

August 2003

We have had a superb summer this year, and many club members have been exploring the pleasures of the European Mountains - Ackie on his motorbike tour of France and Switzerland (watch out Billy Connolly - there may be a tour and a TV show!) whilst Ed and friends in the Pyrennees (see report below). Chamonix has been visited on three separate trips by Helen; Steph and Harry; and Alison and Mark (Oh and the Ed's - briefly). Elsewhere Stacey and Brian assisted a fellow climber who fell at Wildcat recently (Nice one lads!). Although our main Club news, in addition to the appointment of a new president (see below), is the change of venue for Thursday nights - we have now returned to the back room at the Black Horse again! Hope to see you there!

Chairman's Report

As a Club we have had an active year already, with many members taking the opportunity to indulge their respective sporting pastimes during this fine summer. Hut meets have had varied attendance levels but we hope to fill the remaining meets which include Welsh 3's in September then the President's meet in October on 3rd - 5th Oct 2003. This will be Elvyn's first meet as our new President. On behalf of us all I thank Brian Gillett for his previous endeavours for the club, and welcome Elvyn Haig to his new role. I am pleased to report that Elvyn has also agreed to continue as Social Secretary for the time being. I now have the menu options and need your bookings together with menu choices and cash ASAP.

New President - Elvyn

After the recent vote of the current membership, Elvyn has been elected to succeed from Brian as the new Club President. Congratulations to Elvyn on his appointment and we look forward to his forthcoming "term of office". As many of you will already know Elvyn is an active member of the club who skis, mountaineers, walks and climbs whenever he is able to get out and about. Together with his wife, Marie, Elvyn has shown a great commitment to the club, serving as a member of the committee in the capacity of Social Secretary. He and Marie have hosted several successful slide shows at their home, organised lecture evenings and arranged the annual skittles matches for the Club.

Return to the Black Horse from 28 August '03

Following requests made by members at the AGM, the Committee has explored local options for alternative venues. After considering the relatively limited choice of alternatives, there is unanimous support for a return to the newly refurbished back room at the Black Horse on Upper Bond Street. There has been a recent change of landlord who, we understand is managed by the Railway's landlord, so really, everyone should be happy with the arrangement. See you there.

Photographic Workshop - President's Meet

"Ever wanted to improve your outdoor photography? Well now's your chance! Pete is running a workshop for those interested in learning professional techniques for wildlife and landscape photography. This will run on Sunday the 5th October (the Sunday of the President's Meet), at Eskdale, and will be of around 4 hours duration. Aimed at improving your skills in finding and capturing wildlife on film, together with maximising the photographic opportunities to be found on hill walking ventures. You will discuss equipment, techniques and locations. The course costs a mere £4 per head, with all proceeds being donated to the HMC funds. Contact Pete to book your place. First 24 bookings will get a free goodie bag, courtesy of "Jessops".

Welsh 3000'ers Sept 5th - 7th 2003

Base: Glan Dena Grid Ref 668606. Will all those wishing to take part either as participants, or as helpers, please complete the form on the back page of the newsletter, and return it to Pete M together with the full fee i.e. £15 for participants and £5 for helpers **ASAP**.

A review of the weather forecast on Thursday 4th September will determine if the event is to go ahead. A call to Pete will give you a decision.

The assumption is that you will check in with your overnight gear and require refreshment at the base camp opposite the Vaynol Arms in Nant Peris - GR 606584. You can leave food or gear there on Friday night. Please be sure that you check in and out at this point on Saturday morning.

The midday-ish check in and out will be at Glan Dena, whilst the final pick up point is at the end of the road at GR 676716. A bed for all participants will be made available at Glan Dena on Saturday night.

Cars! It is preferable on Friday evening to leave your car at Nant Peris and one of the base camp staff will take you up to Pen Y Pass. If you are thinking of leaving from Pen Y Pass early on Saturday morning please talk to Pete M in advance.

Yorkshire Interhostel Weekend

Following tales from last year's Inter-hostel weekend I thought I'd better check this out for myself, so I booked onto Eddie's "short" walk between hostels. Saturday morning saw a start from the Youth hostel in Kettlewell, where most people had managed to appear to eat breakfast. The local Black Sheep curse appeared to be a reaping revenge on some members, who complained of feeling a "bit woolly" as the walking group toiled in a random North Easterly direction towards Great Whernside passing Providence Pot. The ridge taking in Black Dike and Little Whernside was followed and left to visit the shady pub in Horsehouse. After leaving the pub, the river Cover was (eventually) located and followed until a Westerly course was taken to arrive at the village of West Burton where a pint was consumed in the cooler evening air. This was followed by a mad dash to reach the sanctuary of the Youth Hostel at Aysgarth before the brewing storm drenched us. 18 miles since breakfast, we all were looking forward to dinner.

I'd like to be able to recommend the pub next door but I can't, we waited for ages to get served as they insisted that all 14 of us ordered at the same the time. Needless to say they had run out of anything that people might have ordered and most people settled for Fish and Chips...

Sunday started with reasonably spectacular thunderstorm, and there was an air of dissent in the ranks and talk of fetching the cars, but with the rain stopping such talk was soon dispelled. The day gradually improved as we headed South-westerly to Naughtberry Hill and eventually Buckden Pike, where we met Swampy who had driven round to Kettlewell then walked to the summit. The sun graced us with its presence on the descent into Kettlewell, where after 12 miles walking "cream teas" were savoured before the journey home.

Backpacking without the tent, stove etc was a pleasurable experience and I can't wait for next one. Thanks Ed, Mark H.

Richard's Rockfax

On the weekend of the 27/28 June Nettie & I were in Boot, Eskdale. We walked up Scafell, climbed on Wallabarrow in the Duddon valley climbing Digitation MVS 4b, 4b, and caught the steam train after having walked from Boot to Ravenglass. OK so we were there for 3 days, but who's counting? Mid week I went to Burbage North with Neil, Beastley & Lee. Pete's lead of the Knight's Move was the route of the night. A dozen other routes were done before we were midged off to the pub.

On the inter-hostel weekend in Yorkshire me, Neil & Tracy went to Slipstones. (Top tip with Yorkshire grades - just double them!) Best route of the day was Neil's lead of Aces High S4b (more like VS 5a!). Tracy was leading some routes and I wasn't doing much hard on account of too much beer... Slipstones is a steep crag! We did about a dozen routes before the midges got us this time.

Other crags visited this summer with either Nettie, Lee, Pete or Neil this year in no particular order are Birchen Edge, Stanage, Cold Stone crag, Witches quarry (interesting rough limestone), Harborough rocks, Hutton roof (=good limestone bouldering not far from junction 36 M6), Angelzarke, Brownstones (again great gritstone bouldering). Nettie and I also backpacked in the Cairngorms in

March. We did Ben Avon & Ben A'bhuid but had problems - not enough summer clothes, sun hats, sunscreen etc. But we did have three fantastic days in a lovely part of the world.... Richard E.

Bosigran Meet - 9th May 2003

Early sunshine made great climbing on fabulous rock the reward for the climbers who made the long journey to Cornwall. A variety of routes were climbed along this awesome stretch of the Cornish coastline. Hopefully a full report will be forthcoming ...

HMC v Rugby MC - Skittles 2003

The evening's organisation, venue and food were great (Cheers Elvyn). We weren't. We lost... again!

Perth- y- Pia Hut April 2003

Brian G and Trowie had a good journey down to Crickhowell and the hut, Perth-y-Pia (magpie in the bush) in the Brecon Beacons arriving at 13:00. We sat on the wall in the sun and ate our lunch whilst the cleaning ladies spruced up the hut. Brian and I enjoyed a gentle stroll to the summit of Table Mountain, which is just at the back of the hut. We extended our walk to a higher summit beyond Pen-Cerrig-Calch 701 metres. We sat in the cairn shelter on the summit enjoying the warm sunshine. Good views were to be enjoyed across the Brecon Beacons to the west. Down below was the town of Crickhowell. Returning to the hut we got our gear from the car and were soon organising a pot of tea.

Brian K arrived, having done a walk known as the Waterfalls Walk, down the rivers Melte and Hepste to Pontneddfechan, where a pint or two was downed at the local inn. Returning up the River Nedd Fechan taking in further waterfalls on the way. 16 miles.

Saturday we joined forces to do a 16mile walk at the top end of the Black Mountains. The two Brian's and I drove to Capel-y-ffin. Booted and spurred we were on our way by 09:30, a steady pull up on to the ridge, we joined Offa's Dyke Long Distance footpath.

We nearly missed our first summit Black Mountain (south top) – a small pile of stones just off the track. As for No. 2 summit, Black Mountain, well we walked straight over this without even realising it – this was just a stick, stuck in the bog at the side of the path. The trig point at Hay Bluff was next (although this summit does not count in Nuttalls!!). We descend and cross the road at Gospel Pass, a gentle slog up to Twmpa (Lord Herefords Knob for the English...don't be rude Brian G). A group of women are sitting on the summit-ancient - a fertility rite maybe??

We stopped here for a well-earned lunch. After a cloudy morning with a cold N Easterly wind, the sun finally broke through which was much appreciated. Three summits in the bag and two to go, we set off for Rhos Dirion. I nearly knocked the trig pillar over when I shoulder charged it. We took a quick look over the lip of the escarpment to take in the panoramic view, which was quite fantastic. Taking the trig point for the second time on the retrace, we set off for the final summit Chwarel-y-Fan, No 5 of the day. A superb ridge walk was enjoyed, and we finally reached the summit. After some doubt by me as to whether it was the true summit, Brian K dispelled my concerns with a check on his satellite-fixing gadget. Clever stuff.

Descending to Capel-y-ffin we reached the car at 17:00. A fifteen mile drive back to the hut to get ready for a trip down to the Red Lion at Llanbedr where good food and fine ale J was partaken of.

On Sunday Brian G and I came back home in the morning, whilst Brian K headed to the Brecon Beacons for another day's walking. A great weekend in superb mountain country and an excellent hut. A great pity only three of us made it there... Trowie.

Pyrenees 2003

Andorra offers all that's best in walking - fantastic scenery, great weather and loads of variety. Staying with ex-pats Nigel and Michelle at their love-nest in El Tarter (Soldue) we (AKA Eddie, Alastair, Gillett

and Trowie) had a brilliant week, with only one day off to re-charge the batteries, and no days off the beer!

Our first day traversed the ridge of Col D'Ordino, before taking in both north and south summit of Casa Manya (8,990 ft). Muttering under his breath "merde" "fek" and "zut a'lour" Brian was well knackered!

The following day we nipped over the border into Spain, driving as far as we could up a forest track before Nigel's car grunted to a halt with exhaustion. It was a beautiful walk through the forest, with lizards, deer and griffin vultures to accompany us. We were soon on our way to bag three summits on the Serra Del Caddi, culminating on the Torre de Cadi (8,405 ft). Having got ahead (that's rare for me), I had turned back just 50ft below the summit, as I didn't like the look of the heavily corniced rim although Alastair, Nigel and John did manage to overcome the problem and summited about 3pm. We completed our first eight-hour day and were all knackered, including Al who even said "arse!"

Tuesday's Trek went straight out the back of the apartment, passing through carpets of wild flowers together with the scents of the wild thyme and broom - almost overpowering. An interesting scramble ensued between the peaks of Cap de Tossa d'entor (8,480 ft) and Tosa de Caroup (8,337 ft) and we skipped along the airy ridges before descending to the semi-frozen Salamander lake. Later, Nigel showed us his photo's of the traverse that he and Michelle had undertaken in winter conditions and I'm sure that's why John donated his ice-axe to Michelle!

That evening we had a barbecue in the high valley of Coma de Ransol. These purpose built barbies in the forest captured the last rays of the sun as it went down behind the surrounding peaks. A magical spot, and only us there. We drank copious amounts of red wine which sends me doo-lally at the best of times. To the shout of "more pine cones" Trowie & Co cleared the forest whilst I stoked the fire like the devil. We ate like kings thanks to Nigel & Michelle, including pork kebabs, trout, duck sausage and so on. Veggie was not an option. I can't say how I extinguished the fire, suffice to say, the steam could be seen for miles! (It must have been the wine.....)

Wednesday dawned and a day off at last. We did a car tour into France, up boulder valley to see a solar furnace before popping into one of those little French Caf  s in the middle of no-where. It was like a set from Allo' Allo' but the grub and beer was excellent.

Thursday gave us possibly the best (9 hour!) walk of the week. Starting at the Col de Puymorens (6,300 ft) we went up the Coma d'en Garcia valley to the col before ascending Puig de la Coma d'or

(9,272 ft) where we had fantastic views overlooking the lake Estany de Lanos. We descended into the Serra de Font Viva valley, spending some time watching Marmots and lizards (chamois/goaty type beasts).

Our final walk was spent in the hills straight out the back of Nigel's pad again. This time we went up the Val D'Incles. Leaving Brian and Nigel to sunbathe in one of the high pastures, Trowie, Alastair and myself gained the first peak on the ridge leading to the Alt de Juclar (8,340 ft) before deciding that the knife-edged ridge was maybe a little too interesting.

At the check in at Toulouse airport, Mr Trow set off the metal detector 3 times. We stood watching as each bag (and he's got lots of little bags) was searched. A wry smile came over us as one of the female customs officers (out of view from John) donned her rubber gloves. Meanwhile Mr Trow is getting redder. Is Trowie about to get the full treatment? Alas, no. They give up with him and let him pass. We told him about the girl with the rubber gloves and he said "Thank god they didn't, I'm still suffering from the last 3 days of having the sh*ts"

A big thanks to Michelle and Nigel for their hospitality. We had a great time. We'll be back!

Italy - Easter 2003

Wolves, bears, wild pigs and porcupines were some of the animals I didn't see on a trip to Italy at Easter. But the book said they were there!

The visit was a double silver wedding celebration with two friends from 25 years ago. The main itinerary was to visit lots of old things, museums, art galleries, roman ruins and such like but I managed to find a couple of hills. Our first week was spent at Anzio, the scene of the World War Two battle. Having done Rome...the Coliseum, St Peters, Palatine Hill etc in a day, we ventured south to Naples which of course lies in the shadow of ... Vesuvius. At 1281m (4200ft) not very high but very volcano, the last eruption was in 1944. To give an idea how close it is to Naples, it is about the same distance as Bradgate Park is to Leicester. And there the similarity ends, a fine road leads from the motorway to within 1500ft of the summit and the car park charge is 2 Euros, about £1.25, not the rip off £4 charged by LCC for a piddling little hill with a tower.

A fine maintained path leads up to the crater ... but then the sting ... 6Euros to get through the gate to the crater itself! Money well spent though, an incredible sight and with smoke coming out of fumaroles, very atmospheric. It was a fine sunny day (the week before it was covered in snow) we continued around the crater for half a mile or so and then a bit of a shock, another gate and we could go no further, so we never made the summit after all!

Reading the guide book carefully showed where we went wrong, should have gone clockwise around the mountain, leaving the official path before the 6 Euro gate and then contour around the mountain on a faint path which should have got us to the summit. Ah well, another time.

The second week we moved north into Tuscany into the hill village of Regella, 1500 ft, and surrounded by olive groves and by near 5000ft hills. And best of all, although I didn't know this when I booked it, the area was a regional park with signed numbered footpaths leading from the road outside our cottage Cassa Tutti. Maps were supplied in the cottage so two days were spent in the warmth of the Italian spring following the red and white signs through the woods on footpaths and trails, past "rifugios" to the tops of these hills where the remnants of winter snow remained. It took two days to complete this "horseshoe" of hills surrounding Regello. A very fine walk needing a lot of lubrication with the local Chianti wine in the evening. For the record the hills were Poggio Alla Cesta 4738ft (Poggio = Peak), Poggio Massa Nera 3509ft, Croce Al Cardeto 4447ft, Vont del Vario 4411ft, Poggio Uoma di Sasso 4985ft. After all that I felt inclined to visit the Leaning Tower of Pisa, but that's another story.

Cwm Eigiau Meet - 4th July 2003

Reports from this meet are sketchy, but the rumours of mass ascents of the classic route Amphitheatre Buttress on Craig yr Ysfa do justice to the Himalayan sized walk in to this relatively remote hut. A source close to one Annette Ellis tells me that Richard was heard to be murmuring in his sleep "no don't let me near Mur-Y-Niwl Wall", and an ascent of this route must be in doubt.

Apparent attendees include Elvyn, Pete L, Brian G, Neil, Richard & Annette, John T, Tim G, Ted and his son.

Rumours also abound about parties wandering around (possibly misplaced on the Carnedd Massif?!), but as I've not seen anyone to confirm or deny these, my legal advisor tells me to use the phrase allegedly. Mark H.

Lecture Evening Feb 2004

Prolific climber Daniel Mazur will be the guest of HMC at 8.00pm on 29th January 2003 at William Bradford College, Earl Shilton.