



Relative Mutters

No 6, June 2020

Dear Members and Subscribers,

As I write this, we should be gathering in Fort William for our Annual Dinner and AGM. Sadly, the Dinner has had to be postponed until next May and we will be publicising it further in the autumn. In addition to the usual news items, this Mutters includes a couple of articles. We do not usually hear much from you during the year so would welcome **short** articles for future editions of the Newsletter. Please send to editor@rhsoc.uk.

Virtual AGM Outcome

We are pleased to record that our virtual AGM went smoothly with great support from the Members. Around 60% of the Membership responded and the results were mailed to them at the end of May.

Unfortunately, since then, Mark Trengove, our Hof Clerk, has resigned from the Committee for personal reasons. Our thanks go to Mark, as well as Gill Stephens and Gordon Coventry, who have also stood down. We much appreciate their contributions in this, our first year as a Club affiliated to Mountaineering Scotland.

As a result, the Management Committee is now constituted as follows:

Chair:	Rick Salter
Deputy Chair:	Chris Watson
Treasurer:	Barry Smith
Secretary:	Denise McLellan
General Officers:	Jon Foote and Rob Woodall

In addition, around a dozen Members have offered to assist on a number of sub Committees during the coming year. The Committee will meet shortly and agree who is leading on various activities and we will let you know once decisions are made. Meanwhile, if you have any suggestions for the Committee, you can contact us on rhsoc@rhsoc.uk.

Annual Subscription / Standing Orders

The Treasurer's Report to the AGM indicated that the Society had broken even in the 2019/2020 Financial Year despite a significant investment in communications and the website. As a result, the Committee has decided to hold the RHSoc Annual Subscription at £10 for Individual Members and Subscribers and £15 for Joint Members. There will, of course, be an additional fee to be paid to Mountaineering Scotland (MS) by our 60+ Affiliated Members but this is still being negotiated by MS with their insurers.

In order to reduce the workload of the Membership team in January (they sent out over 1000 emails this year), they would appreciate it if Subscribers and those Members affiliated to MS or BMC, either individually or via another Club, could set up a Standing Order to the account below to be paid in January, 2021 – and advise the team on members@rhsoc.uk once you have done so. This does not apply to our RHSoc Affiliates who will be contacted in December 2020, once we have been advised of the MS fee for 2021.

Bank account no: 50603562 Sort code: 20 49 17 Account Name: Relative Hills Society

RHSoc Survey

We have been flagging up a survey for a while but decided we should wait until we had successfully dispatched the Journal and completed the Virtual AGM. It will now be sent to Members and Subscribers during w/c 8th June. The aim of this is to gain feedback on several points regarding the Society. The Survey itself has eight questions and should hopefully take less than five minutes to complete. The output will be used to shape future activities and events of the Society so your response would be greatly appreciated.

Hill Bagging 2019

The following link <https://www.rhsoc.uk/wp-content/uploads/HillBagging2019.pdf> takes you to the online version of Relative Matters 4. It contains additional photos plus Rob Woodall's Japanese trip report in full.

Awards Badges

We have designed new personalised badges for the 2019 Awards to Members and Subscribers who have reached landmarks in the Society's Halls of Fame. They are coloured in descending order of popularity of the various HoFs as indicated by the 231 people who signed the Consent Forms. The first tranche has been posted to those who did not wish to wait to have them presented in person at some future date.

For those of you who missed out on a badge in years gone by (when they were only presented to those who attended the Annual Dinner), we are now offering the opportunity to purchase one of these colourful badges for only £5 inc P&P. However, you do need to be in the current Relative Matters HoF Tables to qualify to make a purchase.

As mentioned in earlier Mutters, we are also now offering award badges for separate Completions of Welsh and English Marilyns and Humps. For all these, please contact Chris Watson at hof@rhsoc.uk.

The Committee is proposing to overhaul the awards system before next year – more details in future Mutters.



2019 Rainbow Awards

Access: Covid-19 and Hillwalking

The Covid-19 Lockdown left the DoBIH team with plenty of time to 'discover' a lot of new hills by poring over maps and Lidar data. These have been released over the last two months and placed into the Hill-Bagging website. One of our keen 'Tumpers' recently visited some of these prominences and, in the process, upset two of the landowners. Not only that, he showed them the Hill-Bagging website on his phone. This resulted in complaints to Hill-Bagging and these hills have now been removed. The Member has been advised about their future conduct.

The Society's position on Access is stated on our website at <https://www.rhsoc.uk/access-issues/>

As Covid-19 restrictions begin to ease we would like to remind you of the need to be more sensitive than usual to other's fears and feelings:

- Plan your route so that, where possible, you avoid going close to others' properties.
- If there is a debate about access, we suggest a graceful and prompt retreat without conversation
- When using public websites to record ascents, think carefully about what you record.
- Remember some summits may be inaccessible, even if on a list

LAST HILLS BEFORE LOCKDOWN

A Sheltered Life (Chris Watson)

As many of you will know, I have been having immunotherapy treatment for the past two years and am currently on immune suppressant tablets. My wife, who has a medical biology background, was already getting twitchy about the approaching pandemic when I set off on my first walking trip of the year to Ambleside at the end of February.

I had arranged for twin brother Tony to come up from Morecambe to pick me up and go for a gentle stroll somewhere over Dunmail Raise. I had driven back to my 'lodgings' in a blizzard the previous evening so there was a nice covering of snow even on the lower tops as we drove north. Our target was an easy Birkett, Threlkeld Knotts - my first hill of any sort since Slaidburn in November. Inevitably, when I got out of the car to put my boots on, I found that I had left my socks behind – there's always something, isn't there?

Not to worry - it was only a short walk. I was treated to the sight of a red squirrel on the way up and we found a comfortable sheep pen on the way down where we could have a sheltered lunch - pork pies of course. It was nice to be in the snow for the first and perhaps the last time in 2020.



Tony behind me on the summit of Threlkeld Knotts

A week later, after opening up and closing down our Welsh caravan in a period of five days, we locked ourselves in the house for the duration. I eventually got the 'twelve weeks' letter from two different hospitals at the end of March and I am still 'staying in'.

I must confess that it has not proved particularly onerous for myself. Having not been seriously bagging for a few years now due to my health and Lorna's, I have not suffered from the severe frustration many of you have felt. There were regular reports of where people should have been jetting off to whilst my plans only stretched to the caravan – which I still cannot visit three months on.



Tony (full of pie) with Blencathra behind

I have kept busy with RHSoc duties – which are extensive in my case – and the garden has never looked so good. Throw in a bit of house maintenance and a few of those hefty books that I bought in the 70s and never read and the time has flown by. I live in hope that some light Tumping may be possible in a couple of months but the Welsh Government have just recommended that 'sheltered patients' should generally stay indoors until mid-August so I will be taking their advice for the present. Well, I can see Snowdon from my attic!

Taking the Plunge (Barry Smith)

My final Marilyn before lockdown was on Wednesday 11 March. I was staying in self-catering accommodation in Crickhowell. A grey and gloomy day with light rain dawned. My plans for a cooked breakfast were scuppered when I couldn't find a café open. Coffee and some cereal in the apartment would have to do. I posted the key back and was away before nine, driving to Merthyr Tydfil. The target was Cefn yr Ystrad, over 2,000ft (617m) and my 100th Welsh Marilyn.



Cefn yr Ystrad trig point – the camera survived the soaking

Progress to the start was dogged by road works culminating in a road closed sign when driving north up a minor road to the Brecon Mountain railway. That made me nervous, but cars were ignoring the signs, so I compromised, carrying on but parking one kilometre before the start point. Walking along the road to the start, I was befriended by a Welshman who told me that there was a massive landslide caused by all the rain and the usual route up the hill was blocked. He said the best route was up a path from near where my car was parked, followed by a hillside traverse.

The route was a disaster; bracken, brambles, gorse, mud, and the Brecon Mountain Railway line meant nearly an hour lost before I was on the normal route to the mountain. I found a path, so didn't bother to consult the compass. The mist came down and it was cold and wet, then the path vanished. A fast running stream appeared. I was losing patience and tried to cross quickly. My foot slipped on a wet rock and, in slow motion, I fell backwards into the fast running stream. Drenched and cold, I carried on for another half hour. Then the mist cleared, and I realised I was heading in the wrong direction.

After this, things improved – they could hardly do otherwise - and I made swift progress to the trig point. The climb had taken three hours from the car whereas Hill-Bagging said just over an hour, a pitiful effort! I descended in improving weather to find the road fully open, changed and headed for the nearest coffee shop. And, yes, I know the trig point is not the summit – I did visit the ancient cairns.
