, you need to decide which to target. That is easier said than done - there are over 2 million to choose from. I search using the podcast app on my phone. For any potential podcast, I check the date of the last episode to make sure it is still live. I split the podcasts into A, B and C categories, where A denotes the most popular. Although it would be nice to feature on category A podcasts with millions of listeners, you may have more success starting small and working your way up.

I also consider how frequently the podcasts are aired. The more frequent the podcast, the more content they need and the more likely they are to consider an approach.

I listen to at least part of every potential podcast, to check that it is appropriate for my target audience. Then, I e-mail the show's host with the subject line 'Potential podcast guest'. In the body of the e-mail, I say that I have a story that I think would be a good fit for their

audience. I outline the story and offer two different angles that might be of interest and include a link to other podcast interviews so they can check me out. To conclude, I ask them to reply if they agree that my story sounds like a good fit for them.

This approach has been successful with category B and C podcasts.

The interviews themselves usually take about 45 minutes to an hour. Some are only audio, some are videoed too. Podcast hosts like it if you have a special offer for their listeners, so I offer a few chapters of one of my audiobooks free of charge. These are accessed by becoming a member of my website, thus building my mailing list.

Podcasts potentially allow you to speak to a large, targeted audience that is interested in your subject matter. However, you have no control over when the podcast is broadcast (it can take months for an episode to air) and it takes a lot of time to research relevant shows.

I have yet to be convinced that the benefits outweigh the effort. However, this might reflect my lack of sales skills rather than the effectiveness of the medium. I would love to hear whether you have had a better experience. Please email me at julia@juliags.com and, if there is enough interest, I will provide an update in a future issue of *Outdoor Focus*.

www.juliags.com



▲ Publicity for *Head Right Out*

PEN TO PAPER

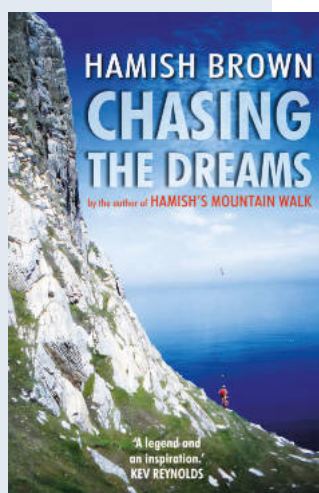
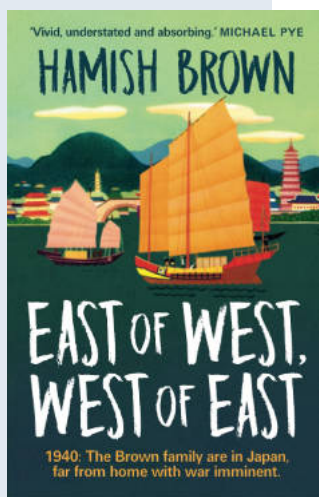
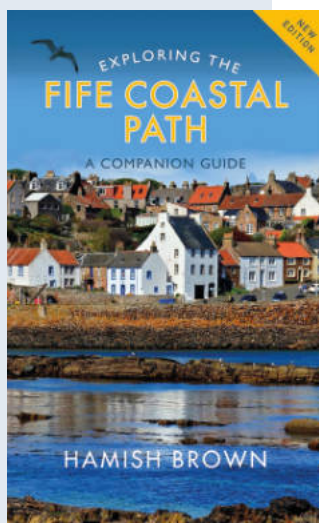
Hamish Brown keeps busy

As soon as Coronavirus rules permitted travel within one's country, but only using public transport, I was asked to do a new guide to the Fife Coastal Path, this being extended from the Forth Bridge to the Tay Bridge to the extreme bounds of Kincardine and Newburgh. To fill one five mile stretch I had to use bus, bus, bus, walk, bus, train and bus, a day when I spent more time sitting than walking. Photography was a nightmare as all my work is held in St Andrew's University Library Special Collections and lay out of bounds. Somehow the job was done and the result look excellent: *Exploring the Fife Coastal Path* (Birlinn, 2021).

Sandstone Press just managed to complete two works to beat the missing years. *Chasing the Dreams* was a companion volume of collected writing to *Walking the Song*, with accounts similarly under geographical or thematic groupings, plus a last section of four fiction stories, and a poem between sections. Sandstone also published *East of West, West of East*, our family saga of escaping the Japanese at the fall of Singapore. This used mother's letters, my own memories and father's account of his horrendous experiences plus much research that showed the shattering disaster it was. (I still carry a fragment of bomb in my right knee.)

Whittles Publishing are in the throes of completing (out for Christmas) a book much based on my two National Service years in the RAF, passed in the Canal Zone, Kenya, Cyprus and Jerusalem. My letters home had been kept but much of it explores the deplorable chicanery of our government, kept secret till recently. A medal for the Zone came fifty years on, too late for most I'm sure.

Both these have odd mountainy connections. By co-incidence my parents climbed Mt. Fuji the day World War Two broke out. I cried my eyes for being left behind. My brother was born in Yokohama a year later. RAF days saw me roaming from the Indian Ocean to the Mountains of the Moon and then an ascent of Kiliminjaro on a last leave and then I was sent home weeks early. I did go back, a disaster, but that is explained in *Chasing the Dreams*. I'm still chasing.



YHA News

2022 Walking Festival

Around the world in 46 days... that's the aim of a new walking festival targeted at both seasoned and novice walkers.

The YHA Festival of Walking takes place from 04 September – 20 October 2022. Organiser YHA (England & Wales) hopes to get people walking at least 24,901 miles; that's once around the world.

The festival aims to bring walkers – individuals, friends, families and walking groups and communities – together at hostels across England and Wales, as well as introduce new voices, feet and faces to walking in the UK's landscapes.

The new festival capitalises on the lockdown discovery of the joy of walking for many people. YHA's Festival of Walking now offers an opportunity for walkers – new and experienced – to make the most of the facilities provided at YHA's locations in the National Parks and on National Trails.

YHA is offering 25% off accommodation at a number of hostels, as well as a warm welcome and a free cuppa for everyone who gets involved with the festival.

In addition, everyone who takes part in the festival and logs their miles on the festival website will be entered into a free prize draw. YHA has partnered with Ordnance Survey, The Ramblers and the BMC to deliver the festival, as well as outdoor clothing and footwear retailer Cotswold Outdoor.

"24,901 miles seems a long way but that's just 5,000 people walking five miles each; which we think is more than achievable. Ideally, we'd love it if enough people got outside and got walking during the festival that their logged miles could collectively circumnavigate the globe multiple times. That's the goal," said James Blake Chief Executive of the social enterprise charity YHA (England & Wales).

To help with the challenge, YHA is mapping a number of circular walking routes, using OS Mapping Software, that all start and finish at a youth hostel. The mapped routes will offer an easy, moderate and challenging circular walk from each youth hostel and are suitable for novice to seasoned walkers. The free walking routes are in the process of being developed and tested by YHA's army of walking volunteers and will be available to download from the YHA Festival of Walking website.

More than 80 of YHA's hostels are on National Trails in England and Wales and provide a convenient, safe and welcoming base for people to get active.

To find out more about the YHA Festival of Walking, download walking routes, book discounted accommodation or to get involved, visit www.yha.org.uk/festival-of-walking.



Don't walk on

Ronald Turnbull on negligence, harsh contract clauses, and

Hedgehogs, look away now

Do you have these warranty clauses in your book contract?

15.1 ix) The Author guarantees that no statements, instructions or recipes in the Work will cause death, illness or injury to the reader

15.7 xIII) The Author indemnifies the Publisher against any actions, claims, damages, legal expenses and costs arising out of any breach of these warranties, including any out-of-court settlement made by the Publisher on the advice of its legal representatives

The answer's yes. In my experience, every book contract contains clauses like this. So what, if anything, did you do about them?

Let's illustrate these clauses with a story. Which comes with a preliminary warning. The scenes described may cause distress and anxiety in the reader... especially if you happen to be an author. Or a hedgehog.

My guidebook entry for Cat Bells contains a minor typo which has the unfortunate effect of totally altering its meaning. Yes, I meant to write 'Walk on to the lake'. Until an alert editor rejigged my prepositions. A reader, one Mrs Tiggywinkle, immersed herself in Derwent Water and as a direct result lost all of her role-defining prickles. (Well she says it was a direct result.) She sues my publishers, Goliath Corp.

Goliath's lawyers, the well established firm of Sue and Settle, advise Goliath to settle out of court. As a fictional character in a deeply loved children's story, Tiggywinkle's mishap, if known to the public, will do huge damage to Goliath's reputation (already tarnished by the tasing episode involving Mr Plod the Policeman). So S and S settle with Mrs T for a warm £2 million. After all, the insurers will pay.

And who will pay the insurers? Goliath's insurers, the giant Multiple Exclusions Corp, peruse the author contract, and their eyes light on Clause 15.7 xIII). Great, guys, this is really good of you. We insisted you take every precaution against the author's negligent misstatement, and you took us at our word. This author, now, what's his house worth? And it's in joint names with his husband, oh, good-ee, we get it all! And he recently received a legacy from his old Granny, and he's put his life savings into an ISA! And his pension plan's got draw-down!! Lovely-dovely!

Fortunately for me, post-bankruptcy there's a vacancy just arisen for a washerperson at Little Town, Newlands. Best of all, they pay cash down. In sixpences.

So far I've managed to somewhat improve this clause every time it's come along. But it's still a standard clause, which suggests lots of authors must be signing up to it.

In short, insure?

A very serious risk, that's very unlikely to happen: this is the sort of thing we insure against. And the Public Liability Insurance offered to members of the Society of Authors at £10 a year looks just the ticket. Unfortunately, it's not. It covers for if you drop your very heavy book on a reader's toe at a book-signing event. But it doesn't cover Mrs Tiggywinkle. Instead, we're looking at 'Professional Indemnity Insurance'. Top of Google is Direct Line Insurance. I fill in the boxes, income not too frightening, profession author. Ah.... profession 'author' makes the 'professional indemnity' box grey out. Someone's told them about those contract clauses.

First one after the sponsored results, though: Jensten Insurance – to be precise, the Financial and Professional Risks Division. Jensten has a product specifically aimed at us authors. I estimate my income level, still not huge, click a box saying I'm a member of the Society of Authors, and go for the £1 million level of cover. That might not cover Mrs Tiggywinkle's serious pain and distress plus lawyers, but it's the highest level they have. And out pops the premium. Seven hundred pounds.

So I go back to the SoA, as they also have a bespoke and discounted Professional Indemnity offering.

Ah yes, Ronald. It's not cheap, but worth it for peace of mind, obviously. And they've offered us a very competitive price. They're called, let me see, Jensten Insurance.

The very competitive price – seems like I already found it.

The royalties of my second-best book

So, are all the outdoor writers devoting the royalties off their second-best book to their insurance policy? I suspect not. I suspect we're following the simpler and cheaper policy of just not reading the contract. Or the somewhat more harrowing option of reading it and then signing it anyway....

the water

iconic hedgehogs

This may, indeed, be the rational way to behave. The word among publishers and the Society of Authors is that no publisher, so far, has invoked this clause to seize any unfortunate author's assets, house and pension pot. This clause is in the contract at the insistence of their own insurance company. (Multiple Exclusions Corp, remember them?) its purpose is, to terrify the poor author.

It may, on the other hand, be not rational at all. We can all think of things that never happened at all right up until the day that they did. What Mrs Tiggywinkle's accusing me of is negligence: specifically of negligent misstatement. What is negligence? It's what a judge or a magistrate or even in extreme cases a jury can be persuaded by lawyers to think it is.

Some years back a walker (let's call him Mr Walker) got into trouble trying to descend the North Ridge of Tryfan, and had to be rescued. Who got the blame? The guidebook. The guidebook writer had described the Llyn Bochlwyd as being the 'easy way up Tryfan'. Mr Walker had found it not easy at all, decided the guidebook was rubbish, and set off down the north ridge. And then blamed the guidebook that he hadn't even been using. Concerningly, even the mountain rescue joined in the condemnation. The MR are scrupulously non-judgemental over walkers and climbers who get into difficulties. But this doesn't extend to poor old authors who write 'easy' when they should have written 'less difficult'.

Luckily, Mr Walker wasn't seriously hurt, and the case didn't end up in court. Earlier, one fell race organiser had a similar escape, after an inexperienced runner got lost and died of hypothermia. The organiser was an unpaid volunteer. Everybody knows fell races are at your own risk. The race had rules about being capable of navigating, carrying a map, and being equipped with lightweight waterproofs, and the victim had broken them all. It was still suggested that the organiser had been negligent in not checking everybody's kit at the start – though after six months of suspense, this one didn't end up in court either.

What to do about the warranties?

There are a number of things you should and should *not* do...

1 One is not putting a disclaimer in your book: Cat Bells is a jolly dangerous place and Derwent Water is full of water (yes,

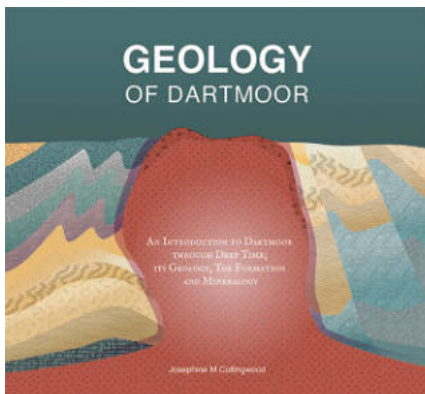
there's a clue in the name) so if you fall in and get wet we don't accept any liability. When you're accused of negligence, you might just as well have used the space for dedicating the book to your fellwalking auntie.

- 2 For starters, I get the publishers to acknowledge, either within the contract or in a separate letter, that fellwalking is an adventure sport and the warranties do not cover its normal risks. This is because I don't go in for signing stuff that's simply not true. (Just one of the reasons why I'm not a Cabinet Minister.)
- 3 Carefully read through the Society of Authors' advice note on 'Negligent Misstatement', found among the OWPG's advice notes. (Also their blog post on negligent misstatement – search "SOA negligent" [www.bit.ly/soa-before-sign])
- 4 I've always managed to get a contract amendment that I get informed and consulted over any decisions to settle any negligence claim before they come to take away all my money. Then at least I could get my own lawyers on the job before it's too late.
- 5 Enquire whether your risks may be covered by the Publisher's own liability insurance. Oddly, in some cases it seems that they can. Multiple X Corp, after demanding the right to retrieve any settlement money off the poor old author, then agrees to pay the author back again.
- 6 Get the publisher to confirm, in writing, what editing, proofreading and checking they will be doing. We all want everything carefully checked anyway. But evidence of such thorough and careful checking is the best defence against claims of negligent mis-statement. There might still be a mistake, but it wouldn't be a negligent mistake.

So as well as messing up your punctuation, changing all your 'onto's into 'on to', and taking out the jokes, the editor is performing another very valuable function. Saving your pension pot and your house from the clutches of your publisher's insurance company's lawyers....

Photo: Cat Bells / Ronald Turnbull Inset illustration: Beatrix Potter (Wikimedia Commons)

Book Reviews / Roly Smith



Geology of Dartmoor

Josephine M Collingwood

Tavicinity Publishing, £20 (pb)

If you thought – as many guidebooks still seem to do – that Dartmoor’s geology was simply the granite of its characteristic tors, think again.

Following on from her beautifully produced *Dartmoor Tors Compendium* (see review in *Outdoor Focus* Autumn, 2020), the author’s latest paean to her beloved Dartmoor concerns its geomorphology and geology. And she reveals, in sometimes overly technical detail, a complex geological story which goes back into what’s now commonly known as “Deep Time” – at least to the Devonian Period of between 419 and 359 million years ago.

The authoritative text is enlivened by many graphs and diagrams, but most interestingly by the author’s micro close-ups of the rock crystals, which are beautiful in themselves. The photographic coverage of the individual tors and the other places where the different rock types can be seen are up to the author’s usual very high standard.

And she also answers the perennial question of how the tors were formed by examples found in the unlikely setting of

the back of the car park at Two Bridges, which stands at the crossroads of Dartmoor. The former quarry shows outcrops of granite emerging from the loose grit (locally known as “growan”), which eventually will become the tors familiar to so many Dartmoor walkers. Collingwood explains this provides evidence for the hypothesis that significant formation of tors occurred while the granite was still underground, and not all when the rocks were on the surface and exposed to the erosion caused by Dartmoor’s frequent frost, ice, rain and wind.

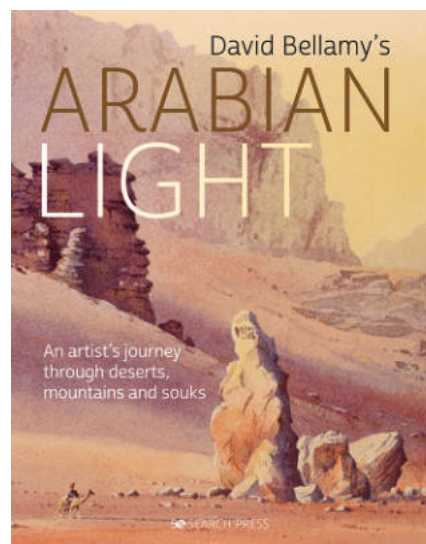
This is another very handsome volume again from Tavicinity Publishing (in case you were wondering, they are based in Tavistock) and is a worthy addition to the library of any aficionado of Southern England’s wildest national park.

Arabian Light

David Bellamy

Search Press, £25 (hb)

Artist David Bellamy’s last publication, *Arctic Light* won the Guild’s Best Outdoor Book award in 2017. And in this new



work he takes us to the opposite climatic extreme of the blistering heat and mirages of the Arabian Desert.

It was his two-year posting to Aden during his National Service in the Royal Air Force in 1963 which first sparked his interest in Arabia, its deserts, mountains, people and antiquities. From those early years Bellamy developed a deep seated and abiding love for the barren expanses which are home to a people whom he found, as many others also have, to be unfailingly friendly, kind, humorous and welcoming.

Through a series of mouth-watering watercolours, the artist manages to capture that intense, blinding white light found only in these regions – you can almost feel the heat radiating off some of the pages. But this book is so much more than his paintings.

As Bellamy transports us to legendary places like Wadi Rum, Petra and the weird landscapes of little visited Gilf Kebir, in the south-western corner of Egypt, he also describes the troubled history and political turbulence of the region through his entertaining and informative text.

Enlivened throughout by Bellamy’s personal experiences in each region, from the Swahili Coast to the busy souks of Jordan and Lebanon, this is a book to be treasured by anyone who, like him, has been captivated by the magic of Arabia.

Capital to Coast: Walking 1066 Harold’s Way

David Clarke

History Walks, £10 (pb)

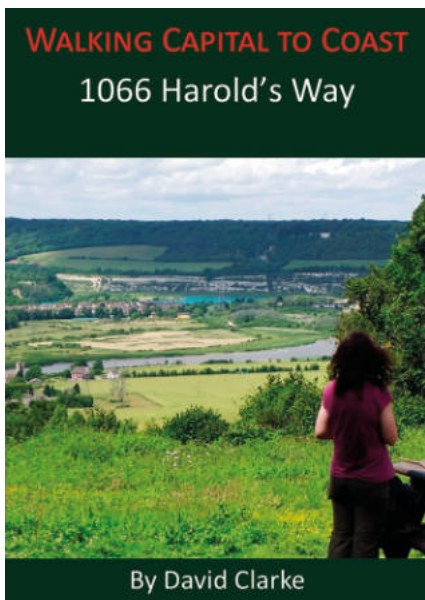
Ten-sixty-six is the date burned into the memory of

every schoolchild of my generation – the date of the Battle of Hastings and the last successful invasion of England by William of Normandy.

We were all taught how Harold Godwinson, newly crowned King of England, rushed north to defeat the invading army of his brother Tostig and Harold Hardrada at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in September, 1066. Then, on hearing that William had landed in Kent, he had to rush south again to meet his destiny, and that of England, at the Battle of Hastings on October 14.

So the first question to be asked of this nonetheless informative and historically rich guidebook is why *1066 Harold's Way* doesn't start at the Stamford Bridge battlefield near York and end at Hastings? (Apparently, the author did discuss the route from Stamford Bridge but found it difficult to establish a clear route on rights-of-way).

So this 100-mile, 10-day route instead follows what could have been Harold's route from Westminster Abbey to Senlac Hill,



east to Rochester and then due south roughly following the old Roman Road through Maidstone, Bodiam and Battle.

The route is described in the author's usual meticulous detail, but it is the regular "Reflections" and the occasional excerpts from *The Saxon Times*, an imaginary newspaper from the period, which sets this apart as an entertaining and enlightening read, whether you do the walk or not.

High Risk: Climbing to Extinction

Brian Hall

Sandstone Press £24.99 (hb)

Renowned mountain guide Brian Hall looks back on the lives – and deaths – of 11 of his climbing friends in this honest, unflinching but often joyful account of the so-called 'Golden Age' of Himalayan mountaineering.

Himalayan climbing went through something of a revolution in the decade from the mid 1970s, when a generation of young British climbers eschewed the traditional, large and expensive military-style assaults on some of the highest peaks in the world. Instead, this group of fearless but technically brilliant climbers pioneered small, simple, Alpine style expeditions which, as the author using a metaphor which reveals his Sheffield roots, "left a legacy on which any of today's climbs are forged."

Many, such as Paul Nunn, Al Rouse, Joe Tasker, Alex MacIntyre and Pete Thexton, paid the ultimate cost of their lives pursuing what the brilliant Polish current exponent of the style, Voytek Kurtyka, calls "a higher



form of the mountaineering art". Hall knew most of his subjects as personal friends with whom he had regularly climbed or partnered on expeditions. So his brutally-honest accounts of their sometimes outrageous life styles are often tinged with a moving and understandable sadness at their untimely passing.

Of course, Hall himself can speak of these things with a high degree of authority, as he took part in a dozen of these Alpine style attempts on the Himalayan giants himself, including the Doug Scott multi-national expedition to Makalu in 1984.

So to ask the perennial question usually posed by non-mountaineers, why are so many young climbers prepared to risk their lives in this way? Hall's answer is simple: "Successfully pushing the boundaries creates euphoria and a unique satisfaction, which can result in an addiction to risk." Or he perhaps expresses it best in the words of his sub-title (which surely should have been the main one), of "climbing to extinction."

COMING HOME

Huw Kingston finds it good to be back

I looked over the edge at High Neb, the wind pushing the clang of climbing gear up the buttress, closer to my ears. 'Climb when ready' were the last words I heard before continuing along the edge. There were other familiar sounds, that of a curlew, forever sounding as if it needs assistance, a grouse I almost stood on, clucking and flapping in its struggle to rise from the heather. To hear the 'Ay Up' acknowledgements of rambblers being pulled along by their dogs.

Views too: Win Hill and beyond to Mam Tor and Kinder and the disturbing but somehow reassuring intrusion of the Hope Valley cement works.

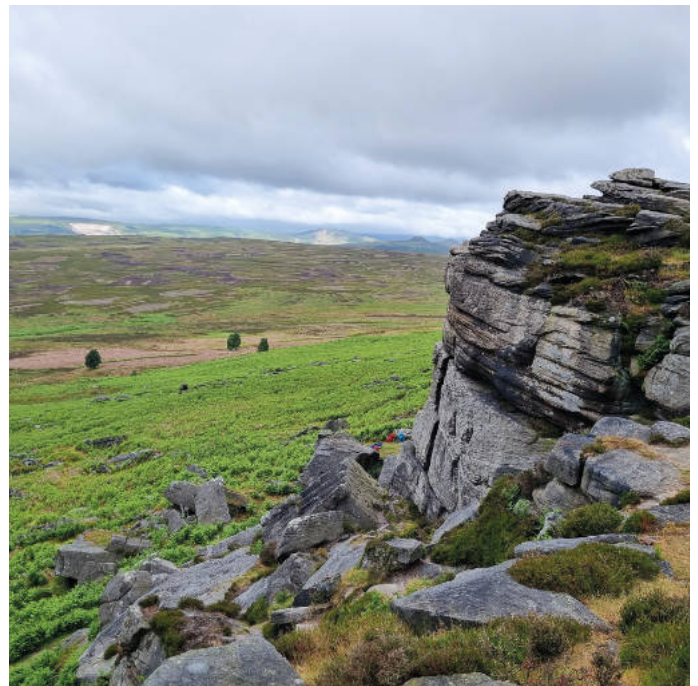
I'd walked away from my parent's house, in the western suburbs of Sheffield, early that June morning, using Porter Clough as my escape route to the Peak. With no map, I followed my nose and my memory, took tracks that I must have taken in years gone by, but some I couldn't recognise.

It was good to be back in the UK, a first visit since that C word changed the world. That thing that had stopped, in their tracks, plans my wife and I had to be back for a year or so. Travel writers forced to stop travelling.

It was good to be back, despite dodging rail strikes and Jubilee jubilations for an anachronistic monarchy. Good to be back, despite the announcement of despicable, diversionary refugee policies, copycatting the dark stain of 'offshore processing' that has marked my own country Australia for a decade or more. Good to be back.

Once at Stanage End I dropped, off track, in the direction of Ladybower. To my right the A57 Snake Pass was busy with weekend traffic, running straight before slowing at the bends by Cutthroat Bridge. I recalled how one winter I'd been driving that section on a Friday evening, en route to the Lakes for a rare XC skiing opportunity. Brake lights ahead alerted me first and then I saw them all merge together. I too slid down the snowy hill to join them, a pile up of a dozen cars or more. Frustrating yes, but even more so for all the people already in Keswick waiting for me to turn up with a car full of skis that never arrived.

Up onto Derwent Edge, the moors dry enough to put a real spring in your step, stalks crunching a little underfoot. I met my parents and my wife at the inn at Strines. They took a coffee, I drank a



▲ High Neb, Stannage Edge

▼ Crossing the old bridge, Sligachan, Skye





▲ Taking a stroll on Harris

pint, feeling I deserved it, despite the relative earliness of the day and knowing it would guarantee an afternoon snooze. Another winter, as teenagers, we walked out from Sheffield to Strines, in snow deep enough to allow all walls to be straddled easily. It was dark when we got to the pub and, not surprisingly, were the only ones there. We stayed two days, a snow-in if not a lock-in.

The week before my Peak District ramble I'd been in Scotland, cycling for a week on a loop out of Oban through the Outer Hebrides, back to Skye then down through Moidart, Glen Shiel, across to Mull and thence back to Oban.

Mark, an old friend who I'd first met when we were working at an outdoor centre in the Brecons, near 40 years ago, had driven up from his home near Barcelona with bikes on board for us both. He scooped me up in Sheffield and we continued up, first to stay with friends in Stirling. As we enjoyed a late-night dram or two, I recalled my time working for North Cape, a now defunct outdoor clothing company, based in Stirling. On my first day visiting the factory, some of the machinists insisted I join them for a drink after work. There I experienced the delights of mixing the national hard and soft drinks of Scotland in one glass - whisky and Irn Bru. It was the first and last time.

The Outer Hebrides were new ground to me, a place I'd always wanted to visit. The west of Scotland gave what Scotland gives; a decent lashing by wild winds and plenty rain. But at least such weather keeps the midges down. Better perhaps to be soaked than scratching?

As we rode across Skye, and pulled in at

Sligachan, memories came back again. Of dropping off Sgurr nan Gilleán at sunset after a solo traverse of the Cuillin Ridge, looking forward to a celebration pint in the hotel. Of being stuck for three days in a tiny tent with a 6ft 5in friend, on the shores of Lake Coruisk. I wasn't aware until then that he was an avid trainspotter and, despite my show of disinterest, he bored me day and night with stories of this engine and that shunter from Penzance to Perth.

Both a lobster fisherman on Barra and a bookbinder on Uist bemoaned the barriers of Brexit. As Mark said to me, Britain is the only country to have voted to impose economic sanctions on itself. There was, on this visit home, a sense of some decay and much despondency. A circus led by a clown played out daily in the media.

But there is hope, there is always hope. I left Australia days after we had deposed our own climate change denier and liar and installed a government that gave us hope. Hope for real action on climate change by a country long considered a laggard, hope for real action for our First Nations people, hope for integrity.

I write this back in my house in the Snowy Mountains of Australia on the morning I read of a cascade of cabinet resignations in the UK, of rats leaving the sinking ship. By the time this is published things may be very different there. There is hope for a place still so very dear to my heart. A place that gave me my love of the mountains, the rivers, the rocks. It may no longer be Great Britain but it sure is still beautiful Britain. It was good to come back.

www.huwkingston.com

ROMSDAL

Tony Howard aims high in Norway

Gosh, what a stunningly beautiful place! Despite numerous visits since passing through whilst hitching back from climbing in Lofoten in 1962, it never ceases to amaze me.

I was there again this summer enjoying beautiful weather. The mountain scenery is unique. It's peaks rise abruptly from close to sea level, or should I say fjord level, to heights mostly around 1450 to 1850 metres. Some summits still retain their slowly shrinking glaciers. Others stand above huge sweeping slabs and ridges rising from the depths of the birch forested valleys to pinnacled summits which, it is said, are home to trolls. The great Trollryggen Pillar, the ascent of which involves around 2500 metres of climbing, almost dwarfs the adjacent 1200 metre Troll Wall, or Trollveggen, Europe's tallest, steepest north face.

At almost 63°N, the summer days are long. In fact it's never fully dark and on the big routes we have sometimes climbed through the night. The sun even makes a warm and very welcome, if brief, appearance on the Troll Wall in the early dawns of summer. Climbing in Romsdal dates back to a very early ascent of the impressive Romsdalshorn in 1827 by two local farmers, but it was Slingsby 'the father of Norwegian mountaineering', who made the first real alpine routes. He summited Vengetind 1852m, in 1881 then Kvandalstind 1775m, in 1884, where he also named a nearby impressive pinnacle which reminded him of Thors Hammer (now Torshammer), quoting from Olav Triggvasson's Saga:

**"I am the God Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!"**

Slingsby also climbed the dark truncated tower of the Romsdalshorn in 1884 with his wife Alizon who was the first woman to reach the top, commenting "The mountain is more difficult than the Matterhorn when in good condition", though I'm not so sure about that. But anyway, these days Romsdal is no longer just about traditional climbing and mountaineering to high summits. There are now routes at all grades to site all people, including single pitch as well as the big walls and mountain routes. As elsewhere, the climbing game has changed and there are now also a multitude of sport climbs, some on roadside cliffs, many fully bolted, as well as via ferratas.

Nor is Romsdal just about rock climbing. There are, of course, some beautiful valley walks in inspirational scenery, plus scrambles and treks in the higher mountains, often with awesome views into the valleys below. Or if you feel like an easy day, there is now even a gondola to the top of the mountain above Åndalsnes, the small town by the Romsdalsford where the Norwegian Tindesenter (Mountain Centre) is located. I could go on, but I hope the photos (on page 12) will tell their own story.

Useful links

Norwegian Mountain Centre: www.tindesenteret.no/en

Reinheimen National Park www.norgesnasjonalparker.no/en/nationalparks/reinheimen

Norwegian Guidebooks

Fra topp til topp i Romsdal

Romsdal Sports Klatring

Klatring i Romsdal

Books by the author

Climbs, Scrambles and Walks in Romsdal

Troll Wall

Quest into the Unknown





▲ View to Romsdal and Åndalsnes from Litlefjell

▼ The Trolltind Massif and the Troll Wall and pillars

