

February '06

After a longer interval than usual, the new newsletter is here and as you'd expect it's a pretty bumper edition. We've got reports from many of the well attended meets. We had a great Christmas Social with hot food and slide shows to get you in the mood for planning trips for this year. Thanks to everyone involved who made it a great night. There has been the other traditional annual event: the Pud Walk. Again, well supported, as was the BMC winter lecture. This may become a regular event on the club's calendar. Another success has been the monthly Climbing wall meet which has proved really popular.

For 2006, annual membership remains at £15 (bargain!) and is due from 1 January. Can you please complete the new application form (even if you have already paid) and return it to Brian. This is to enable us to keep our records up to date.

To reserve a place on any hut meet requires £5 deposit. N.B The booking for the Isle of Skye meet in May/June will require full payment by the end of March and bookings will be on a first come first served basis.

The Presidents Meet for 2006 will see us return to the Chamois Hut, situated adjacent to the Beacon Climbing Centre and about ten minutes from Llanberis. A merry band of HMC cooks will be catering for 48 of us in what is hoped to be a "back to basics weekend" together with some light entertainment to boot! Watch this space.

If anyone wants to take a group (minimum 5) to a YHA hostel, and wants a reduced fee, don't forget to pick up the club's membership card from our meets sec Ed.

Anyone else interested in the skiing trip to Val Thorens should make themselves known to Ed ASAP

Congrats to Michelle and Nigel C on the birth of their son.

As always, thanks for the articles and please let me know what you've been up to. Alison.

President's Meet '05 - Snowdon Ranger YHA

We returned to the Snowdon Ranger Youth Hostel for yet another excellent President's Meet. The late autumn sunshine inspired many to reach the summit of Snowdon by a variety of routes and take in the amazing views on offer. Others used the hostel as a base for cragging at Tremadog or to explore nearby ridges and summits. After a great night's socialising, many headed for the coast to blow away some of the thick heads whilst others pulled their boots back on for more action. TAT awards were distributed in fine style by our Chairman for misadventures that may have otherwise gone unappreciated, and Ted C was presented with the President's Award 2005 by our Club President, Elvyn. Congratulations to Ted and big thanks to Dave for organizing yet another superb weekend.

Limestone Country December 3rd- 4th '05

Despite being advertised as "Yorkshire Interhostel Weekend. Exactly what it says – we walk from one hostel in the Dales to stay at the next then back again" the true account of the weekend follows:

You wouldn't have thought that booking Youth Hostels in December would pose much of a problem. However: Whitby was full; Scarborough – closed until March; Lockton – closed down; Grassington – sold off; Kettlewell – shut; Malham – fullbut joy o joy Ingleton was – open. Yahoo! Saved!

I'd never been to Ingleton so I was a bit nervous, and any chance of walking between different hostels this year was out. Anyway, we duly arrived Friday evening and the village had put on an Edwardian evening for us – which was very Christmassy and all that – but how did they know we were coming?

Saturday's forecast was for crap weather – rain; fog; wind, cats, dogs etc – which turned out to be correct. So we got a bit damp and even though the group split into two parties, the view was just the

same - clag. Annette, Bally, Tracy W and Paul B ticked off Wherside & Ingleborough clocking up about 17 miles whilst the rest of us were content with a stroll past Santa's Grotto (Ingleborough Cave) Gaping Gill and then on to Ingleborough and the Wheatsheaf Inn, clocking up an impressive seven (pints of Black Sheep).

Sunday's stroll included the waterfalls walk and after the previous days rain, we weren't disappointed as they were in full spate. Having taken Teeth up Trow's Gill on Saturday, it somehow seemed appropriate to be looking down at the Kirton of Whyte water splashing down on Beezley Falls on Sunday!

Who writes this crap? ED FURST

John's Christmas Pud Walk

Once again, John had put together a fine festive walk, starting and finishing at The Plough Inn, Hathersage and he'd even organised some festive snow. 18 members enjoyed a manageable 8-mile circular walk taking in Over Dale, Shatton Moor and Shatton Edge with great views of Win Hill/Ladybower Reservoir. The walk was great and the beer and food was excellent. Crackers and everything! Thanks John.

Other Travels with Trowie

On a fairly regular basis Stu M and Dave P accompany JT on fairly local walk, having recently visited Draycote Water and Hartshill Hayes. On an outing last September Stu recounts: Leaving Staunton Harold Reservoir, we passed through Ticknall via the Hangman's stone on an eerily cloudy day. Before we'd set off John had sold the walk to us as "about 4 miles with a bit thrown in to make it worthwhile"! We reached our "Outlier" namely The Swan at Milton and happily passed a "worthwhile" two hours recovering with beer and bowls of chips in front of a roaring fire! Mustering ourselves on again we passed Foremark Reservoir and on to Carvers Rocks. After a small blip (ok we went the wrong way) we started the return leg home. In all the additional bits totted up to a 14 miler. No wonder we were weary by the time we reached the car again. We all made calls home to anxious wives to reassure we didn't need the mountain rescue – oh, and get the dinner on - we're famished!

Climbing @ The Tower

For some members, climbing every Thursday evening, generally from 6pm-9pm ish, is a must. However, for those that can only climb occasionally the introduction of a monthly indoor climbing meet at The Tower (1st Thursday of the month) has been very successful with around 16-20 members turning out on each occasion. The Wall is at Leicester Leys Leisure Centre in Beaumont Leys. This meet will continue throughout the winter months (Oct-Mar). It's informal – and experience is not essential! Just turn up (pay!) and join in. Climbing gear, harnesses and boots, is available to hire from the centre, although some club harness are available if booked in advance.

BMC Winter Skills lecture

The lecture we organised in conjunction with the BMC turned out to be one of their best attended. With almost a full house (200) the event was very successful and a great advertisement for the club. Two top class mountaineers, Martin Moran and Mike "Twid" Turner gave the talk, passing on valuable advice and tips. Thanks to all who attended and supported the event - at only £4 it represented great value for money. We had a very nice letter from the BMC thanking us for our efforts and hospitality and they hoped we could organise next year's event as well.

Dolgellau – My 1st Real Meet

Mum and Dad took forever to pack the van but I slept most of the long journey to Dolgellau in the dark. We were the last to arrive and were surprised that all the beds seemed taken. Uncle Ed had said hardly anyone was going so Mum had agreed that I could come too. I think Brian K and Ken W

were a bit surprised to leave their kids at home for a quiet weekend to then find they sharing a room with me. Whoops!

We all woke early and Mum's plan to take me for a gentle walk in the woods changed when Uncle Ed talked Mum into joining the Ed's, Lee and Luke on a short walk. It was a lovely sunny day so I was thrilled to be up high in the papoose. I like being big!

Mum struggled uphill but once we were on the ridge above a lake (Llyn Cyri) I could even see the sea. We walked for ages (over Tyrau Mawr) and for most of the day we seemed to be walking away from our van. It's a wonder we didn't see lots of the others who walked up Cadair Idris as we could see this big hill all day. I didn't see Dad though because he was mountain biking in the woods (Coed y Brenin forest) with lots of his friends. Mind you, he said they'd left him behind 'cos he was too slow and unfit. Never mind Dad. Maybe I can bring my tricycle next year.

Our group were really late getting back. I got a bit scared because it got dark before we got back to the cars. Mum seemed to be muttering a lot but she was better once she'd had a cup of tea. Everyone else seemed really thirsty too and most of them went out that night to find even more to drink. I was really tired, I had my milk and an early night.

Lots of people seemed to have bruises in the morning. I don't know if like the sound of biking it seems a bit scary but lots went back for more. Dad didn't, he and Mum went on a gentle walk near a waterfall and old gold mine. I like this because I was allowed to walk. The puddles were excellent. I love Wales!

The Ed's went for another walk but their walk sounded very scary – The Precipice Walk. I think everyone had a great weekend. I really did and I hope I can go on another one soon. Ben 17 and $\frac{3}{4}$ (months).

Mountain Biking and pub-less nights

It's funny, but some things are forgotten by the mind and seem to be a good idea regardless of the transitory pain during a prior experience. So it was for last year's mountain bike meet. The previous year I had hired a bike and followed everyone around a large chunk of Welsh woodland known as the Karrimor route in Coed-Y-Brenin, this despite being sleep deprived. The experience was a salutary one of no training and a general lack of (the hitherto taken for granted) fitness resulting in much pushing of my bike uphill. This year was different. I had learnt to sleep on my feet, and I had been to the alps: I must be a bit better off!

Anyway, I pre-booked my bike which was not as comfy as last year's (but a lot cheaper), and joined the throng on the Red Bull Trail. True to last years' form it wasn't long before I was pushing my bike uphill, but this year I was at least staying mainly in contention with the group. The trail follows the same start as the Karrimor, which is a laborious ascent first on single track and then on forest rides to give the first taste of the excellent "off road" rocky bits. I was obviously getting a bit complacent because at the end of the second exciting bit I managed to plant the front wheel and glide gracefully through the air before landing less than gracefully like the proverbial sack. No real harm done, but the bruises were appearing all week. The remainder of the morning was a blur of mainly downhill bits to arrive back at the start point around lunchtime. Several others managed to dismount in spectacular style, but the most memorable bit was one rider's refusal to ride down the technical bits because they looked too scary! This man flies planes!

Lunch was a quick cuppa at the centre where we bumped into Bally and Andy P who must have been 10 minutes behind us on the trail.

Following lunch the main body of the group started on the MBR route. I joined them for the first mile or so, but felt quite knackered, so dropped back to the main road at Ganllwyd and then back to centre for an enjoyable solo trip round the single track section called the Flightpath. I returned the bike, and had just finished a brew when everyone else arrived back having given the MBR best until another day.

A chip supper and an agreement that Ali would take the first stint in the pub meant that I was baby-sitting for the evening as Ali was enjoying everyone's company so much she forgot to swap.

Thankfully Andy A appeared like a vision from the bar with a pint that he carried back through Dolgellau town centre.

Sunday most of the Bikers headed North to Betws-Y-Coed to trek around the Marin, but I'll have to wait for another occasion when the memory has dulled the saddle soreness again before I venture onto that!

Mark H

Captain Crag and the Fifth Person

New Year in Scotland always sounds better than just another piss-up down the local, so ten of us headed for Kinlochleven's "Cosy Cabins" – which turned out to be several Wendy houses behind the Macdonald Hotel. Andy A, Andrea, Sue and myself were in Shed No 3; The Ellis's, Paul B and Teeth shackled up in No 4 and Harry & Steff were at No 6. OK. At £7.50 a night inclusive of central heating (a fan heater in the middle of the wall) hot showers and a view of the pap of Glencoe, the scene was set for a cracking few days. Round at Oban, the Hardy's were visiting ex-pats Pete and Cheryl and experiencing warm Scottish hospitality despite sub zero temperatures outside and a broken boiler indoors. Shame they didn't get to use the sledge though!

Whilst Shed 3 had delayed departure from Leicester due to a man-cold, Shed 4 had managed to bag Sgurr Eilde Mor (1008m) and Shed 6 had a stroll along the West Highland Way. That night, we had several beers in the hotel bar before fighting our way back to the sheds through a raging blizzard.

Next day, the weather was foul, so we had a day's climbing and dossing at The Ice Factor (the world's biggest indoor ice climbing venue, so they claim).

Dinner that night was at The Tailrace Inn, where we discussed which Munro we were going for the next day. No need for all that planning though as the weather was crap once again. Clag down to the roof of our Wendy house and rain slashing it down. There was nothing else for it. We'd have to dig a tunnel under the perimeter fence.

A splinter group of Paul, Andy and Annette were determined to get wet, and set off down the West Highland Way. God knows how far they went, as they'd been stuck under a bivvy shelter and downed a bottle of brandy between them. Disgraceful behaviour, but good old Harry and Steff did a couple of hours ice climbing, so at least someone did something.

As for us, well, we went off to Fort William and then, driven by thirst, on to the Clachaig Inn at Glencoe. It was chucking down when we arrived and as we got out of the car, we wondered why a bunch of girlies were eying us up. Someone reckoned it was because I look a bit like George Cloonie, but personally, I think he's got longer legs.

The Clachaig is normally a snug old place, but today there was no log fire, and it was colder inside than out. Today it seemed a miserable place –there was a disparate bunch of outdoor types trapped in a dungeon with puddles on the floor smelling of rain, some of it not. It was New Years Eve and the Blue Bell in Stanton seemed a long way off.

One of the girlies came in from the rain. "Hello" she said and smiled sweetly at me. I thought my luck was in, 'til I remembered the wife sitting next to me. "We're having trouble pitching our tent" she said "and need a man". That was me out straight away. Teeth was staring blankly out at the rain, but we did have Captain Crag with us. The hero of many a damsel in distress, the Captain said, "give us ten minutes and we'll be out" I assumed that by "us" he meant just himself. He then proceeded to give her lots of advice about making sure they'd got all the poles before leaving, making sure they knew how to put it up, and other worldly tips.

At this point a fire breathing dragon from behind the bar appeared. "I don't think your comments are very helpful," she snarled. "Have you offered them any rooms?" asked Teeth. The Captain was clearly ruffled and after a few more exchanges he said, "I'm offering them help and advice, I don't see you moving your fat arse to help". "Who is the fifth person?" she retorted. We looked around in vain. I

expected the good Doctor to arrive with the Tardis and a big finger pointing down "it must be you". "Is she over 18?" cried the dragon.

"I'm nineteen actually. Why, is there an age limit on drinking hot chocolate?" said the fifth person. Indeed, too much hot chocolate is bad for you and the law in Scotland has to be obeyed. This dragon had obviously had too many midge bites during the summer. We buggered off and left them to it. Captain crag and the fifth person - 1, Damsels and Dragons – Nil.

Anyway, that night we cracked open a couple of bottles of bubbly before dining and boogied into the small hours with the Quo, the Proclaimers and others at the hotel disco. The night sky cleared just long enough for the landlord to let off all four fireworks. Later, all ten of us crammed in to Stalag 3 for malt and sympathy. We might not have done much on the hill – but by God, we had a laugh. Roll on the spring.

John Revolting

Question: Who was the fifth person? Answers on a postcard to: Turnip Face, Clachaig Inn, Glencoe.

Since They Were Famous – Dave Stevens.

Former member Dave "the Yeti" Stevens recently wrote to us in conjunction with the clubs 25th anniversary: "Many thanks go to John T and Ed – soon after we had walked across the whole of Wales, I later went on to complete the West Highland Way. The following year, I continued with Johns' epic by trekking from Fort William to Shiel Bridge, and followed up in the third year by continuing the walk on to Ullapool. I also enjoyed two skiing trips to Les Deux Alps and the Three Valleys in France. I even had a go a climbing and had many good times, particularly at the hut weekends – too many to mention. I'm unlikely to be mountain fit again due to my leg be poisoned by a bite but I still treasure my Tat award – for getting below 18 stone in weight! All the Best." Dave.

Report for 2005 – Ian Wilcox

Another former member Ian Wilcox sent the following by email: "Here in Buenos Aires the Christmas festive season sneaks up on you. Back in U.K. it is over the top and in your face from late October onwards. Here it's quite a minimal affair; only the few major stores and shopping malls have any sort of display. The majority of the thousands of smaller shops have no decoration at all and the remainder just have a bit of tinsel and a few lights. There are practically no street displays. Apart from the Christmas dinner (which actually is consumed after midnight on Christmas Eve called Nochebuena) I think people here prefer to save their money and spend it on their summer holidays; the schools break up today and don't go back until the beginning of March.

My major change this year was a removal to a new apartment in August. I liked my previous one but in May my landlord there told me he was raising the rent by nearly 40% I found a very nice 2-bedroomed apartment for the same rent in the same district of Belgrano; it is on the 9th floor with nice views going out to the Rio de la Plata, is fully equipped and furnished, and there is even a gym and swimming pool in the complex.

My trip back to UK lasted five weeks and I based myself in Manchester, and had trips to friends in Camberley and Oxted. I then went over to Brussels on Eurostar for a few days to Leuven. After a few days back in Manchester I flew to Cork and stayed near Skibbereen. For the last ten days in Manchester I hosted a friend from Peru who now lives in Barcelona for his first visit to England. I returned with him to Barcelona and then flew back to BA.

Other trips this year have been to Concordia in the province of Entre Rios for a few days at a resort with thermal springs; a few days in Córdoba, the second city of Argentina (which included a trip to Alta Gracia to see the boyhood home of Ché Guevara); and recently five days in Asunción, Paraguay. I have done all my travels so far by long distance buses which in this country are very high standard, like travelling first class on an aircraft. The trip to Paraguay was 20 hours which is certainly my limit. Trips further than that and I will have to fly.

Here in Buenos Aires I have been enjoying the many opportunities for live entertainment. These include orchestral concerts, opera, ballet, musical shows, plays, jazz and sport. Here you can see world-class entertainment at third-world prices. I have even started going to football matches regularly again, something I haven't done since I watched Sheffield United as a boy. My new flat is near the stadium of the 1978 World Cup final so I have been going there for home games of River Plate who are one of the top sides of Argentina. Wishing you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year".
Ian Wilcox.