

## # Surviving Patagonia 2010

## We have to keep going, we are beyond the point of no return and safety lies ahead of us not behind us

### 2010-12-08

Two taxis arrive to take us to the trailhead at Rio Electrico. From the trailhead we walk a few hours through

The next day we move on to camp at La Playita (the beach). Here we stay put tent bound for 4 days due to

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w\\_1000/kr/2010/12/team.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w_1000/kr/2010/12/team.jpg) Image: The team - Neil

Finally day 5 that weather window arrives. We have a late set off because it was still raining at 9am but the

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w\\_1000/kr/2010/12/glacier.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w_1000/kr/2010/12/glacier.jpg) Image: Me on the Ma  
2010-12-08-surviving -patagonia-gmiiier. This is a dangerous section because the seracs are almost conti

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w\\_1000/kr/2010/12/seracs.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w_1000/kr/2010/12/seracs.jpg) Image: Me getting bla

We have to keep going, we are beyond the point of no return and safety lies ahead of us not behind us. Ne

With just a little day light left we start to dig down into the snow and build snow walls to protect our tents fro

I wake and find that we had been virtually buried, thankfully our tents have 2 entrances and I manage to cr

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w\\_1000/kr/2010/12/tents.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w_1000/kr/2010/12/tents.jpg) Image: Our tents on the

When daylight arrives again and we take stock of our situation, which is no better than yesterday, we make

We are greeted by a group who apparently had been 2hours behind us yesterday, spent an awful night be

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w\\_1000/kr/2010/12/wind.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w_1000/kr/2010/12/wind.jpg) Image: Me trying to stop

The next day, guess what, the weather is good, the other group head up to try their luck again and we pac

=> <https://spanishhighs.smugmug.com/Mountains/Patagonia/Patagonia-Icecap-2010/> More photos from th

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w\\_1000/kr/2010/12/safe.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/w_1000/kr/2010/12/safe.jpg) Image: Having a rest be

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# Night on a bare mountain in the Sierra Nevada

## sometimes it takes a great effort to leave the comfort of one's home and head for the cold, icy peaks. So

### 2011-01-13

Sometimes it takes a great effort to leave the comfort of one's home and head for the cold, icy peaks. Some

High in the Rio Chico valley above Orgiva in the Alpujarras lies the ruins of the Refugio Cebollar. Access i

The hut walls and roof are quite solid and secure. Much better than similar huts at the Caballo and Eloriet

We made our approach from the south taking to the open forest south of La Pluca forestal. In a little over a

=> <https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/epn/refugio-cebollar-79.jpg> Image: Sunset over the Mec

It is set in a beautiful location. It's also incredibly, quiet as most trekkers and mountaineers head for the mo

A couple of eagles soared above us. Bonellis or Golden, not sure which. Wish I knew my raptors better!

We spent another hour soaking up the winter sunshine in the lee of the wind, watching the clouds form be

We headed indoors and wedged the metal door tightly shut with a large plank. Overnight the wind increas

=> <https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/epn/refugio-cebollar-92.jpg> Image: Nearing the summit

On leaving the hut next morning we contoured northward of the s to the col between Las Alegas and Tajos

We took shelter behind the summit pinnacle trying to keep out of the biting wind. Then it was out into the g

At the final peak of the day we dropped down to the forest edge above Puente Palo and made the rendezv

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# Un mulo, dos arrieros, dos perros y tres montañeros

## With the humble effort of a mule, 2 drovers and 4 mountaineers. If all who use the refuge care and resp

### 2011-08-21

At 6am on August 20th 2011, together with Pepe Badaje, Jesús Labajo Yuste of Campo Base and mulete

Then it was down to work. Jesus and myself cleaned litter and stones from the building whilst Pepe started

Next day was another incredible 7 hour round trip commute to work! Toni, Jonni and Pepito had slept at th

The interior painting went well and the window was completed, but there were some problems with the do

We had a day of rest before we ventured uphill again on the Thursday. The most important task was to en

The plaque we left hanging up says it all.....

\*\*\*"With the humble effort of a mule, 2 drovers and 4 mountaineers. If all who use the refuge care and resp

Says it all really!

## # Lounging at the Altar of the Patagonian Mountain Gods

## It's a tough trek to the Cirque de los Altares in Patagonia. The outcome is never certain. Raging rivers,

### 2013-05-17

It's a tough trek to the Cirque de los Altares in Patagonia. The outcome is never certain. Raging rivers, con

The Cirque is to be found on the western side of the Cerro Torre massif, at the eastern edge of the great snow

A huge line of seemingly impenetrable and jagged mountains separates civilisation from the cirque. For th

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/f\\_auto,q\\_auto,w\\_960/dpr\\_auto/epn/patagoniagods2](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/f_auto,q_auto,w_960/dpr_auto/epn/patagoniagods2)

The first time I ventured there was in 2006. Our GPS announced our arrival as we arrived at the cirque in t

This time we camped correctly at the entrance to the cirque. As the sun set over the great icecap we watch

The first few days of an expedition always seem strange. You mess about erecting tents, the cooking is aw

In fact, life becomes very simple. You sleep, eat, drink, move, travel, find shelter, eat, drink and sleep. In be

And of course you do enjoy the return to "civilisation". The Quilmes beer, the malbec wine, the bed, a prop

By the light of my head-torch I read about Walter Bonatti and Carlo Mauri's exploits here in 1958 on Cerro

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# Queen Boudica (Boadicea) of the Iceni was my 66th Grandmother!

## Yes, it's true! I came from Granny Boadicea. My 66th Grandmother in fact. Here is the research done by

### 2021-02-03

Let me say that I owe all this research to my Dad. During the latter days of his life he got involved in his an

Below you will see my family tree heading back to Granny. Apart from Boudica (Boudicca) ICENI Queen o

Baeldaeg "The Gentle" of SAXONY Archdruid (243 - 300)

Alfred (Ælfrēd) "The Great" WESSEX King of England (871-899) (849 - 901)

Brando Brond Wegbrand "The Blessed Archdruid" Deira of SAXONY

and unfortunately ... Baldrick ie Balderich (Baldric) Teutonicus de COURCY (970 - 1018)

# My Relations and their Dynasties and Monarchs

## ROMAN BRITAIN

### Relations

Boudica (Boudicca) ICENI Queen of the Iceni (8AD - 62AD)

is my 66th great grandmother

Julia Victoria verch Prausutagus ICENI (85 - 91)

daughter of Boudica (Boudicca) ICENI Queen of the Iceni

Coel "Old King Coal" BRITAIN (108 - 158)

son of Julia Victoria verch Prausutagus ICENI

Lucius MAWR King (137 - 201)

son of Coel "Old King Coal" BRITAIN

Cadwalladr BRITAIN King of Britain (193 - 219)

son of Lucius MAWR King

Frigg Frear verch Cadwaladr ASALAND (219 - 310)

daughter of Cadwalladr BRITAIN King of Britain

Baeldaeg "The Gentle" of SAXONY Archdruid (243 - 300)

son of Frigg Frear verch Cadwaladr ASALAND

Brando Brond Wegbrand "The Blessed Archdruid" Deira of SAXONY

King of Saxony and Scandinavia (278 - 360)

son of Baeldaeg "The Gentle" of SAXONY Archdruid

Freothogar of SAXONY (299 - 390)

son of Brando Brond Wegbrand"The Blessed Archdruid" Deira of SAXONY

King of Saxony and Scandinavia

## ANGO-SAXON BRITAIN

### Monarchs

Offa (757-796)

Ecgberht (802-839)

Æthelwulf (839-856)

Æthelbald (856-860)

Æthelberht (860-866)

Æthelred I (866-871)

Ælfrēd (871-899)

Edward "The Elder" (899-924)

Æthelstan (924-939)

Edmund (939-946)

Edred (946-955)

Edwy (955-959)

Edgar (959-975)

Edward II "The Martyr" (975-979)

Ethelred II (979-1016)

Canute (1016-1035)

Harold Harefoot (1035-1040)

Hardicanute (1035-1042)

Edward III "The Confessor" (1042-1066)

### Relations

Freawine of SAXONY (327 - 418)

son of Freothogar of SAXONY

Wig Freawinesson of SAXONY of Saxony (355 - 446)

son of Freawine of SAXONY

Gewis de SAXONY (383 - 474)

son of Wig Freawinesson of SAXONY of Saxony

Esla de SAXONY (411 - 490)

son of Gewis de SAXONY

Ælle (Elesa) Elisens of SAXONY (439 - 514)

son of Esla de SAXONY

Cerdic WESSEX King of Wessex (519-534) (470 - 534)

son of Ælle (Elesa) Elisens of SAXONY

Cynric WESSEX King of Wessex (534-560) (495 - 560)

son of Cerdic WESSEX King of Wessex (519-534)

Ceawlin WESSEX King of Wessex (560-591) (535 - 591)  
son of Cynric WESSEX King of Wessex (534-560)

Cuthwine WESSEX (564 - 592)  
son of Ceawlin WESSEX King of Wessex (560-591)

Cutha Cathwulf WESSEX (593 - 679)  
son of Cuthwine WESSEX

Ceolwald WESSEX Prince of Wessex (622 - 688)  
son of Cutha Cathwulf WESSEX

Coenred WESSEX Prince of Wessex (640 - 694)  
son of Ceolwald WESSEX Prince of Wessex

Ingild WESSEX Prince of Wessex (672 - 718)  
son of Coenred WESSEX Prince of Wessex

Eoppa of WESSEX (706 - 737)  
son of Ingild WESSEX Prince of Wessex

Eafa WEST SAXONS (718 - 762)  
son of Eoppa of WESSEX

Ealhmund of KENT King of Kent (750 - 784)  
son of Eafa WEST SAXONS

Ecgbert WESSEX King of Wessex (802-839) King of Mercia (829-830) (775 - 839)  
son of Ealhmund of KENT King of Kent

Æthelwulf WESSEX King of Wessex (839-856) (795 - 857)  
son of Ecgbert WESSEX King of Wessex (802-839) King of Mercia (829-830)

Alfred (Ælfrēd) 'The Great' WESSEX King of England (871-899) (849 - 901)  
son of Æthelwulf WESSEX King of Wessex (839-856)  
is my39th great grandfather

Edward "The Elder" of WESSEX King of England (899-924) (870 - 924)  
son of Alfred (Ælfrēd) 'The Great' WESSEX King of England (871-899)

Edgiva (Eadgifu) of WESSEX Princess of England (902 - 955)  
daughter of Edward "The Elder" of WESSEX King of England (899-924)

Charles de COURCY Carolingian (925 - 993)  
son of Edgiva (Eadgifu) of WESSEX Princess of England

Wigelius (Charles Of Lorraine) (Teutonicus) de COURCY Duke Wigerius (952 - 1000)  
son of Charles de COURCY Carolingian

Balderich (Baldric) Teutonicus de COURCY (970 - 1018)  
son of Wigelius (Charles Of Lorraine) (Teutonicus) de COURCY Duke Wigerius

Richard (Ricardus Teutonicus de Nova Villa) de NEUVILLE (NEVILLE) (1020 - 1066)  
son of Balderich (Baldric) Teutonicus de COURCY

Gilbert 'Admiral' le Teuton de NEVILLE Duc de Neuville (1035 - 1118)  
son of Richard (Ricardus Teutonicus de Nova Villa) de NEUVILLE (NEVILLE)

Hervé de SUTTON 1st Lord de Sutton (1050 - 1091)  
son of Gilbert 'Admiral' le Teuton de NEVILLE Duc de Neuville

## ## NORMAN BRITAIN

### ### Monarchs

William I "The Conqueror" (1066-1087)

William II "Rufus" (1087-1100)

Henry I "Beauclerc" (1100-1135)

Stephen & Matilda (1135-1154)

### ### Relations

Hervé de SUTTON 2nd Lord of Sutton (1090 - 1154)

son of Hervé de SUTTON 1st Lord de Sutton

Syward de SUTTON (1100 - 1137)  
son of Hervé de SUTTON 2nd Lord of Sutton

Sayer I de SUTTON (1129 - 1155)  
son of Syward de SUTTON

## ## ANGEVINS

### ### Monarchs

Henry II "Curtmantle" (1154-1189)

Richard "Coeur de Lion" (1189-1199)

John "Lackland" (1199-1216)

### ### Relations

William de SUTTON (1149 - 1264)

son of Sayer I de SUTTON

Amandus de SUTTON Earl of Arundel (1185 - 1208)  
son of William de SUTTON

Saire (Sir) de SUTTON (1215 - 1306)

son of Amandus de SUTTON Earl of Arundel

## ## PLANTAGENETS

### ### Monarchs

Henry III (1216-1272)

Edward I "Longshanks" (1272-1307)

Edward II (1307-1327)

Edward III (1327-1377)

Richard II (1377-1399)

### ### Relations

Sayer (Sir) de SUTTON (1239 - 1290)

son of Saire (Sir) de SUTTON

John (Sir) de SUTTON 1st Baron Holderness (1270 - 1338)

son of Sayer (Sir) de SUTTON

Alexander (Sir) de SUTTON Knight. (1300 - )

son of John (Sir) de SUTTON 1st Baron Holderness

Joyce Josian SUTTON (1320 - )

daughter of Alexander (Sir) de SUTTON Knight.

William CLAPHAM (1340 - )

son of Joyce Josian SUTTON

William CLAPHAM (1360 - )

son of William CLAPHAM

## ## LANCASTRIANS

### ### Monarchs

Henry IV (1399-1413)

Henry V (1413-1422)

Henry VI (1422-1461) and (1470-1471)

### ### Relations

John CLAPHAM (1380 - 1469)

son of William CLAPHAM

Thomas CLAPHAM (1400 - 1469)

son of John CLAPHAM

Thomas CLAPHAM (1423 - 1442)

son of Thomas CLAPHAM

## ## YORKISTS

### ### Monarchs

Edward IV (1461-1470) and (1471-1483)

Edward V (Apr-Jun 1483)

Richard III (1483-1485)

### Relations

William CLAPHAM (1443 - 1508)

son of Thomas CLAPHAM

Johanna CLAPHAM (1477 - )

daughter of William CLAPHAM

## TUDORS

### Monarchs

Henry VII (1485-1509)

Henry VIII (1509-1547)

Edward VI (1547-1553)

Lady Jane Grey (10-19 July 1553)

Mary I "Bloody Mary" (1553-1558)

Elizabeth I (1558-1603)

### Relations

John HARTLEY (1490 - 1532)

son of Johanna CLAPHAM

John HARTLEY (1513 - 1582)

son of John HARTLEY

Thomas HARTLEY (1543 - 1597)

son of John HARTLEY

Thomas HARTLEY (1583 - 1675)

son of Thomas HARTLEY

John (Johannes) HARTLEY (1615 - 1662)

son of Thomas HARTLEY

## STUARTS

### Monarchs

James I (1603-1625)

Charles I (1625-1649)

The Commonwealth (1649-1660)

Charles II (1660-1685)

James II (1685-1688)

Mary II & William III (1688-1702)

Anne (1702-1714)

### Relations

Thomas HARTLEY (1647 - 1726)

son of John (Johannes) HARTLEY

John HARTLEY (1676 - 1749)  
son of Thomas HARTLEY

William HARTLEY (1705 - 1759)  
son of John HARTLEY

## ## HANOVERIANS

### ### Monarchs

George I (1714-1727)

George II (1727-1760)

George III (1760-1820)

George IV (1820-1830)

William IV (1830-1837)

Victoria (1837-1901)

### ### Relations

William HARTLEY (1734 - 1810)  
son of William HARTLEY

William HARTLEY (1771 - 1827)  
son of William HARTLEY

Squire HARTLEY (1799 - 1871)  
son of William HARTLEY

David HARTLEY (1841 - 1908)  
son of Squire HARTLEY

## ## SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA

### ### Monarch

Edward VII (1901-1910)

### ### Relations

John HARTLEY (1866 - 1936)  
son of David HARTLEY

## ## WINDSOR

### ### Monarch

George V (1910-1936)

Edward VIII (Jan-Dec 1936)

George VI (1936-1952)

Elizabeth II (1952-

### ### Relations

Maurice HARTLEY (1892 - 1967)  
son of John HARTLEY

John Duncan HARTLEY (1926 - 2020)  
son of Maurice HARTLEY

Richard Duncan Hartley (1955 - )  
son of John Duncan HARTLEY

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## # My Grandfathers Role in World War One

### 2021-02-05

(N.B Warning ..... Not particularly a large file but it is a long read!)

Horace (Harry) Leak was my grandfather. During his life he didn't talk much about his experiences during

I have analysed these notes as best I can and tried to date and validate them. To assist me I have read pu

There is a certain consistency with all of Harry's 200+ pages of war memories. Yes, there are many repetiti

I have not tried to re-write Harry's notes within this story, neither correct nor put into better English, apart fr

### ## Timeline

- \* November 1915 - Enlistment
- \* May 1916-January 1917 - Malta
- \* January 1917 - Off to the Western Front
- \* April-July 1917 - Fauquissart Front
- \* July 1917 - St Georges Sector, Nieuport
- \* 1-8 October 1917 - Approach to Ypres
- \* October 1917 - Poelcappelle - 3rd Battle of Ypres
- \* November 1917-April 1918 - Hospitalisation and Recuperation
- \* April 1918 - Back to France
- \* May 1918 - Front Line, Kemmel Hill
- \* May-August 1918 Ypres Summer Reinforcement
- \* September 1918 - Arras Front
- \* 11-12 October 1918 - The Pursuit to the Selle
- \* 15-16 October 1918 - Battle of the Selle
- \* 1 November 1918 - Battle of Valenciennes
- \* 11 November 1918 - Ceasefire
- \* November 1917-October 1919 - Army of Occupation

### ## Harry's thoughts on the war up to enlistment in late 1915

- > Now when war was declared on 4th August 1914 I must admit that England had the most powerful navy
- > We had reserves in both navy and army and they all soon answered the call and so did all the colonies,
- > Great Britain got caught with their pants down to put it bluntly. Take Gallipoli, the Somme, Ypres. No won
- > I guess also in the first year our artillery was not getting enough shells for the guns. So they were limited

### ## Enlistment

Harry and some of his pals had tried to sign up to fight for king and country earlier, but it wasn't until late 1913

> In 1914 and 1915 you had to be fit and in perfect health to join the army. In 1914 my two pals and I tried

> We were sent to Redcar where we were inoculated in one arm and vaccinated in the other. I think he must

> In Newcastle we were billeted in a roller skating rink in St Mary's Place off Northumberland Road. For the

## ## Mediterranean Bound

After the initial training in the North-East, rather surprisingly, he was issued with tropical gear and put on a

> We had a rough passage in the Bay of Biscay and I did not eat anything as I had the misfortune to only have

At this point they were still unaware of their final destination. They had feared they were bound for Gallipoli

> After leaving Gibraltar we went up the Mediterranean. We began to feel a little anxious as rumours were going

Fortunately for Harry he was one of the sixty or so that were picked out to stay in Malta and unload hospital

> Well we were very fortunate to be there and we're kept very busy, but in a way we were very glad to as we

The first month was spent in Floriana Barracks until the necessity for beds for the sick and wounded meant

> One day my mate and I went down to the harbour and spent the day swimming down there. This wasn't a

> There is one thing we get very good meals and we sure enjoyed them as we were on a shilling a day pay

His building skills were put to good use, even in those days.

> One day they held a competition for the tidiest marquee. Me and my mate Jimmy Grass went for it. We co

Harry seems to have been a bit of a lad!

> I was on guard duty at the Main Guard room in Floriana Square opposite the Governors Palace and then  
He suggests that he had a girlfriend back in England.

> In July I had a letter from the mother of the girl I was courting to say she was 'walking out' with the Forem

There were interesting other duties Harry had to perform.

> In November six of us were on duty at the cold meat store and it rained continuously for twelve hours. Th

> For the next two months two of us was out every other night with a signaller on observation duty on the s

All good things come to an end though, especially during wartime. Harry had really enjoyed his time in Ma

> There was a daily paper printed in Malta and it was very gloomy about the future, both in the east and the west.

## ## Off to War

In January 1917 they boarded a ship in Valletta harbour bound for Marseilles in France. There they were put through the mill.

> I remember we were all quite excited when the Sergeant told us we were going to have Pork and Beans for dinner.

It must have been four difficult days before they arrived at their destination, Étaples, south of Boulogne on the coast of France.

> On arrival we were all examined by the doctors and declared fit. In a lecture we were told that we would be sent to the front.

> They put you through the mill alright, galloping around in the soft sand from one trainer to another in headgear.

> The camp we were at was as strict as any prison. The Red Caps caused a lot of trouble. There were four of them.

> An instructor took a violent dislike to me. I said that the bayonet was no good against the machine gun and he was angry.

> Next morning the camp commandant told me that it was a serious charge. The instructor said he just gave me a talking to.

> A few days later in St Omer I was also picked on by a Sergeant and got four days confined to camp. Just a few days.

They also spent some time in the Dunkirk area to do intensive training in the sand dunes.

On training:

> Well most of the time on the sands near Dunkirk was bayonet fighting and I thoroughly detested it. Of course, it was necessary.

Harry found the training tough and they were really put through the mill for the next few weeks. One day they were sent to the front.

> It sure made me a lot happier as that regiment was the Territorials together with the 1st 8th Battalion of the Buffs.

A day later they headed for the front line at Fauquissart.

## ## Poelcappelle - 3rd Battle of Ypres (October 1917)

During September the 1/7th continued training in the Dunkirk coastal areas, readying themselves for the assault on the Ypres Salient.

> It bothered us that we knew we were to be in that mass attack and didn't know any more than the Germans.

> In the Ypres Salient it was the custom when in the front line or support to 'stand to'. That meant the every man for himself.

> I was amazed looking over the bulge of the Salient. It was just like one giant horseshoe and the destruction was everywhere.

> A few nights later we were in semi darkness over very slippery, very muddy ground for such a long time.

- > By what we could see in the darkness it was most horrible and we got to a duckboard track about a yard
- > I was very lucky to go in feet first and also lucky that it happened by the edge. My pals were close by and
- > Some time later we reached a dugout. They had my puttees off in no time and then boots and stockings.
- > Now when in the front line or support it was the custom to be all ready for action before daylight so I put m
- > There were about 50 of us and only room for a few. An officer yelled "Spread out and get in shell holes".
- > Not only that we sure was pinned down by gunfire. Even through the night and all next day they kept spr
- > You see, we did not know until the third day our division had been relieved and the third day I said to my
- > By that time not only were we exhausted but we found we could not stand. Anyhow we finally managed
- > One of them spotted a pill box about 50 yards away to our left. Then he saw some figures moving toward
- > The Anzacs helped slide us through the mud and got us to the pill box. There was a pile of sandbags so
- > Half an hour later we decided to try an extract ourselves. So off we went crawling. I could not keep up wi
- > The last two hours I was alone and scared to death as the big black 'Heavies' were busting in the sky. I
- > I saw some men walking towards the road so I sat up and shouted. They came over to me. They were tw

## ## Hospitalisation and Recuperation (November 1917-April 1918)

- > After I reached the aid station they transported me to a field ambulance and then into a large marquee a
- > Finally we got to a large hospital in Wimereux near Boulogne. I was well attended to by the doctors. Wha
- > Two days later one of the nurses said to me "I guess you will be in England for Christmas, your knees to
- > As I settled down on the train heading north I closed my eyes and prayed and hoped that never again w
- > We eventually got to a large hospital in Whalley, Lancashire. It was just 1 week before Christmas. I was
- > Along with 19 others, mainly cockneys, we went to three houses in Colne, just outside Burnley. By gosh,
- > At a pantomime one day a box of sweets was passed around from the back to the front. I turned around t

Note: Belle eventually became Harry's wife and our Grandmother. In 1980 Harry wrote ...

- > Well on 15th March my dear wife passed away in Leeds Infirmary and I sure was broken hearted. I was l

- > Funny thing is, if I would not have met her if I had not been in the Passchendaele area. I wouldn't have met her.
- > I sure am very grateful that from something very bad something marvellous came to me and my family.
- > By the end of March 1918 I was marked fit and well and I must admit I was 100 per cent better than I ever was.

## ## Back to France (April 1918)

On 20th April 1918 Harry was back in France at St Martins Camp not far from Boulogne. This time he was back in France.

- > I arrived back in France 20th April 1918. After spending the night in St Martins Camp a party of 100 of us were sent to a place called Abeele.

[Note: I believe this place to be Abeele, SW of Poperinghe]

- > An Officer asked me if I would like to be No1 Lewis Gunner. I said yes and for 10 days I was on a course to be a Lewis Gunner.
- > The next two weeks were pretty hectic. After 10 days I had passed all the tests. Next day he handed me my commission as No1 Lewis Gunner.
- > In 1917 and many times during 1918 I was asked if I wanted a stripe. I always said no, thank you. My ex-Commander said I was a good lad.

Throughout May 1918, the flood of 'new blood' promised by General Cameron poured into the 1/5th battalion.

- > They had had more casualties in the last action. They sure had a lot of young chaps, quite a few from the 1/5th battalion.

## ## Kemmel Hill - Harry's Story

- > We had to parade in battle order and we thought we were off for another four days in the line. We set off for the front line.
- > What puzzled us was that there was not even a lance corporal with us. If only the Germans had known that we were going to be there.
- > I expected them at 5am and they had not arrived at 7am. 15 minutes later 4 shells exploded 40 yards behind us.
- > We both scampered up the slope about 150 yards, dug a quick funk hole and set the Lewis Gun up. I had a good look at the Germans.
- > It was a hopeless situation and I was watching the Germans put the wounded on stretchers. They certainly were not going to be there long.
- > My No 2 said there was someone creeping up on us through the grass. I said keep your eye on him. I was sure he was a German.
- > The person crawling to us through the grass was a British officer. He said those are Germans down there. We were in a bit of a predicament.
- > Little did I know but by firing off that burst it nearly cost us our lives. We got back in the funk hole and were waiting for the Germans.
- > Right away we were off running to where that Officer had disappeared. About 50 yards away we met six British soldiers.
- > We crossed three roads before we got to see any of our lot, must have walked a mile and a half. The Serpent was a good name for the road.

- > Seems we were put into the wrong field as we found out that we were in front of another Division on the
- > I called them twerps! The Sergeant said he would have me up before the CO. I replied, I wish you would
- > We left that spot and did not have any further contact with the Germans for quite a while. Soon after that

## ## Ypres Summer Reinforcement (May-August 1918)

- > During the next two weeks it was always the same routine. Then we moved to the Pop front to hold the li
- [Pop was the soldiers slang for the town Poperinghe, west of Ypres]
- > A few days later we were back in the Salient up towards Zonnebeke, Kemmel, Dickebusch on one side
- > I was sure surprised looking in the direction of Zonnebeke. The bulge was so small compared to what it
- > An Officer asked me if we had any complaints. I said would it be possible to have a steam bath as not on
- > I invited the Sergeant to come into our huts and watch the lads running lighted candles up the inside sea
- [N.B 'chats' was the word they used for lice]

Further fighting patrols were pushed out on subsequent nights in June 1918, sometimes with artillery supp

- > Two staff officers paid us a visit. Doesn't make them any wiser! As they sauntered along the trench one a
- Having spent June in the line north of the Menin Road, in July the 1/5th moved south, to the area between
- > We were mostly in the line trenches in front of Zillebeke Lake but one time, in reserve, we went into the F
- On 30 July Major General Cameron presented medal ribbons for gallantry at Wytschaete and the battalion
- > It was difficult setting up a Lewis Gun Post in shell holes as one had to get used to having ones feet in w
- However, night patrols were still dangerous and on 11 August Second Lieutenant Lewis Mitchell was kille
- > With Whizbangs you first heard a metallic click and in seconds a terrific explosion. They didn't make a la
  - > During that spell at Ypres I am pleased to say that we didn't have one casualty.

In mid-August the 49th Division left the Salient for good; 146 Brigade headed for the coast near Calais for

- > The very next day we left the Ramparts of Ypres. We later heard that the yanks had taken over and the G

## ## Arras Front (September 1918)

The same day, the 1/5th Battalion left the coast for Arras, arriving at Foufflin Ricametz, 10 miles west of Arras.

- > We entered the outskirts of town and were told that the Germans were at the other side of town. We had to be careful.
- > We had only been in the cellar of the château an hour when a large shell exploded about 60 yards away.
- > The Officer said I am sorry your friend caught it. I said, well that's what war is all about. It is either kill or be killed.
- > We came out to the Arras Front and was sleeping in holes we had dug in the railway embankment. In front of us was the German line.

## ## The Pursuit to the Selle

- > The guns opened up with a terrific barrage and we had to not get too close to the barrage or we would get hit.
- > We came to an aid station. We were going down some steps when a German fired a revolver at us. I think he missed.
- > There is one thing I did not like that happened. A soldier asked what time it was. A young German prisoner told him.
- > We were held up by 2 German tanks and we got in a sunken railway embankment for the night. We were very tired.
- > Would you believe it? The Colonel came and visited us, asked us how we were. I replied that we were very tired.
- > The Germans had retreated in the night.. From then on it was open, flat country so we had to contend with machine guns.
- > It seemed as if Jerry was on the run alright. I must confess we were all very tired. The next day we were ordered to push on.
- > Even at that time the average Tommy did not think he was nearing the end. So off we went back for a rest.
- > It seems the 49th Division and Artillery had really opened up the way to Valenciennes.

## ## Battle of Valenciennes

- > On we went for the next few days keeping the Germans on the run and I know it sounds daft but I was rather proud.
- > We knew something was going to happen as I had to establish my Lewis Gun Post about 200 yards ahead of the main line.
- > I really do think what a marvellous job the Artillery did. They were perfect. They lifted about four times as many shells as we did.
- > Even though we were at the edge of the river I said we will drift to the left. The shells were going over our heads.
- > I said once we get on that bridge which was only wide enough for a horse and cart it would be to our advantage.
- > We had only been there five minutes when a shell hit the roof which fell on top of us. Well we escaped serious injury.
- > The shell was probably from our artillery which were going over our heads towards their machine gunners.

- > An old woman came out of a shattered building and told us in broken English there was a German officer
- > We had a good rest there. Lot of credit to my team as that was the very first time they had been under fire
- > He said how long have you been here? We told him the story. He said why did you not cross on the pontoon
- > We stayed with them as they mopped up in the town. We went into the square and the Germans offered
- > The Officer told me the main place we had to capture was Aulnoye. I and my team got in a sunken road
- > Then it was on to the second objective. We had gone through a very large field and had no contact with
- > That was the procedure of the Germans. Fire a few shells and then scatter. Three times that afternoon we
- > We dug in, in a sunken road. Some staff officers congratulated us and made the remark that the war is now

## ## Ceasefire

- > We arrived at a town called Evin Malmaison. It was a nice small town, where the Germans had a Prisoner
- > On the 10th November we went on parade as we were going on a route march to keep fit. Our Officer, Mr
- > I had a cousin, Harry North, in the Army Service Corps, so I told my No2 to make excuses if I was missed
- > After three or four days spit and polish it was nothing but route marches and lectures. During one lecture
- > One thing that came in handy was we were able to have a good wash and clean our clothes, not forgetting
- > We sure had a smashing Christmas Dinner. Lots of turkey and pudding with rum sauce. It was funny as I

## ## Army of Occupation

- > We took things very easy and second week in January two of us were told we could go on leave for seven
- > Anyway for the next three weeks we were in various rest camps and getting really fed up. Finally we got
- > We finally arrived in Cologne looking more like hobos than soldiers. Tired and scruffy. On arrival we were
- > I used to go to the baths twice a week and on guard duty on the docks quite close to the Hohenzollern B
- > I was in Germany and to me it was one long holiday and our money went a long way. I think it was over
- > After returning from leave the Division had acquired 500 new recruits. My first day back I was stood in a l
- > After a year on duty in Germany, which included plenty of time off a few of us came back via the Rhine a

## ## Reflections

- > I know I had some very rough times over on the Western Front, we sure was very lucky. During my stay o
- > I can honestly say the only quarrels I had was with a couple of Sergeants but we privates, we worked as
- > On the Ypres front I will be honest and say what I felt at the time. I suppose you could say I was a fatalist.

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## # Big Tech and the Gemini Project

### 2021-03-18

I don't particularly like the way BigTech has taken over, hence my recent moves towards the decentralized.

There is room for alternatives that are open and transparent and don't sell our data to the highest bidder.

Messaging systems are changing too. People in their hundreds of thousands are leaving Facebook Messenger.

Come on people, break free of the chains that have taken you over!

In the last few days I have been particularly looking at "Project Gemini". Now this is a really interesting new

From the Project Gemini own website

=> <https://gemini.circumlunar.space/docs/faq.html>

### ## What is Gemini?

I have really come to hate the World Wide Web. It is bloated! Websites themselves are doubling in size at

Gemini is a new (the project started in June 2019) application-level internet protocol for the distribution of

- \*Opposed to the web's ubiquitous user tracking

- \*Tired of obnoxious adverts, autoplaying videos and other misfeatures

- \*Interested in low-power computing and/or low-speed networks

Gemini is intended to be simple, but not necessarily as simple as possible. Instead, the design strives to m

In short, Gemini takes you back to the simple days of the early web. It simplifies everything. Compare it to m

### ## My Gemini Journey

It has only just started as I only discovered it a few days ago! I have already written a few blogs (GMI files)

Today I took a step forward however by setting up my own Gemini Server on a Digital Ocean Droplet. Altho

=> <https://youtu.be/ldPIP4xVlag> How to install and set-up a gemini server

I now have my own Gemini Server running. Creating text documents is easy. Uploading to the Server is al

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## # The Changing Face of My Blogging Platforms

### 2021-03-18

There no doubt that my interest in creative writing has surged recently. I used to do a lot of it in the late 2000s. But, there's a problem with this scenario. These social giants then control all your data and even how you write. With all the recent scandals regarding privacy and of course the fact that we all know they make billions selling your data. To this extent I have started blogging again. It used to be WordPress in the old days. Then, I came across Static Site Generators. I came across a Static Site Generator called Jekyll, liked it and tried a few more similar types afterwards. I produced my wife's and daughters websites using Eleventy. It was great! Fast, efficient websites with super easy to use. Then on 27th December 2020 my Dad died. This changed my thinking. Why? Because, I realised my own vulnerability in the system. I was key. I was critical. I'm not a spring chicken. I had to find a way to write. Only I could use Eleventy. Integrated CMS (Content Management Systems) for static sites are not yet at a level where I can. Time to head back and look at the popular CMS blogging platforms once again. This time with "continuity" in mind. I hate WordPress. But, it's got worse in the 10 years since I last used it. It's horrible. Bloated beyond belief. I do love the idea of federated and decentralised software. So for micro blogging I have adopted "write.as". The two CMS I've mentioned (write.as and ghost) are really good. Easy to enter data. Modern. Quick. And flexible. Now, its so easy to blog/micro blog. On a daily basis if I have something to say. And, I can write a blog from anywhere.

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# Debilitating effects of Snowblindness - a personal experience

## Becoming snowblind is one of the most debilitating hazards of being in the high mountains. This article

### 2021-03-18

I guess after spending over 40 years walking in the mountains I've been lucky not to have contracted snow

It was supposed to be a relatively easy day. Reaching the flat plateau of the Icecap mid-afternoon. We had

After wearing contact lenses for 20 years I now wear glasses. Glasses and goggles in a blizzard do not make

My eyelids become iced up. Two inch long icicles hang off my nose. As night begins to fall we reach the ice

Next day is just as bad. Today though we are pulling out. Uncertainty with the weather and the previous day

We rest beside our campsite situated by the lake at "La Playita". It feels good to be out of the wind. I fall asleep

I spend an uncomfortable night. The only relief is not to move my eyes behind my closed eyelids. Any move

Next day head back to civilisation. I have a rough day's walk with a big pack. More difficult as I find it hard

No epics. We get back. But the pain continues for a further 48 hours. I look ridiculous, crying in my beer, in

So what have I learnt?

Well, I certainly know what to expect should I leave my eyes unguarded. But if I was in the same situation a

Day two should have seen me put on sunglasses or goggles. That was a mistake. It was grey, an absence

Becoming snowblind is not nice. Even on poor days eyes must be adequately protected. I am going back

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# In the Footsteps of the Moors

## Walking alongside ancient irrigation channels originally installed by the Moors

### 2021-03-18

Today's walk from home alongside the sparkling waters of the Acequia Mezquerina today to a friend's cortijo

One of the benefits of being in lockdown mode here in southern Spain is that we have been able to explore

Yesterday we walked from our house above Lanjaron and followed the long distance GR-7 path initially. A

It's quite a steep ascent of 550m up to the 1250m height (1hr 30min from town) that marks the point where

One hardly notices the ascent as you stroll alongside the gently rising canal. Further on, there's a couple of

The acequia arrives at the junction with the **"Camino de la Sierra"** (2hr 15min from town) and you can no

We walked a further 10 minutes up the track towards Tello to visit a friend's mountain cortijo set on its own

Definitely a walk to do if you are ever in the Lanjaron area. Even better if you have your dogs with you. Th

=> <https://www.google.com/maps/d/embed?mid=16QZrpYfUKHEHspTJM9pO2ChCy2HOJuUP&ll=36.934>

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## # Surviving Blizzards in Kamchatka

### ## Report from Berghaus Kamchatka Expedition April/May 2013

### 2021-03-18

So, Kiersten and I were packed close together for warmth, huddled in a tent in the middle of the night. Outside

We had come to Kamchatka to make a ski descent of Klyuchevskaya Sopka, at 4750 metres in height, the

In addition the volcano had started to erupt a month before. Thus we managed to arrive to the most active

=> <https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/v1/articles/images/2014/05/20132013-04-1423-46-30.jpg>

The peak on the left is the one we should have climbed.

Anyway, back to the blizzard. We had known it was coming in from our Sat Phone updates so we had time

N.B Later found out that this condition is called "Cold Induced Bronchial Spasms" and brings on asthma like

=> <https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/v1/articles/images/2014/05/20132013-04-2023-39-48.jpg>

During the night the wind picked up even further. To compound matters the volcanic ash put down by the volcano

Our tent fared a bit better although volcanic ash did start to put holes in both the tent outer and inner. It was

We survived the night but as the photo below shows, the campsite was devastated and in ruins. With a blizzard

I shall never forget Kamchatka. We didn't make the summit (not even close) but we had a wonderful adventure

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## # Metamorphosis of a Hiker

### 2021-03-18

In the outdoor world of the human in the mountains there is a natural evolution. A natural development cycle.

Then, as age begins to take a toll on mind, body and especially the legs our tough mountain warrior starts to change.

All along this journey of mountain discovery he has been gaining experience. This has allowed him to become a better hiker.

Certainly the more you venture into the mountains the more you will experience and gradually your in-built wisdom grows.

You cannot gain experience from a book, nor YouTube nor an online course that dishes out a "Certificate of Completion".

I've made plenty of mistakes!

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## # How My Digital Lifestyle is Changing

### 2021-03-18

This post was inspired by the excellent article, "My War on Doomscrolling" by Toby Kurien and takes it a step further.

=> <https://tobykurien.com/war-on-doomscrolling/> "My War on Doomscrolling" by Toby Kurien

## The definition of doomscrolling, according to Urban Dictionary is:

"When you keep scrolling through all of your social media feeds, looking for the most recent upsetting news or bad news."

An interesting and thought provoking post that got me thinking about my own digital lifestyle and how I can change it.

## Traditional Social Media Platforms

The main social media platforms I use are becoming more and more toxic and inhospitable for me. Twitter is a cesspool.

The timelines themselves, especially on Facebook, have become terribly manipulated and censored. Hey, I know, I'm biased.

I limit myself to just a few quick visits a day (there is an exception when my favourite football team are playing).

## Federated Social Media Platforms

I love the idea of Federation (the #fediverse). Hundreds, maybe thousands of small servers running a social media platform.

## Writing Content

I believe writing your own creative content is really good for the soul. If you think about it, Twitter and Facebook are not the best places to write.

Writing creative content should be on your own site, on your own domains, under a system that you have full control over.

### Your data is your data!

## Blogging

This change in my digital thinking has sparked a new effort of creative writing for me. I have restarted blogging.

My father passed away in December aged 94. He had a "good innings" as we say in Yorkshire. Thankfully, he lived a long and happy life.

=> <https://sierramountain.life> Sierra Mountain Life - Tall Tales & Ramblings from Life in Spain's Mountains

=> <https://write.as/elperronegro/> Somewhere South of Granada - Daily thoughts and micro blogs from life in the mountains

### By the way, I've also started writing a book

## ## Get Outdoors!

Yes, make time to forget the digital age. Leave the computer behind and get out into the fresh air. Enjoy nature.

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## # Walking the Vasar on the North Face of Mulhacen

## The Vasar de Mulhacen takes an improbable looking horizontal shelf across the vertical north face of M

### 2021-07-13

Leave the summer crowds heading up Mulhacen behind and instead have a go at the Vasar de Mulhacen

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/f\\_auto,w\\_1200/articles/images/2021/vasar3a.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/f_auto,w_1200/articles/images/2021/vasar3a.jpg) Image

We have done this many times during the day but perhaps the most rewarding time is in the early morning

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The Vasar makes use of a narrow, horizontal shelf crossing the face at about 3150m is sandwiched between

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It starts with a steep drop down with a step over a steep drop to the left. Once completed the path winds its

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Due to its unique location this path is a botanists delight with many endemic plants to be found including t

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/f\\_auto,w\\_1200/articles/images/2021/vasar8a.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/f_auto,w_1200/articles/images/2021/vasar8a.jpg) Image

There is just one short step that requires a steady head for heights. This is a step round a protruding bould

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/f\\_auto,w\\_1200/articles/images/2021/vasar9a.jpg](https://res.cloudinary.com/shmg/image/upload/f_auto,w_1200/articles/images/2021/vasar9a.jpg) Image

The gently rising path then reaches the end of the Vasar and meets a zig-zag path coming up the scree fro

Note: if there is any snow remaining on the north face during early summer then the route should be avoid

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# Down the Snowden rabbit hole and back out again

### 2021-08-14

After watching the superb TV Series "Start Up", I became fascinated with the dark web. I had previously da

I am a bit of a privacy freak though and the thought of securing my laptop and online presence against pe

I installed and tried out various worthy operating systems on my laptop. Kodachi looked good but would it

Then I read Whonix's Tips on Remaining Anonymous which I now wish I'd read first! It's a superb read. My

For instance, banks can easily block you when they detect Tor or VPNs are being used. Similarly other site

It was an interesting exercise learning all about privacy and the dark web. But ... it's just not for me. Back u

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# Blurred images and lost opportunities

### 2022-07-04

## In trying to learn camera techniques to take good landscape images you are bound to have some failures.

This photography lark is entertaining and overall I am enjoying the learning experience, but it does get very frustrating.

I have a new 35mm APS-C prime lens (52.5mm FF equivalent) for my Sony A6400. I use this camera on the tripod.

I was devastated by my own ineptitude! On Monday evening I had changed camera settings to cope for low light.

I'd had just gone from fully Manual to using Aperture with Auto ISO combined with ISO Min Shutter Speed.

This is a case where a mobile or a camera set on automatic would have coped perfectly fine. You live and learn.

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# DAI Part 2 - They can rebuild him

## Just home after spending 5 days in the Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves in Granada having a

### 2022-10-12

Just home after spending 5 days in the Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves in Granada having a

I had the old DAI implanted in the left hand side of my chest, below the collar bone) since February 2022.

Unfortunately a growth, a Pyrogenic Granuloma to be exact, had developed over the site of the old wound

I spent pretty much the whole day, Monday the 3rd of October, with my friend Felipe, in and out of the hosp

I had been fasting all Monday so was grateful for some food on Monday evening as the fasting would begi

The "team" all knew their jobs and began racing around preparing me for the operation whilst chatting and

I came round in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) ward sometime later. Not sure how long I was in the operati

I had had two operations. Firstly, to implant a new DAI in the right hand side of my upper chest. 3 cables co

My ward consisted of two other "inmates", Rafael and Antonio, both in their 70s. As I glanced around I refle

Later that afternoon I was told a further operation would be necessary on Thursday to close the wound tha

I had thought it would be an open wound, almost like a burn. When the bandages were unpacked it turned

Then I had a funny experience. Nurse Mercedes warned me she was going to spray an ice cold liquid into

During the night my fellow inmate, R who had just been brought back from his operation, kept trying to esc

I was doing a lot of bloody fasting! I had to fast again for the Thursday operation. Due to more urgent tasks

Friday morning I had expectations to be let loose after the weekend but a nice surprise came before 2pm w

Imagine our frustration then when the following scene occurred all down to a little gadget that was attache

5 minutes later a group of paramedics arrived to transfer Mr and Mrs A from Granada to Almeria hospital. A

Evidently, the ambulance wasn't insured for that many bags. A heated discussion broke out between para

At around 5pm the nurse arrived and extracted all the bits and pieces that were sticking out of me and I wa

The first came after the catheter was removed. I couldn't leave the hospital until I had urinated. Doh, how fr

Kiersten and I started walking towards the reception area and exit of the cardio wards. That's when we were

That was when I made a probably illegal escape from the hospital, Kiersten and I furtively sneaking around  
FREEDOM!

A thousand thanks to the Doctor's, nurses and porters at the Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves in

> Also thanks for the many messages of support over the past week. Much appreciated. For those who have  
"The mountains are calling and I must go" (John Muir)

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# To Blog or Not To Blog, that is the Question?

## Some thoughts on why I write blogs and will continue to write blogs, even if nobody reads them!

### 2023-02-26

Writing blogs seems to be more and more a thing from the past, I guess partly due to the expanded influence of social media.

The fact is that people on social media would much prefer to hit the "like" button and move on. Rapidly. Without thinking.

Is this the death of Blogging? No! "Long Live Blogs" I say. Why?

I have kept a blog of my experiences and adventures here in Spain since I arrived way back in 2002. Initially, I wrote for me.

I write words on my blog for one reason and one reason only. For Me!

Along the way possibly other interested persons might read and gain some useful information. Possible not the main reason.

Yes, I write for me. Selfish ain't I? I want to keep a record of my life and a legacy of my time here. I am not concerned about what others think.

And the great thing is, nobody can ever take that away from me. Not ever. Not Zuckerberg, Musk, Besos, Gates, or anyone else.

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## # Travelling 'Arse About Face' in the Mountains

## Rethinking the way you approach your mountain trips and the benefits that that might bring.

### 2023-08-06

Adjective: arse about face (slang, UK, Australia, New Zealand) Placed or arranged the opposite way to the

There's something quite appealing about doing things contrary to the norm and going against the grain. In

Why not go up in the afternoon of day 1 and return on the morning of day 2. That way most people are lea

I first came across this concept in the English Lake District way back in October 1988 when my friend Alist

I have been practicing this same strategy here in Spain's Sierra Nevada during the summer months for ma

# So, what are the benefits of travelling "Arse About Face"?

## Less Humans, More Nature

There are fewer people around. The mountains are more silent and we can move within them enjoying the

When the day hikers leave the mountain peaks it seems to me as if the mountains themselves breathe a h

## Best Light For Photography

Certainly here in the Sierra Nevada the light in summer is strong and harsh. The sun is directly overhead a

Being around pre-dusk and post dawn mean the you catch the photographers prime time for images ... th

Golden hour is the period of time after sunrise and before sunset when the sun is low enough in the sky to

Similar to golden hour, blue hour is not exactly one hour. Instead, it varies based on location, the weather,

Either way being in the mountains at these times enables you to catch these exquisite moments, moments

## Silence and Cool Air

This benefits really only those of us living in hot countries. Here in southern Spain, the summer nights can

It is also the time that the spanish locals like to party. Fiestas and Ferias compete with noisy, out of tune, b

Thus, for my wife and I, sleeping at 3000 meters means cool air and silence. Absolute bliss!

## The Sky at Night

No need to be enclosed in tents. You'll miss the best bits. Groundsheet and sleeping bag are all you need

We have regular meteor showers during the summer months too, particularly the "Perseids" and the "Leon

## ## Fine Dining

This is maybe a bit controversial but yes, "fine dining" can be had. I don't know about you but all my taste b

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## # Getting into Backpacking for the first time?

## Interested in preparing an overnight camp in the mountains but are a bit wary of the weight to be carried?

### 2024-06-26

I wrote this for a friend of mine who is interested in preparing an overnight camp in the mountains but is a bit wary of the weight to be carried.

### Contents

- \* Mountain Camps and Bivouacs
- \* Carrying your house on your back
- \* What is Base Weight?
- \* How much does your existing gear weigh?
- \* Recording your weights
- \* Evaluating your gear list
- \* Being ruthless!
- \* Sharing
- \* A Few Personal Recommendations
- \* My current gear list for an overnight in the Sierra Nevada

## ## Mountain Camps and Bivouacs

Camping or bivouacing overnight in the mountains is a wonderful way to experience the beauty and tranquility of the wilderness.

Here are a few tips for those of you who are looking at getting into multi-day mountain treks (backpacking):

## ## Carrying your house on your back

Obviously, to carry all the equipment needed for an overnight stay in the mountains means carrying a great deal of gear.

This can add many kilos to your poor old shoulders and maybe the trudging up and down mountains under a heavy load.

## ## What is Base Weight?

This is the weight carried in your pack excepting consumable items. Consumable items are items that reduce in weight as you use them.

As an introductory target, why not try to keep the base weight between 5-8kg? My personal target base weight is 5kg.

Help is at hand too. These days there are many lightweight alternatives to the robust, heavy products of old.

## ## How much does your existing gear weigh?

By choosing your equipment wisely and by accepting there necessarily has to be some sort of compromise between weight and functionality.

This means that the first thing you should do is weigh all your current equipment you intend to take and make a list of it.

## ## Recording your weights

Initially, in the old days, I used a list, then moved to a spreadsheet. Nowadays (June 2024) there are some

This is not a fully inclusive list, just ones that I have come across, used and can recommend. The sites below

Android app ... Carryless €11 for full version - allows you to prepare an inventory of your gear and easily a

Desktop (web) ... Packstack (free) - a superb piece of software. Can be self hosted.

Desktop (web) ... Lighterpack (free) - a little bit outdated but still a useful resource.

There are others but the best ones are part of larger sites that offer links to equipment purchase (Amazon)

N.B If you find any of the free sites mentioned above useful then please consider a small donation to help

## ## Evaluating your gear list

Once you have an idea of what your existing mountain gear weighs you can start to evaluate and to make

There are many excellent resources about what is currently the best ultralightweight equipment for backpack

## ## Being ruthless!

Can you really not go for just one night without a change of clothes, a toothbrush, toothpaste, camp slippers

I once had a group doing a multi-day trip into the Sierra Nevada. They were used to Himalayan travel so h

Owning up. The only compromise I personally make is to add in my camera gear. Photography is a hobby

## ## Sharing

Of course if you can find a friendly friend to share things with then certain items can be "shared" items betw

## ## A Few Personal Suggestions

Think about buying a quilt instead of a sleeping bag. From my experience you will be a more comfortable

Backpack - I was using a 35 litre Deuter Guide rucksack. This was 1350 grams, quite light in its time. I hav

Tent - consider not bothering with a tent, especially during the summer in the Sierra Nevada when the con

For just an overnight trip try going without a hot meal/drink and save the weight for cooking gear and food.

Seek out and support the cottage industry made products. Most of these are made by hard core enthusias

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## # Discovering Long Range Radio Communications (LORA)

### ## My experiences with LORA radio communications using the Reticulum Network Stack to build networks

### 2024-12-26

## N.B This blog post is ongoing and will be added to as I continue to develop my own LORA Networks

I first came across Long Range (LORA) radio communications as a form of passing messages when I encountered

I looked into Meshtastic with, not only, post disaster situations in mind but also as a way to communicate in rural areas.

From my initial research on the internet I then came across the Open Source, Reticulum Network Stack.

Reticulum is the cryptography-based networking stack for building local and wide-area networks with reach and resilience.

The vision of Reticulum is to allow anyone to operate their own sovereign communication networks, and to connect them to the wider world.

What I liked about Reticulum over Meshtastic was the way that it wasn't just about LORA radio, it included a wide range of communication methods.

Reticulum is built by a small team of very clever and committed enthusiasts led by Mark. An interesting project with a lot of potential.

There are plenty of places to ask for support too:

- The discussion forum on GitHub

- The Reticulum Matrix Channel at #reticulum:matrix.org

- The Reticulum subreddit

### ## Installation and Testing Progress

I purchased 2 x LILYGO TTGO LoRa32 V2.1\_1.6 versión 433/868/915Mhz ESP32 LoRa OLED 0,96 pulgadas

These small boards come with small antennas included. I purchased each board for under €22.

Note: Here in Europe I am using 868MHz in my set ups

### ### Linux Laptop

The Reticulum manual gave me good instructions to install the Rnode firmware on my Linux (PopOS/Ubuntu)

### ### Android Phones

Installing on an Android phone was even easier using the Sideband App (also available on IOS Testflight)

### ### Connection Achieved!

I was able to communicate between 2 Android phones or from one phone to my Linux Laptop. Not only could I communicate between the two phones but I could also communicate from the phone to the laptop. Another plus point for me with the Sideband app was the ability to show positions of both transceiver and mobile. Mobiles connected via LORA radios Mobiles connected via LORA radios

## Test 20-Dec-2024

Distance test to bottom of our land. Easily sent messages from 100m away

Distance tests moving away from my house Initial distance tests moving away from my house

## Test 26-Dec-2024

Distance test from the dog walk. Initially all went well. From the "acequia" bridge above my house (335m above sea level)

Thereafter as I walked along the ridgeline I had a series of 12 "Failures to Send". What was going on? I thought it was the weather.

My wife, Kiersten, hit on the answer. My phone at home had gone into sleep mode. Sideband had shutdown.

No test is a failure. It's all a learning experience. You learn and move on. I shall repeat the test tomorrow with the phone at home.

## Test 26-Dec-2024

Managed to get repeated LOS (Line Of Sight) signals delivered from ridgeline. Approx distances involved were 100m to 200m.

JOOS (Just Out Of Sight) messages also sent successfully.

Failures on OOS (Out Of Sight) messages.

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# LoRa mesh networks using Meshcore software

## Building a local mesh network in the Alpujarras using Meshcore

### 2025-08-07

I previously wrote a post about "Discovering Long Range Radio Communications LORA" detailing my inter

=> <https://elperronegro.com/posts/2024-12-26-discovering-long-range-lora-communications/> Link: Discov

=> <https://meshtastic.org/> Link: Meshtastic website

=> <https://reticulum.network/> Link: Reticulum website

=> <https://meshcore.co.uk/> Link: Meshcore website

=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/f\\_auto,q\\_auto,w\\_960/dpr\\_auto/epn/2025/meshcore](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/f_auto,q_auto,w_960/dpr_auto/epn/2025/meshcore)

Reticulum is the most advanced of all these mesh networks. It incorporates most forms of networking inclu

That left me the choice of Meshtastic or the recently developed Meshcore. Here is a good report of the pro

=> <https://www.ebee.com/blog/Meshtastic-vs-Meshcore-Comparing-Two-Leading-LoRa-Mesh-Network-S>

Needless to say, I went for the Meshcore option.

## Installation

The installation of software was done from the Meshcore Web Flashing page which worked well and I four

\* 2 x Lilygo LoRa V2.1 (companion USB - attached to mine and Kierstens laptops via USB)

\* 1 x Heltec Mesh Node T114 V2.0 (repeater on roof)

\* 2 x SenseCap T1000-E trackers (companion Bluetooth paired to an old mobiles)

\* 1 x Lilygo T-Beam SX1262 (spare, for now)

\* 2 x LILYGO® T-Deck Plus ESP32-S3 (standalone device)

## T-Deck Plus

This is an interesting device as it's completely standalone. No need for companion apps on mobile phone

It's a bit hit and miss with communication distances so maybe I have not quite got things attached correctly

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=> [https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/f\\_auto,q\\_auto,w\\_960/dpr\\_auto/epn/2025/meshcore](https://res.cloudinary.com/krowland/image/upload/f_auto,q_auto,w_960/dpr_auto/epn/2025/meshcore)

## Mesh Range Tests

I ran some initial tests sending and receiving messages from our dog walk. For a message to succeed we

Time for some line of sight tests. I successfully connected from 3km away from the repeater on my rooftop

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# Have I turned into a "Prepper"

### 2025-08-10

The reality is that my life in the past 5 years has been slowly evolving to more self sufficient lifestyle. Hobbies

These projects include:

- \* Solar electricity and solar hot water
- \* Developing a local mesh network
- \* Getting into radio communications
- \* Moving farther and farther away from mainstream social media
- \* Less reliance on Big Tech, especially if based in the US
- \* Much more aware about privacy concerns
- \* Resource buiding for a disaster or emergency situation

Does this mean I'm now a "prepper"?

## Solar electricity and solar hot water

To me this is a no brainer considering I live in southern Spain. Only God knows why I didn't do this many y

Next step will be to install an air conditioning unit. This will provide cool air in the summer months and rais

## Developing a local mesh network

As discussed in prior posts, I am building a local mesh network using cheap LoRa radios. Originally progr

I have successfully sent messages from 12 kilometers distance from my home (line of sight). Next step is to

## Getting into radio communications

Thanks to cheap Boafeng radios my wife and I can communicate either locally or within our walking group

## Moving farther and farther away from mainstream social media

We all know that Social Media on the internet is broken. Irreparably so in my opinion. Timelines designed

Thank goodness for the Federation and ActivityPub. Mastodon is a breathe of fresh air allowing me to hos

I dabbled with the Gemini Protocol back in 2021. Returned back in 2025 as it seems even more relevant n

## Less reliance on Big Tech, especially if based in the US

Moving to European based tech companies seems like the right way to move forward. No Gmail or Hotma

As much as I can I am going to eliminate everything I can from Google and Zuckerbergs empire from my li

Mobile phones - have been using a form of Lineage OS for a couple of years on my main phone. No more

## ## Resource buiding for a disaster or emergency situation

It might not be a full on zombie apocalypse but there are definitely times ahead. We have already suffered

It makes sense therefore to be prepared. Some suggestions:

- \* Keep reserve long term food supplies. We have tins of 25+ year dehydrated food
- \* Always have access to cash as the first thing to go will be either card payments or ATM withdrawals.
- \* Keep your cars fueled up as much as possible.

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# Scrambling the Arista de las Campanitas, Sierra Nevada

## A superb scrambling round of the Corral del Veleta which includes the summits of Cerro de los Machos

### 2025-08-11

The "Arista de las Campanitas" from Cerro los Machos to the very summit of Veleta is a superb scramble/

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From the summit of Cerro de los Machos the obvious ridge of Las Campanitas lies to the west. This is a sw

After descending to the next col between Zacatín and Campanario though things appear decidedly more c

A bold approach is required for the ascent of this ridge. The airy and spectacular sections look hard but ar

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The exposure eases at the summit of Campanario and an easy descent is made just left of the ridge to the

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A direct ascent of Veleta from the col is out of the question. Instead traverse some 20m horizontally south c

The climb finishes on the very summit of Veleta. Last week our group (average age 65+!) reached the sum

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# Letters From the Past

## Thoughts about our own Digital legacy

### 2025-08-12

Whilst in the UK last month my brothers and I came across an old leather case of my fathers. It contained

It's a treasure trove, part of history and I can't wait to sit down and read them all!

Here is an extract written by him to my mother from his Royal Navy ship, HMS Glasgow on 24th February

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Makes me wonder about our digital legacy we eventually shall leave behind. Who from my family is going

Or will I just disappear into the mire of irrelevant dross as if I have never existed?

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## # Wandering into the Sierra Nevada's Forgotten Zone

## I go into the mountains for many reasons but certainly one of them is to ensure I get a break from the norm

### 2025-08-16

It's August and it's bank holiday. In the cities, towns and villages of southern Spain people are fighting the heat.

I go into the mountains for many reasons but certainly one of them is to ensure I get a break from the norm

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For this reason for some time I have been operating my "arse about face" philosophy. This is where you go

=> <https://elperronegro.com/posts/2023-08-26-alternative-overnight-mountain-travel-benefits/> "Arse about

My mind for this latest venture had been thinking about a lake at 2700m called Laguna Carnero. Not a spe

We took a chairlift to the cool air of 3000 metres. There was a light breeze that necessitated donning a win

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We descended gently, traversing across a mountainside beset with cliffs and jagged boulders. A chaotic s

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Mention must be made of the myriad of tiny streams, tributaries and waterfalls that make up the area below

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We pushed on into the valley beyond and rounded the broad lower shoulder of the knife edged Arista del

Kiersten forgoe photographing the pretty blue trumpet gentians and decided instead to sneak up on a vult

We easily reached our objective, the Laguna Carnero, but found the banks quite damp so opted to camp o

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The peak of Tozal del Cartujo dominated the view to our east, the western slopes slowly dropping down to

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The wind got up a bit during the night and we had to close the tent doors. At first light it was a bit fresh, ma

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A stop for coffee at Laguna Misterioso, arriving at the gondola station for our descent just as the first day tr

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We were back home just after midday, a bit tired but happy and content that we had made the most of our

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## # My Digital Legacy

## Morning spent outputting my 15+ year old blog to one large PDF file. Why?

### 2025-08-18

What sort of digital legacy do I want to leave behind when I'm gone? These thoughts have been inspired by

=> [gemlog/2025-08-12-letters-from-the-past.gmi](#) Letters From The Past

=> [gemlog/2021-02-05-my-grandfathers-role-world-war-one.gmi](#) Grandfathers Role in WW1

Do I really want my digital legacy to be in the hands of the Zuckerberg Empire?

Do I trust Google/Microsoft to continue to display my lifes images, comments and observations?

Of course I don't. Don't trust them an inch. My legacy will fade away easily into oblivion. My family will find

No, it's up to me to secure my legacy just as my father did with keeping his old letters and writing a large D

But I'm not going to write a load of handwritten notes. My handwriting is worse than any doctors notes you

I use Eleventy Static Site generator for many years to create my blog. I have been setting up a script to take

Sounds like I'm a developer doesn't it? Well, I'm not really. "Vibecoding" I believe it's called when AI creates

I now intend to get as much of my digital writing and images put onto PDFs and uploaded to my self hosted

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# My Digital Legacy

## Flashing LineageOS onto old OnePlus6

### 2025-08-26

It's always a bit of a heart stopping moment when you use ADB tools etc to flash a new OS onto an old phone.

Anyway managed to flash LineageOS onto an old OnePlus6 this morning. It's like having a new phone again.

You have to follow the rules exactly for the installation of the OnePlus6. No room for small errors. It's a little bit of a pain.

Worth the effort IMO for a clean/like new phone with no bloat.

In the afternoon I took a huge gamble. I installed PostmarketOS, a mobile linux distribution, on my OnePlus6.

Unfortunately, yes, it is very buggy. Very. Not many usable apps yet for my purposes. After playing around for a while.

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# Experiencing the delights of PostmarketOS

## Thoughts on flashing PostmarketOS onto an old Android OnePlus 6

### 2025-08-29

I flashed PostmarketOS (Phosh) a few days ago onto an old OnePlus 6. Surprised at how functional it is. E

Anyway it's a pur linux experience, Alpine Linux in fact which is small and functional.

Camera not working fully and I still have GPS & calls to test yet. Overall this is a super project that deserve

Might keep one phone hooked to the dreaded Google, minimal apps, just banking etc & one with Lineage

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# Flashing LineageOS onto a cheap refurbished OnePlus6

## Thoughts on flashing LineageOS onto an old Android OnePlus 6

### 2025-09-17

Continuing quest for de-googling & less reliance on big-tech ... just bought a refurbished OnePlus 6 from B

Used it for 6 hours navigation in the hills yesterday using CoMaps & location on. Battery 91%. Result

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