



Peak Area Newsletter

Issue 19

November 2012

The next Peak Area meeting, THE AGM, is on Wednesday, 21 November, starting at 19:30, at The Maynard, Main Road, Derbyshire, Grindleford, S32 2HE. Starts promptly so get there earlier to get your drinks in!


The Sec speaks

By Lynn Robinson



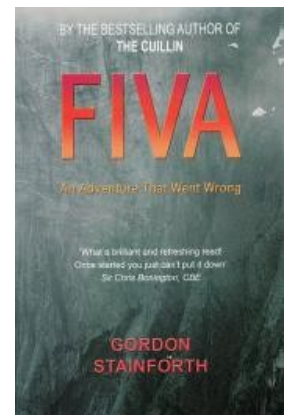
Looking forward to what should be a great meeting on the 21st November – our AGM, Ordinary Meeting and annual quiz. All paperwork for the meeting can be found here: <http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=2764> If you can only make one meeting in the year – then make it this one. The quiz is really great fun and we have lots of fantastic prizes.

The main agenda item of the Ordinary meeting will be the Peak Area Guidelines to Placing Bolts. Also, as Mike Hunt is resigning from being the Chair of the Don Whillans Memorial Hut, we will be looking to recruit a replacement. I'm sure you'll all want to join me in thanking Mike for all his hard work and commitment over the years, in maintaining the Hut as a valuable asset for all climbers.

 **green peak gear** Green Peak Gear will also be at the meeting, selling their products at very reasonable costs – so if you're stuck on

Christmas presents, bring some extra pennies along. Steve and I bought a rug, made from a climbing rope, from them, and it's just great. Remember, all products are made from recycled climbing gear and all profits go to the BMC Access and Conservation Trust. For more information go here: www.greenpeakgear.org

One of the Peak Area regulars has only gone and won the Best Book – Mountain and Wilderness Literature at the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival! Many, many congratulations to Gordon Stainforth. His book, Fiva, is spectacular and a MUST BUY and read for Christmas [available from the [BMC Shop](#) for only £8.95] – if you can wait that long. Gordon has donated a copy of it as a quiz prize, so if you're very, very lucky...



Also, many congratulations to our very own Niall Grimes for making the final in the guidebooks category with [Boulder Britain](#) – again, pretty amazing and a book that should be in every climber's

If you're reading this from a printout, the hyperlinks won't show up (in some cases we do print them). To obtain an electronic version in which the hyperlinks will work, go to the BMC website (www.thebmc.co.uk). Members can have it emailed to them by contacting the BMC office: 0161 445 6111, office@thebmc.co.uk

Deadline for the next edition is 2 weeks before the BMC Peak Area meeting



car...you never know when you may have a few hours to spare.

For those of you that don't know, Martin Koscis has left the BMC full-time, to take up a career with the North West Ambulance Service. Over the years Martin has supported the Peak Area meetings and I want to wish him all the very best for the future and to thank him for all the work he has put in... but I have a feeling we'll still be seeing him and Frank around!

Finally we recently enjoyed a delightful autumn Sunday at Froggatt. There was plenty to be impressed with including ascents in good style of Big Crack, Armageddon, Beech Nut and Bacteria Cafeteria – all really nice routes that somehow seem to normally escape the Froggatt crowds. There was a great little bouldering crew on The Pinnacle Boulders and a typical exuberant university group down below with a woman showing great determination on Trapeze Direct. Unfortunately the fun was spoilt by the all too common idiots top-roping Downhill Racer in poor style... when will people learn to leave this alone until they're ready, to at least avoid polishing it more.

Access Notes

By Henry Folkard

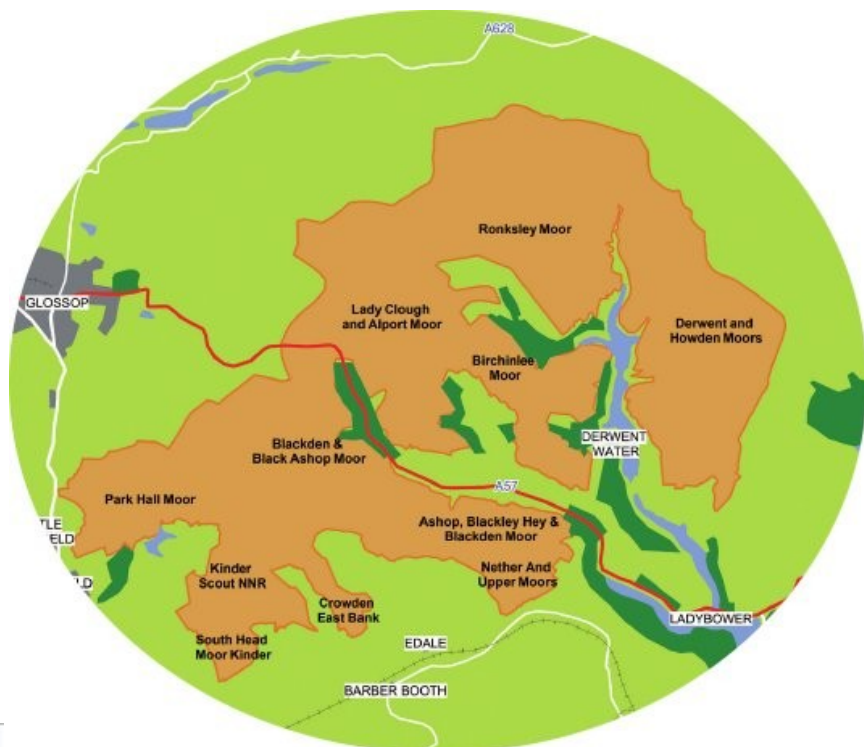


Dateline: 5 November 2012

If any Access Reps were hoping for a load of consultations for Christmas, then Christmas has come early with a vengeance.

Particularly for Members who live in and around Sheffield there are two really critical consultations which everyone should contribute to. They both involve land which is integral to all we enjoy, whether walkers or climbers or both. They are equally of interest for participants in other forms of

adventure activity. Both are readily available online. For the consultation on the **National Trust's High Peak Moors: Vision and Plan 2013 – 2038** go to www.high-peak-moors.co.uk. The deadline for response is 30 November. For the **Sheffield Moors Masterplan 2013 – 2028 Consultation Draft** go to <http://sheffieldmoors.co.uk/consultation> The deadline there is 23 November.



The High Peak Moors Vision & Plan Project Area (National Trust)

For both these consultations it is important to say you agree the proposals if you do. Positive reaction can not be taken for granted by those who are collating responses if what is good for climbing and walking in the consultations gets no support from you. We can not take the open access we enjoy for granted. We have to e-mail or write in individually, and not assume it is all right to do nothing and let someone else do it for us.

The BMC will be making formal responses for both, and we can happily tell you what they say (or how the latest draft stands) at the meeting, but what is needed is your very own personal views, because they matter.



Deadlines for Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) consultations on proposals for Traffic Regulation Orders on Long Causeway, the Roych, Chertpit Lane and the Brushfield to Upperdale route will have passed by the time you read this. The BMC does not normally comment on TRO proposals, but we have made an exception for Long Causeway, and again there will be a copy of that submission at the meeting.

Our current understanding is that the revetment on Long Causeway is in peril of collapse. Knowing how to repair and restore it is a formidable challenge for professional highway engineers. It may even be that complete repair is not possible. There is therefore every prospect that the current restriction on heavy vehicles, defined as those of 1.5 m in width or greater, will have to remain in force for quite some time. For the detail on this, or indeed on any of the other routes mentioned, please ask at the meeting.

All the current indications are that the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) are minded to retain ownership and management of North Lees but to 'sweat the asset' so that, rather than invest in the land, they can make as much money out of it as possible. They were more or less given North Lees so the public could enjoy it, and for the common good. We think any income derived will not be used to benefit the Estate so much as to support the institution of the Authority itself. How they can generate sufficient income to do both that and create a surplus for new investment can only be problematic. It is always difficult to know how accurate rumours are, but with that caveat the rumours we pick up are that PDNPA's vision for the future of North Lees is automatic number plate recognition and enforcement of parking charges with appropriate proliferation of signs. That is only the start.

The Stanage Forum, through its Steering Group, has, meantime, proposed a constitution for itself and nominated Councillor Jacque Bevan as Chairman, with authority to call meetings of both the Steering Group and the full Forum as appropriate. At the last meeting of the Steering Group, which was chaired by PDNPA's CEO Jim Dixon, there was some commitment to continued joint working with the Forum. The

nature of the relationship between the two bodies has however changed. Whereas it was through the Forum that PDNPA evolved its policies and Management Plan for North Lees it is now the case that they will tell the Forum what they propose and call this consultation.

On a more positive note, after extensive consultation with stakeholders, and in tandem with the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area (NIA) Partnership, work is now afoot through the Eastern Moors Partnership on improving access facilities in that area. This mostly, but not exclusively, relates to work on bridleways.

A very welcome development for the NIA is that the National Trust's Marsden Estate has now become a partner.

One of the really major developments affecting the landscape of the Dark Peak in recent years is the Alport Project. The vision is to restore the Valley to the sort of open semi naturally wooded landscape it was before the conifers were planted. This ambitious initiative involving the National Trust, the Forestry Commission (FC), Severn Trent Water, PDNPA, Natural England, local residents and farmers and the Kinder and High Peak Advisory Committee (including the BMC rep) has made fair progress in removing the conifer plantations at Castle Wood and on the east side of the valley. Work on the steeper west side has always been more problematic because of the maturity of the timber and the steepness of the terrain. The big difficulties are in knowing how best to harvest the timber, and then what to do with it, without disturbing the fragile habitat of the valley, and how to beat the Sitka Spruce regeneration which is formidable. It is very taxing to know what to propose for the best. At the moment FC are going to invite a specialist timber extraction company to propose solutions within a defined set of principles.

In the last newsletter we drew attention to common access difficulties in three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) where climbing has long been established. We are still working on that one. Rob Dyer has assiduously been following up people who have promised to come back to him, and continues to do so. In respect of one of the sites, Water-cum-Jolly, there has been some clarification, but as yet no



resolution. Again, if you want more detail on this ask at the meeting or over the butties.

Likewise we are trying to get Willersley access sorted, and have re-established a helpful dialogue with the owners of Scarthin Rocks – that’s the official name of the crag – namely the Arkwright Society, with support from Derbyshire County Council. There may be more to report at the meeting.

The decision on the Public Inquiry into Staden / Cowdale is due out in mid-November, so again it may be possible to give an update on that, though whatever the outcome it will not provide any immediate resolution of the current access difficulties.

Horseshoe and Aldery are both looking good thanks to their seasonal trim. A bigger area has been mown at Aldery than was possible last year and the spraying of the huge bramble bed under the crag in the springtime seems to have been dramatically successful. At Horseshoe we employed a different grass cutting technique which has facilitated raking of the thatch and the tussock removal. It really is looking pretty good just now. A terrific group of Conservation Volunteers from Sheffield University did us proud in getting the work done, ably and masterfully assisted by Duncan. So thanks very much indeed, one and all.

We are keeping a close eye on the virus affecting ash trees. If it gets into Horseshoe, or precautionary felling becomes a requirement, there will be very serious implications for us – not to mention the wider devastation that will change radically the characteristic landscape of the limestone dales and the specialist flora dependent upon ash woodland.

The BMC held a conference on Occupiers’ Liability at Losehill Hall on 1 November. It was very well

attended and the speakers all made excellent presentations. It was particularly useful for access reps because it did much to explain how the Courts and Insurers understood the law and approached both claims and cover. Their input was contextualised by leading academics and a member of the House of Lords who spoke on the latest thinking around a difficult subject, perception versus reality and the approach of the current government. We also heard the perspective of landowners, as expressed by the Country Land and Business Association.

An initial meeting of a Quarries Working Group took place, on the same day, to try and drive forward the vexed question of gaining access to quarries whose working life has, or will soon, come to an end. In places like Leicestershire and the Peak there is theoretically a huge potential in these sites for a range of recreational, conservation and community use. The challenge is finding a way of making the dream of wider access a reality.

There have been two tentative expressions of interest in taking on Reuben’s mantle in the southern Peak, possibly extending to Wye Valley limestone, but thus far neither has crystallised – so both will be followed up!

Last but by no means least, congratulations go to Adam and his wife on the birth of their son.

The BMC's Regional Access Database (RAD) has up to date information on all crags in England and Wales. Otherwise access rep contact details are in the BMC Members Handbook and on the [BMC web site](#). Access reps attend most Area Meetings if there are any points you want to raise with them, or you can phone Henry Folkard on 01298 871 849 or the BMC office on 0161 445 6111 (office@thebmc.co.uk).

Please send articles, letters, photos, notices and so forth, to peakarea@gmail.com All topics considered, the only requirement is that it is relevant to the mountaineers, walkers and climbers in the Peak Area. Summit magazine is the place for the national stuff. Any length up to 600 words; if you want to go longer, best to call us first. **We particularly welcome material from clubs.** Deadline for material is two weeks before the meeting.

A little bit of space –

MAYBE A CLUB MIGHT LIKE TO PUT PEN TO PAPER?



Climbing in the Olympics?

By Dave Parry



I started writing this post the day after the closing ceremony of the London 2012 summer Olympics. Team GB surpassed all expectations, delivered some incredible performances and headed home from the East End with more medals than you can shake a jellied eel at. Fantastic. And as it often does when the Olympics are on, the question of climbing making an appearance at a future Olympic games rears its head. To cut a long story short, climbing in one form or another may feature as a full competitive Olympic event in the 2020 games.

I often hear climbers complaining that there's not enough funding in the sport, that its status and exposure needs to increase, and what better way to increase its status than Olympic billing? With increased interest and funding climbing could raise its game and look after our top talent and approach training in a professional way like the athletics and track cycling do.

So what's not to like? When the prospect of climbing in the Olympics is mentioned it seems that most climbers greet this prospect with unabashed glee, a bit like learning your favourite back-room-of-a-pub folk band is going to headline at Glastonbury. But personally I'm a little uneasy about this whole idea. I don't see climbing in the Olympics as the win-win scenario it's made out to be.

At present climbing seems to be increasing in uptake and popularity. There are now more indoor walls than ever. Sheffield currently has 5 indoor walls, soon to be 6, and it's clear that existing indoor walls are not just sub-dividing up the existing pool of Sheffield's potential climbing customers, they're doing what any good business does and actually stimulating demand and growth by getting new people into the sport, expanding the market. The Climbing Works has achieved this especially well.

Boulders for kids, courses for beginners, nice sofas and coffee; its pretty civilised, a far cry from a dusty breeze-block wall with a few bricks sticking out.

Couple the existing rise in indoor walls and participants with the spectacle of climbing as an Olympic sport and you have a potential boom in numbers on your hands, even more than we already have. Some people stand to make a lot of money out of climbing as a result - wall owners, wall builders, retailers, and manufacturers of shoes, ropes, hardware etc etc. Not to mention anyone who can sell you a book about climbing or sell their expertise as a coach.

Now the problem with increased numbers is that these bodies need somewhere to climb, and a certain percentage of them will not be content just to stay down the wall supping coffee with their shirts off. Overspill to the crags is absolutely inevitable, no matter what anyone tells you. Its not like, say, track cycling, where increased numbers means you can just build another velodrome and the overspill goes onto the existing road network which is constantly maintained and renewed.

We live on a relatively densely populated island and one third of the population can reach the Peak District inside an hour. In Sheffield we are graced with a lot of fantastic crags a short drive away, but these crags cannot absorb increased numbers indefinitely. Some crags already have access issues, and some have erosion and wear issues. We can't build more crags, and we can't rebuild crags once they're ruined - what we've got is it, so we have to look after them.

If numbers are set on increasing, then we need to get savvy when it comes to making sure climbers on the crags are well educated with regard to what constitutes responsible conduct and use of the crags. I would like to see the parties that benefit financially from more bodies climbing pulling their weight a little bit more on this - and by that I mean shops, magazines, manufacturers, and not least indoor walls.



One benefit I can see to increased numbers is that climbing would have a larger and stronger lobby when it comes to issues of access, management of crags, selling off the national parks, that type of thing. However it remains to be seen if this would outweigh the disadvantages. Climbing already has enough numbers to make itself felt but precious few climbers actually ever take any interest in issues of access. It's all too easy to take it for granted that you can flick through your guidebook, pick a crag and turn up and climb. But access should never be taken for granted especially in this day and age. But would a new generation of predominantly indoor-only climbers take any interest in the pressing issues of the day on the outdoor crags?

Whatever happens with the Olympics the next decade or so in climbing stands to face some stern challenges around climber numbers, access issues and crag use. On the other hand if it keeps raining as much as it has this year we might not have any problem at all! Right that's enough, I'm off down the Works [other climbing walls are available... Editor].

[I promised Dave I'd plug his website www.daveparryphotography.co.uk - apart from the cover shot, the [Peak Bouldering Guide](#) contains some of his other work. Editor]

A Personal View

by Terrybnd
terrybnd.blogspot.co.uk/



The British Countryside never ceases to amaze me. Be it the ever-changing scenes thanks to our temperamental weather, the seasons or its diversity. It's been a busy old year for me which has included travelling around the French Alps, Snowdonia, the Lakes and of course the wonderful Peak District.

I'm really rather fortunate in that my photo and video work takes me to such mesmerising places and to this day I still pinch myself while relaxing at camp on a desolate summit admiring a fine sunset.

And even though I enjoyed my visits to the Alps one thing struck me more than anything. We may not have the highest mountains here, or true wilderness - but we do have exceptionally beautiful landscapes that are so easily accessible for the majority of the UK's population. We have spaces up on the moors where we can feel like we're out in the middle of nowhere. Seasons that can transform some of our hills into Alpine playgrounds and much more.

In these hard times, it can be easy to take what we have here in the UK for granted. And it was while on a trip to Scotland that really brought this home to me as a citizen of Blighty. I had spent the night up on Aonach Beag, the UK's eighth highest summit. The views at dawn were truly incredible. Peak after jagged peak lay out below to all points of the compass, glistening with frost and gently kissed pink by our rising local star. The sound of stags roaring bounced around the valleys below while I took in a view of Rannoch Moor stretching out as far as the eye could see. I'm not afraid to admit it was all really rather humbling. And yet we can all experience that here on these small islands. Not some far flung corner of the globe.

Closer to home, I spent several nights working on a video featuring the little-visited Hordron Edge stone circle which sits alone below the northern end of Stanage Edge. For six days and five nights I watched and waited to capture this delightful ancient site in it's best light, including under clear starry skies. A humble place of worship that now lies a ruin amongst bracken and bog with only sheep for company. I wonder if in thousands of years from now, people will look upon our churches and cathedrals the same way. A sublime landscape with gritstone tors and out amongst it the signs of a bygone age. A world in which we truly lived amongst and with nature within our means. Something many of us crave the modern world to do now, up to a point.



I suppose my wee ramble here, is a bit of a cliché. But it's so true. Be it the Peak District or anywhere else in Britain, we really do have world-class scenery we can all enjoy and learn from. And for me there's no better time to take it all in than this coming winter. Gin clear air, lungs bursting into flames from the cold winds, hills and moors more akin to the end of an ice age - enjoy it while it lasts. Thankfully we can take pleasure in this only for spring to claim its place some weeks later. Favourite places reveal differing guises and that to me and along with all of the above is why I feel so passionately about the Great British Outdoors. Enjoy winter!

[Terry and Chris Townsend are amongst the first in the UK to use 'crowd-funding' via a website called Kickstarter; where people pledge money to creative projects they want to support, in exchange for gifts. They're already over half-way to their target, have a look: [The Cairngorms in Winter](#) Editor]



Semi-shameless plug for Heason Events, who've donated several of the prizes for the AGM; Some cracking new stuff, as well as old favourites. And let's hope Cliffhanger is back with a bang in 2013.

25 Nov: European Outdoor Film Première in Manchester, 'Europe's biggest film event'.

www.heason.net/events/2012/11/25/European_Outdoor_Film_Tour_Premieres_in_Manchester/

29 Nov: Best Of ShAFF screening at The Showroom Cinema, Sheffield.

14 Dec: Head torch run and a screening of 2012 ShAFF Grand Prize Winner Unbreakable: Western States 100.

15 Jan: Best Of ShAFF at The Showroom Cinema (different programme to 29 Nov).

More details here: www.heason.net/events/

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WEST NAB – AN APPEAL

There's every chance that you've never heard of me. This is no bad thing.

I live in Meltham, below West Nab. This is a good thing. A very good thing.

As a result of this, I was asked to write the West Nab section for 'Over The Moors'. After a little persuasion and with much help from the diagrams in the previous guide, I agreed. This may yet turn out to not be a good thing at all.

Bouldering last Saturday morning, I managed a problem that I've been falling off for four years. Elated by the day, the place and the success, I was full of it. With nobody to share it with I sent a text to a climbing friend – I had to tell somebody. You may know how it is....

Two hours later whilst still bouncing along on cloud nine, reality struck. This was one of those problems at West Nab that has recently been 'cleaned'. Some have been cleaned into submission: holds manufactured; and some cleaned to death: pebbles lost.

I wouldn't go so far as to say I was distraught; but pissed-off certainly. Not for the grade or any loss of achievement. But as a window into the future, if this is the effect of only a few months' extra popularity, what in a year? Or two?

This rock of ours, this gritstone: it's precious. You all know that. But have you stopped to think how precious? Try it now.

More than gold, isn't it?

It's freedom, movement and outdoors. It's an escape and a blessing. It's who we are. Have you ever been without it due to injury?

Spread the word: let's be careful out there.

Thanks.

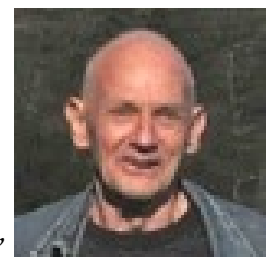
Mark Warwicker

1964

by Dave Bishop

[The punctuation, or lack of it, is deliberate to help promote tension, urgency and drama.' Dave's been reading too much Cormac McCarthy. Editor]

Get up Dave we're off climbing Harry's taking you.





What the hell you on about Stu going climbing what's that?

Just shift your arse he wants to get going he'll explain things later.

This was supposed to be a get away from it all weekend walking forget the no job or money for a couple of days that's what my mate Stuart promised. Things were not looking good. If last night's journey over was anything to go by then Harry was a miserable sod. The warning bells should have rung.

Later proves to be somewhere out of breath on an impossibly steep hillside in bendy borrowed boots under a huge right-angled corner somewhere in Wales.

Right David we're going to do Spiral Stairs.

Christ! Harry's speaking to me for the first time what's he mean do Spiral Stairs?

He's wrapping 20ft of washing line around my waist and tying what looks like an old ship's rope to it.

Put this round your back and pay it out as I climb.

In my ignorance I did as I was told and Harry set off leftwards around a corner and disappeared from sight. I stared at the road miles below and wished I was anywhere but here. The rope stopped going out. What happens now do I have to do anything? That decision is forcefully taken out of my hands when the rope is pulled in viciously then comes tight and starts to pull me off the hillside. I resist. This feels dangerous. The rope's being tugged harder now perhaps he wants me to follow him. So I step onto the wall and the rope is taken in. Phew! That feels better.

The magic of that first moment leaving the ground has never left me. I'm climbing. I'm a climber. Now I can see Harry perched in the middle of a huge expanse of rock. Fantastic! I reach him and he does something mysterious with the rope and sets off upwards. I'm excited and a bit frightened all at the same time. The rope goes tight so I let it go as before and it's taken in and I feel the tugs again. I'm

beginning to get the hang of this climbing. But now what do I do? I seem to have been tied to a Holly tree so I undo the knots.

Mistake!

The rope is taken in fast and I just manage to grab the end of it as it snakes up past my face. I've untied myself for chrissake and am hanging onto the rope-end with one hand and gripping the Holly tree with all my might with the other.

Harry! I yell in desperation. I seem to have untied myself whadda I do?

No answer. I try again. And again! Still no answer. The tugs on the rope became fiercer and my heart's pounding hard and my legs are jittering. This is getting serious I have no idea what to do except hang on to rope and tree.

Are you alright? Do you need any help? A female voice from below somewhere out of sight.

No I'm not alright and Yes I need help please. I've untied from the rope and can't tie back on.

OK be with you.

In moments she's alongside me and takes control ties me on smiles and says don't worry you'll be alright now. I believe her I know no better. The sense of relief is life-enhancing. I thank her and move on up.

I never saw my rescuer again and not even sure what she looked like but thanks. Was it Gwen Moffat? Could have been there weren't that many female climbers back then.

My mate's promise proved more than right. The weekend was life-changing. A first climb and the discovery of an enduring passion.