



Oread Mountaineering Club Magazine

July - August 2026



The last Geo Walk enjoyed fabulous weather. Photo Chris Radcliffe.

Editorial

A double issue so two months of meets in here - local walks including the penultimate Geo walk, Monsal Head, Mow Cop and more. Weekend trips - Llanberis Pass and Cader Idris, followed by Coniston in August and Bank Holiday in Pembroke.

The **Ecton Mine** trip in October is going ahead but still open for more participants, (page 8) as is the hut to hut in the **Pyrenees** in July 2027 on page 9. It now has a WhatsApp group you can join.

If you want to book a discounted room at the Bentley Brook Inn for the Annual Dinner on 14 November see page 9.

Write ups include an update on Pip Leach's charity cycle ride and progress on the work at Tan yr Wyddfa.

Also a report on the recent death of former member Tim Whitaker and memories of Gil Male.

Copy Deadline 20 August.

Meets List 2026 - Edward Bloomfield

Ed Bloomfield email xxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxx

	Dates	Hut/Location/title	Description	Leader
J u l y	1st	Monsal Head	Wednesday walk	Brian Dyke
	3-7th	Tyw	Maintenance meet	Snod
	0	0	0	0
	10-12th	Ynys Btws, CCHut, Llanberis Pass	Climbing in Llanberis Pass	Mike Mowbray
	16th	Peak Forest	Thursday short walk	Ruth Gordon
	17-19th	Cader Idris	Wales	Nigel Berry
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
A u g u s t	25th	Mbw Cop 23km	Saturday walk	Nick Evans
	31-2nd Aug	Coniston Copper Mines YMC Hut	Climbing and walking meet, Lake District	Tim Harrison
	5th	Danebower Hollow	Wednesday walk	Rusty
	8th-15th	Val Cenis Vanoise national park	Alpine meet	Steve Christian
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	20th	tbc	Thursday short walk	Chris Paice
	22nd	Upper Burbage – Robin Hood	Geowalk Saturday	Rachael Walker
	0	0	0	0
S e p t e m b e r	0	0	0	0
	28-31st	Pembroke camping meet	Climbing and walking meet	Ed Bloomfield
	2nd	tbc	Wednesday walk	Chris Mather
	5-12th	Lundy Island	Climbing meet	Kevin Raisin Moss
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	17th	Ticknall	Short walk	Nick Evans
	26th	tbc	Saturday walk	Stuart Firth
O c t o b e r	25-27th	Holyhead, Rhoscolyn	Climbing & Camping weekend	Alan Monks
	0	0	0	0
	3-4th	Heathy Lea	Maintenance meet	Kevin Raisin Moss
	7th	tbc	Wednesday walk	Nigel Briggs
	9-11th	Great Langdale FROCC Hut	Climbing and walking, Lake District	Janet Briggs
	0	0	0	0
	9-18th ish	Kalymnos	Sport Climbing	??
	15th	Elgin	Thursday short walk	Chris Paice
	17th	Ecton Mine	Underground visit	Stuart Firth
	0	0	0	0
	24th	Robin Hood – Matlock	Geowalk finale Saturday	Gill Radcliffe
	0	0	0	0
	30-1st	TyWNorth Wales	Curry meet, Climbing and walking	Tony Howard

N o v e m b e r	4th	tbc	Wednesday walk	Rachael Walker
	6-8th	Heathy Lea	Bonfire Night	???
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	14th	ey	Bentley Brook Inn	Chris Paice
	15th	Walk	Post Prandial walk tbc	???
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	25th	tbc	Thursday short walk	Ruth Gordon
	26th-6th dec	Wadi Rum Jordan	Climbing meet	Ed Bloomfield
	0	0	0	0
D e c e m b e r	2nd	0	Wednesday walk	Steve Booth
	4-6th	Bullstones Meet	0	??
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	17th	tbc	Thursday short walk	Ruth Gordon
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	26th	tbc	Boxing Day walk	tbc

Forthcoming Meets

Wednesday 1 July Monsal Head Walk Brian Dykes

This was originally advertised as one of Peter Amour's walks, but Peter has asked that I step in and lead it for him. As per Peter's original plan, we will meet up at Monsal Head (where the ice cream van is normally parked) at 10:00. There is a large Derbyshire Dales District Council car park at Monsal Head (£6.60 - all day) but there is also some free roadside parking on Butts lane heading east from Monsal Head towards Little Longstone.

The route I have planned is about 15km and with 400m of ascent. Initially we will descend to the Monsal Trail, leaving it at Great Longstone before ascending to Longstone Moor. We will then cross the moor to pick up concessionary paths leading towards Cressbrook Dale - just above Ravensdale crag. We will then take the footpath descent into Cressbrook Dale to pass Ravensdale Cottages and to pick up the Monsal Trail again at Cressbrook.

The descent into Cressbrook Dale is steep, but was not a problem on my 'dry run' but could be a problem if it's very wet - and as such walking poles may help. Also bring food and drink for a lunch stop. Please let me know if you will be joining...

Brian Dykes: email: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

3 - 7 July Tan yr Wyddfa Working Party Snod Helliwell

This year we have a change to the format of the last few years. The usual suspects

have been taking advantage of a free stay at the hut midweek. This is quite selfish and precludes our younger members, who have to work for their living, from taking part. So this year a weekend is included to let them have the benefit of a free stay too, in return for a few hours work. There's always time for a route or two at Tremadoc. Of course they are welcome to stay on if they wish! The hut is reserved for members bookings only so book yourself in online and let me know you are coming.

Snod Helliwell email xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

10-12 July Ynys Ettws Llanberis Pass Hut Mike Mowbray

Stunningly located in the heart of the Llanberis Pass and surrounded on all sides by Eryri's most spectacular mountains, Ynys Ettws is possibly the best-situated hut in Britain. After a ground-up refurbishment in 2023-4 this truly is a state of the art base for exploring Eryri, whilst all the major crags of the Llanberis Pass are within walking distance. So come on all you Oread's, sort out your lead rack and remember where you left your trad head. We have 12 beds booked in this splendid hut. If the weather is unkind there is still Gogarth and Tremadog. Excellent walking and bouldering too and if all else fails a mass ascent of Lockwood's Chimney looms.

For further details join the WhatsApp group or be in touch.

Please let me know when you commit to attend as I expect this to be a full meet.

See you there.

Mike Mowbray email mjmowbray@icloud.com tel. 07841 982398

16 July short walk Peak Forest Ruth Gordon

A bit further afield while we have plenty of daylight. We will park on Church Lane, Peak Forest (right at the traffic lights if coming from the south) then walk up Old Dam lane to join the Limestone Way. We will follow that for a while before bearing left to pick up tracks and paths in the direction of Eldon Hill before returning south to the village. It is a high, open area with wonderful views in all directions and the exact route can be adapted according to the weather and enthusiasm of the party.

Ruth Gordon email xxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxx.

17 – 19 July Cader Idris Nigel Berry

South Snowdonia is a great base for walking, scrambling and climbing, mountain biking and the seaside is not far away.

We will be camping at Hafod Dywyll campsite.

Members wishing to join this meet should make contact directly with Sue at the campsite [stating Oread Mountaineering Club.](#)



She has been made aware that members might arrive pre the weekend, and /or stay later, so state your stay length.

Details:-Hafod Dywyll Campsite, Hafod Olau, Islawrdref, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 1TR

Email suehafod@hotmail.com Tel. 01341 423444. Further information on their website <https://www.hafoddywyllcampsite.co.uk/>

The campsite takes tents, small caravans and camper vans (motor homes not stated, if planning to take such check this with the site first).

Rates as 2025 - Adults £7-50 pppn Children under 10 £3-50 per night Children under 2 free.

Dogs £2-00 per night. Vehicle parking £3-00 per day.

Facilities :- 4 Toilets 2 Showers - hot water

including in camping fee.

Camp fires - small camp fires are allowed. You are requested to purchase any logs from the campsite. No local wood harvesting allowed (SSSI site)

Dogs - permitted, but must be on a lead 100% of the time

Nigel Berry: email xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Saturday 25 July Mow Cop Walk Nick Evans

My legendary Mow Cop walk:

Start Timbersbrook Car park. Free. SJ 894628 demand.remix.grudging

Route - Dane in Shaw, Congleton Edge, Mow Cop, Biddulph, The Cloud. 14 miles.

Refreshing beer available en route.

Nick Evans: email xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx or via the WhatsApp group.

31 July – 1 August Coniston Meet Tim Harrison

The [YMC Coniston Copper Mines Hut](#) is perfectly situated for climbing on Dow Crag and the many other crags around the Old Man of Coniston. There are also plenty of opportunities for walking, scrambling and other outdoor activities, with easy access to other Lake District areas. An optional group meal is planned for Saturday evening (menu yet to be confirmed). Join the meet WhatsApp group or be in touch with me to find out more and to book your bed.

Tim Harrison: email xxxxxxxxxxxxx or tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

5 August Danebower Hollow Walk Rusty Russell

The meeting place is in Wildboardclough, a short distance N. E.(upstream) from the disused quarry below Shuttlingsloe, where we have parked in the past, a formal car park on the RHS, just above the script "Clough House" on the O.S. map, approx SJ988698. Please assemble at 10.30 for 10.45. The plan is to make an anti clockwise loop, on a surfaced road originally, then crossing the A54 and descending into the Goyt. From here we shall walk upstream past Three Shires Head to Danebower Quarries, whence firstly towards the Cat and Fiddle and then SW through the best and remotest territory (which I hope may be fresh to some) to close the circle. As always, I hope we can share vehicles and I would be happy to take three passengers (dogs acceptable).

Please let me know if you propose to attend - email xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxx (text preferred as I am increasingly hard of hearing).

8 -15 August The Vanoise National Park Alpine meet Steve Christian

This year's summer alpine meet takes us to the Val Cenis in the Vanoise National Park. We'll be staying at camping Les Melezes, which has good facilities and plenty of shade, [link here](#).

[Les Mèlèzes à Val-Cenis Termignon en Savoie](#)

The campsite in Termignon is now open for bookings for the Oread summer alpine meet on the 8th to 15th August, see the link below. Some members are arriving earlier or staying longer.

The message from the site manager is: "When booking, you can add comments and in this case, fill in "oread" so that we can make sure to assign you places close to each other. Note that the pitches measure at least 80m2 and that it is possible to accommodate up to 6 people on them, so it is possible for the members of your group to reserve 1 single pitch for several tents and several people so that it is more economical for you"

https://thelisresa.webcamp.fr/list.php?camping=melezes73&lang=en&PHPSESSID=fj18brs0b76lcdhl6lgn7405rs&begin=2026-08-08&duration=7&end=2026-08-15&nb_pers=1&type=1

There is walking, mountaineering, via ferrata, valley cragging, mountain cragging, mountain and road riding all within easy reach. It's good for active families and I have holidayed there many times in the last decade.

There is general information about the area in the link below.

[Vanoise National Park - Haute Maurienne Vanoise](#)

There is a Cicerone selective guidebook in English that covers the many activities ([link below](#)), along with French language and topo guides for more detail on rock climbing in the area.

https://www.cicerone.co.uk/mountain-adventures-in-the-maurienne?srsltid=AfmBOooDTQXwE_1-V9r-MOE1iefgcU_Uh1BckP5QxX_or5HVekfzJrEN

If you have any questions about the activities in the area, I have spent several summers here in the last decade, undertaking family activities like rock climbing, via ferrata, MTB, walking and easy mountaineering, so don't hesitate to contact me. Any queries you can reach me on xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, there is also a WhatsApp group in the Oread Community you can join to express interest, keep up to date

or ask questions.

20 August short walk Ruth Gordon

This walk was advertised for June, but due to heatwave conditions on the day we took a shadier route instead. So we will try again, starting at 11.00 am by Tansley church. SK 323 599 off the A615 Matlock – Alfreton road. There is street parking to be had in various spots on the road through the village. We will go through fields and woodland across Knabhall Lane to Allen Lane and Holestone Gate Road. Lunch will be taken near Turningstone Edge before retracing our steps to return via Old Engine Farm, Packhorse Farm, Knabhall and Whitelea Lanes. Distance about five and a half miles with just one short steepish bit as we climb out of Tansley.

Ruth Gordon: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. [xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](tel:xxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Saturday 22 August Geo Walk Upper Burbage Bridge to Robin Hood Rachel Walker

Step 13 <https://visitpeakdistrict.com/trails/the-peak-district-geowalk>.

This walk is unique in that it follows one very prominent rock formation for the best part of fifteen kilometres. The Chatsworth Grit Formation is primarily made up of sandstones with some thin interbedded shales, with the sandstones becoming thicker and more extensive towards the top. It is this upper part that commonly forms the bold scarp faces or ‘gritstone edges’ that characterise the eastern margin of the Peak District. Continuing the theme established at Stanage Edge, this section follows four more edges, all geologically similar and offering great walking. Starting at Burbage, the walk heads south along the scarps of Froggatt, Curbar and Baslow, interrupted only by a couple of deep valleys that cut through the sandstone capping at Padley Gorge and Bar Brook.

- **Start:** Upper Burbage Bridge Car Park. **9.30 am** to ensure parking spaces available.
- **End:** The Robin Hood Inn (Baslow)
- **Distance:** ≈ 10 miles (≈ 16 km)
- **Time:** 4 - 5 hours
- **Difficulty:** Moderate, with uneven, rocky paths and some boggy moorland [1, 2]
- Please let **Rachel Walker** know if you would like to join us so we can co-ordinate transport Tel [xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](tel:xxxxxxxxxxxxxx), xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

28-31 August South Pembroke Ed Bloomfield

Bank holiday meet, campsite to be confirmed. Join the WhatsApp group or be in touch.

Ed Bloomfield email xxxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. [xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](tel:xxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

2 September Kinder Scout mass trespass walk Chris Mather

Meet at the car park in Hayfield village near the old station at 10.00am for a 10.15 departure.

Distance 13.63 km.

Ascent and descent 555m.

The walk follows in the footsteps of the mass trespass.

Chris Mather email xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. [xxxxxxxxxxxxx](tel:xxxxxxxxxxxxx)

9 – 11 October Great Langdale Raw Head Janet Briggs

What could be better than an Autumn weekend in Langdale? We will be based at the FRCC hut Raw Head. This is in a great position with more than enough climbing and walking from the hut. Climbing covers every taste from mountain routes to bouldering and for the walkers most of Lakeland's central fells are accessible.

Get in touch to reserve your bunk!

Janet Briggs email xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. [xxxxxxxxxxxxx](tel:xxxxxxxxxxxxx)

17 October Ecton Hill Mine Visit Stuart Firth

Oread members have walked over Ecton Hill many times and observed the extensive overground copper and lead mine-workings. Some members have actually been underground and report that it is a fascinating place.

- Once one of the foremost mines in the UK
- Worked for copper and lead for 3,500 years until 1891
- In 18th Century, Duke of Devonshire made £300,000 - possibly used to fund building of Buxton Crescent
- Firsts in mining technology, chemistry, geology
- Deepest mine shaft and first use of mining explosives in Britain
- Boulton and Watt steam engine
- Site of Special Scientific Interest above and below ground

What's not to like?

Consequently, I am organising a private Oread underground trip. **There are now enough expressions of interest to make the trip viable. Before I progress the arrangements further, it would be helpful to know if there are likely to be any more takers. Please let me know if you think you might like to come. No firm commitment required just yet as it is a few months off but the mine official will need to organise the expert volunteer guides.** (Saturday 17 October 26)

The cost is a minimum donation of £10 per person which goes towards the charity's expenses.

There are two underground options: Deep Ecton - easy but wellies needed. More

exciting is a possible through trip to Salts level via 50m of fixed ladders. More kit is needed but can be provided. The trip will include a short presentation, an overground walk and a visit to the 1788 engine house.

For more background info: www.ectonmine.org.uk and www.ectonhillfsa.org

Be adventurous - it should be fun!

Stuart Firth: email xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

***SAVE THE DATE*14 November**

The Annual Dinner will again be held at the Bentley Brook Inn, Fenny Bentley DE6 1LF. Tel. 01335 350278. The pub is again offering a 10% discount on rooms booked direct with them. Telephone and mention the Oread to secure your room and discount. Rooms are limited and will be released for general sale by mid October so don't leave booking to the last minute. The menu choices and booking form will be in the next newsletter.

Chris Paice emailxxxxxxxxxxxxx

25 November - 6 December Anti Atlas Morocco Ed Bloomfield

We plan a return to the Anti Atlas – if you are interested join the WhatsApp group or be in touch.

Ed Bloomfield email xxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxx

29 January – 12 February 2027 Sun Rock Benidorm Ruth Gordon

It's a long way off but some of us have already booked our annual trip to the Costa Blanca in search of sunshine, bolted limestone and beautiful mountain walking. We have booked a few days earlier this time to avoid the mid February weekend which gets fully booked very quickly. However the hotel is very popular and early booking is advisable.

We have booked a Jet2 holiday from Manchester or East Midlands at the Aparthotel Terralta, Benidorm, with Half Board Plus but you can also self cater if you prefer. Car hire is essential for getting to the crags but we will organise that nearer the time when we know how many are coming. Any questions please be in touch.

Ruth Gordon email: xxxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxx and leave a message if I'm not at home.

July 2027 Pyrenees mountain walking/climbing Mark Hipwell

Expressions of interest invited for a Mid-July 2027 Pyrenees Trip.

This will be a hut to hut trip, using each hut as a base to explore the Cirque De Gavarnie and Ordesa Canyon (UNESCO site). Prospective peaks include Mt Perdu (3352m), Marbore Cylinder (PD 3328m), and Taillon (3147m). Walks include the spectacular Faja de las Flores, Breche De Roland, and the Circo de Cotatuero. If interested, please contact Mark Hipwell on the club WhatsApp or tel. xxxxxxxxxxxx.



News, Articles and Reports from Meets

Tan yr Wyddfa news



The scaffolding went up at the beginning of June and Rob Beck is currently hard at work – in spite of torrential rain at the end of his first week - Friday (19 June) and blistering heat in the second week. (22-26th).

All is going well with the job so far, the old rendering has been removed, the insulation fitted to the gable walls and the new rendering is in progress

A passing neighbour from down the lane has told him that our nearest neighbour, Mrs Williams, has recently died and her son is over from Canada to organise the sale of her house.



Pip and Jonathan Leach - Land's End to John o' Groats charity cycle ride

Pip and her brother Jonathan are cycling from Land's End to John O' Groats. They started on June 26 and are currently working their way through Scotland. They are doing this as a fundraiser for the Alzheimers Society and have so far raised over £3,000.

Pip writes:

“We are doing this in memory of our parents, both of whom died with dementia. We saw them change so much from being vibrant active people with interests in many areas of life to ones being afflicted by dementia. We would like to raise money to help support those individuals affected by dementia and also to support family and friends around them.”

If you would like to donate to their fundraiser the link is

https://www.justgiving.com/page/jonathan-leach-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

or be in touch with Pip by email xxxxxxxxxxxx tel. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx



Tansley Short Walk 25 June Ruth Gordon



As the heatwave increased, with temperatures of 30 degrees forecast, the usual suspects made their excuses – I knew five people who weren't coming – and only

one who was! But lo! Another two mad dogs appeared ready to brave the midday sun so we were a party of four. I took an executive decision that the planned route would be unpleasant, offering very little shade, so we took a well wooded route to Lumsdale, up to the Wishing Stone and via the new paths around the Hurst Farm estate (featuring many interpretation boards and even a bench that talks to you) down to Matlock for lunch and icecreams in the park. Then up towards Riber – but definitely not to the top of the hill! - before descending back into Lumsdale and a different route over to Tansley. Thanks Chris Paice, Gill and Chris Radcliffe for your company and Chris R. for the photo – not a selfie – his arms weren't long enough but he charmed a passing stranger to do the honours!

Hut Bookings.

Hut bookings are now made online at the Oread website www.oread.co.uk. The system allows you to see up to date bed availability details and make your own bookings.

Please remember to sign in as members first before making your bookings as you get access to the Oread beds and rates and you don't have to enter lots of details required for external bookings.

All queries and outstanding payments should be addressed to Michael Hayes, the Hut Bookings Secretary: 179 Starkholmes Rd. Starkholmes, Matlock DE4 5JA Mobile 07771 700913. Email: michaelhayes6688@gmail.com

Our preferred method of payment is via bank transfer to our Lloyds account – Sort Code 30-98-97 Account number 62584068. Please use the 'Reference' box to say what the payment is for. **In particular please say which hut, ie Hut fees HL, or Hut fees TyW.** Your name is not necessary in the reference, unless it is different from the bank account name.

Alternatively you can post a cheque, payable to Oread M.C. to the above address.

Hut Door and Barrier Codes

Note – these are available on the website in the Club Information section under the Members tab section **when you are logged in as a member.**

Information on Member Activities

Welcome to new provisional member Thomas Bates. We hope you will enjoy many happy days with the club.

Tim Whitaker



Tim Whitaker was killed falling off a route at Doyden Point in Cornwall on Sunday 7th June.

Tim was based in Derby in the 1980s and at that time climbed actively with the Oread. Recently he lived in Glasgow and spent the winters in Les Houches. He had been a keen member of the Climber's Club since 2016.

Our thoughts are with his wife Liz, daughter Sophie and son Blair, and his wide circle of friends.

Photograph courtesy of Nigel Berry.

Gil Male – celebration of life.

On the hottest day of the year friends from all his many social groups – climbers from the Oread, Fell and Rock, the Notts lot, the Burton crowd and fellow musicians gathered to remember Gil. The evening kicked off with an event that would have broken his heart – the beer, over excited by its journey to Holymoorside, burst forth when the barrel was tapped in a tidal wave, engulfing Chris Wilson - luckily the second barrel was better behaved! Stuart Firth captured the moment with spectators standing well clear as Brian West and Roger de Faye prepare to deal with it!



Andrea organised an evening that was both up-beat and moving. Gil would have enjoyed the splendid pies! She and Richard Freestone had created a memorable slideshow of photos of him up to all his many activities, mostly with a great happy grin on his face. Dave Wark spoke of his memories, Irwin Bottomley, fellow climber and folk singer sang a few songs that recalled events from their days together, accompanied by Mike Wren, and all evening, all round the room people shared their memories of happy times with Gil – an unforgettable character greatly missed.



Gil and Irwin entertaining Andrea and Snod at Tan yr Wyddfa, October 2025.

Andrea writes: It was a wonderful evening, thanks to all the people who came together to share with such warmth and fondness their stories and memories of times spent with Gil over

many years - from near and far, and from very different walks of life. It was the people who came that made the evening - I'm sure Gil would have been happy to hear the laughter, music and words spoken about him. Several people have been in touch to say how much they enjoyed the evening. It is comforting to know that Gil got the send-off he deserved - I reckon he'd be pretty chuffed.

Gil: some memories – Chris Radcliffe

Gil has been one of the outsize personalities in the Oread for many years. In the early 'eighties he encouraged me to join him, Gail and Jo, with John Robinson (FRCC) for my first climbing trip in the Costa Blanca. Armed with the slim first edition of Chris Cragg's guide we visited many of the classic crags. I was most impressed with the Puig where we climbed the classic ridge and also Diedre

Magicos. Equally impressive was the Penon D'Ifach (Calpe) where we climbed U.B.S.A. It began my love affair with Costa Blanca and I have been back climbing and cycling almost every year since.

Another early trip using the same Chris Cragg's guide was to Tenerife and also the famous El Chorro gorge in Andalucia. Closer to home we had many climbing days in the Peak, Snowdonia and the Lakes.

I particularly want to acknowledge my debt to Gil for his friendship and generosity at a difficult time in my life when I started a small fabrication business in St Helens. It was an insecure situation and I continued to live in Chesterfield so I faced either a huge commute across Derbyshire or living locally in temporary accommodation. It would have been a bit soul destroying, but Gil, who lived in the Wigan area, introduced me to his local climbing friends and I began to embrace the climbing scene in Lancashire. Wilton and Anglezarke are quite well known (although they could be horrendously midgy in summer) but many of the other crags were true exotica. A quarry near Runcorn, with an outlook over the refinery, had appalling rock but our group included some excellent climbers who coped with it and even here it was always a fun evening ending up at the pub.

Gil had a range of bicycles at home and some evenings we would go cycling. Gil was ever competitive but I generally held my own. A favourite destination was the Black Dog at Belmont where beer was £1 a pint – remarkable even at that time.

One madcap scheme was to have a long weekend in the Saussois, south of Paris. After work on Friday we loaded the camping gear into the car and, together with Gail and Jo, we set off to drive to France. Gil stubbornly refused to let Gail or me drive and just kept going all through the night with barely a pause. We arrived in the Saussois early Saturday morning and with characteristic enthusiasm tackled all the best routes. We climbed again on Sunday and then Gil proposed we return via Fontainebleau. I was never a keen boulderer but, carried away by Gil's enthusiasm, I really enjoyed climbing one of the sequence of colour coded problems. Again Gil drove all the way home, apparently not fazed by the epic drive, although I was exhausted by the full-on trip.

I am forever grateful to Gil for making my time in St Helens a more palatable experience. These were great days and I have fond memories of climbing with him. R.I.P. Gil.

Ruth Gordon, 4 The Terrace, Upper Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbys DE4 5LB

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