

Outside Now!

News Feb/March 2007

Well, we've had an excellent few months, with members out and about making the most of the winter sun, and the hut meets so far have been at full capacity. We're only 10 weeks into 2007, and members have already been to the Lakes, the Peak, N.Wales, Scotland, and the Alps! We also had an excellent turn out of around 35 members for the Christmas Skittles and Nibbles night. Members were split into two teams: the "Walkers" and the "Climbers" - the Climbers were narrowly defeated by the Walkers. The main thing is that we managed to polish our skills in preparation for the game against Rugby MC (more details coming soon). It has been a productive month for the club, as a brand new website is now up and running (see p.6)-it is definitely worth a look. Members have been busy walking, biking, climbing, and there have been various ski parties around Europe! There are some fantastic huts coming up, so make sure you book yourselves on them early to avoid missing out. As you are all aware, the membership fees are due, so if you've still not paid up, now is the time! Also, just to remind you that although some huts do allow dogs, we have to take into account that some of our members have allergies etc, so unfortunately, the club has a no dog policy for all hut meets. Sorry! Thanks to all those who wrote articles for this edition, if anyone has any write ups, please email me edwardsandi@hotmail.com or take it to the Holywell on a Thursday night.

Presidential Election Elvyn is nearing the end of his time in power. As a strong, committed leader, he will be sorely missed, seeing us through the ups and downs of HMC life! The time has come for you to start thinking about his successor (if any) so if you have any suggestions, please fill in the enclosed form, and obtain 10 members to propose your candidate. Then, return the form to any committee member by Thurs 27 April 2007 All members will then receive a voting slip, and the new President (if any) will be elected during May.

Glencoe Meet Feb 2007 by Kev

Ruth and I decided to make the most of the Glencoe meet by driving up on Friday evening and extending it by an extra weekend. We did question our sanity when after 2 hours we had only just joined the M6 because of the traffic chaos caused by 2 inches of snow! Undeterred we arrived in Tyndrum at 12:30am and awoke at 7 to a horizontal blizzard caused by 70mph winds and driving snow.

Saturday was not a day to go high so we decided to walk the section of the West Highland Way to Bridge of Orchy then catch the train back to Tyndrum. The deciding factor for direction was the prevailing wind. I don't believe we actually did any walking at all as we were blown the entire way and were very smug as we passed people walking in the opposite direction bent double into the teeth of the blizzard. Harry and Rich went up to the Northern Corries on Beinn an Dothaidh to check out conditions for winter climbing but were beaten back by the high winds whilst Stef very sensibly stayed indoors at the Bridge of Orchy Hotel.

Sunday morning was much more clement in that the wind had abated but it was still snowing. After a lengthy breakfast and a lazy start we finally set off at 11 for a bit of Munro bagging near Bridge of Orchy. We thought we would do Stob a' Choire Odhair and time permitting continue on to Stob Ghabhar and descend the other Aonach Eagach. The walk from Forest Lodge along the Abhainn Shira is beautiful with stunning views down the Glen, and would be worthwhile in its own right to continue along the river to Loch Dochart or beyond. Our route

took us as far as the Clashgour Hut before heading off uphill. This 10 foot by 10 foot green corrugated iron hut incidentally used to be the schoolhouse for the Clashgour estate. Someone's parents apparently did walk 5 miles to school in winter in the snow but I suspect not barefoot (don't know your born these days!). At around 500M we were enveloped by mist and occasional snow showers but navigated without incident to the summit at 945M via the broad south ridge. Descent was down the west ridge to the bealach then back down to the Clashgour Hut following the Allt Toaig as time didn't allow us to go up Stob Ghabhar.

On Monday the forecast was much better so Ruth and I went up to Stob Coire nan Lochan to climb Dorsal Arête, a classic 3 star grade 2 mixed route which has been on Ruth's tick list since we last climbed there 2 years ago. We ambled up the perfect neve to the base of the route then had lunch to enable the three parties already on the route to gain a bit of distance, then geared up. The first 3 pitches are fairly straightforward and can be taken almost anywhere up the broad ridge to the crux of the climb, a very narrow highly exposed knife edge. Here we had to wait about 45 minutes as the 3 parties in front of us were ensconced on various parts of the pitch. One party were traversing underneath the ridge along the snow, another was traversing along the wall mid way up the ridge, and the third team were on the ridge proper. This pitch is superb if you religiously stick to the crest. It involves very airy climbing, with a couple of tricky moves. The first is a mantle onto a 2 foot square table top. I didn't feel so bad about using a knee on this section after watching the Guide from Abacus behind us do the same with his party. The second is a gymnastic move off a huge jug onto small footholds and another thin mantelshelf. This leads into the final pitch, a straightforward grade 2 snowy rampline. Up until now we had been largely enveloped in mist. This was well rewarded as we topped out above a cloud inversion. After waving goodbye to our "Brocken Spectres" we descended Broad Gully and then back down to the valley. Broad Gully is a very good grade 1 route and would be a great introduction into winter climbing for anyone interested. Tracey, Ken, Meg, and their friends Robert and Maureen it transpired, were not that far away and had a great day on Bidean nam Bian with Meg apparently wearing crampons for the first time (Broad Gully next then Meg?) Harry and Stef went up to Beinn an Dothaidh and the Northern Corries whilst Pete & Ed went off to Glen Etive, Pete bagging Beinn Charoch. So back to the hut, looking forward to meeting Richard's new girlfriend Lucia for the first time. Tuesday was another day for the valley as the weather was decidedly Scottish ("dreich" I believe is the proper terminology). So another section of the West Highland way seemed in order, namely Kinlochleven to Lagangarbh in the Glencoe valley. One of Ruth's (things) to do is the West Highland Way. I am hoping that one day I will be able to con her by saying that she has already done it saving me the trouble of having to do it in one go! All said and done this section is a lovely walk with fantastic views of the Mamores and Blackwater Reservoir in the other direction. We were looking forward to getting a good view of Buachaille Etive Mor from the top of the Devils Staircase but unfortunately it was clagged in below Crowberry Gully. We hitched back to the Clachaig in an artic truck driven by a South African guy who conspired with Ruth to get me to trek Fish River Canyon in Namibia! (very bizarre). Tracey, Ken and party were supposedly going for an easy walk because Robert had sore knees. Poor bloke, I think they walked to Blackwater Reservoir and back from Kinlochleven, which I believe finished Robert off! I also overheard Meg mumbling later on in the Clachaig about ringing Childline as she thought this kind of holiday was tantamount to child abuse! Cheers Ken for driving our car back from Kinlochleven by the way. Nigel and Pete went to the Buachaille to climb Curved Ridge but were thwarted by poor conditions and bad weather. Harry and Stef went for a walk in the same area, and Tim climbed the Buachaille via coire na Tulaich. Richard and Lucia went up to Aonach Mor and had a great time practicing winter skills (first time in crampons I think for Lucia). Tim and Ted, I believe went Munro bagging near the Glencoe Ski area and climbed Creise and, or Meall a Bhuirdh. Wednesday (Valentines Day) promised good weather. Two groups of us set off to do the Ballachulish horseshoe, myself and Ruth, Tim, Ted, and Pete. Ruth and I ascended the ridge that leads directly to the col between

Sgorr Bhan and the first Munro Sgorr Dhearg whilst Tim, Ted, and Pete chose the better option with more interesting scrambling, climbed the ridge to Sgorr Bhan. After reaching the col Ruth decided to go to the top of Sgorr Bhan to try to see the others. I suggested that she try to slow them down by trundling boulders down the ridge at them in the style of Edward Whymper in his race to beat Carrel to the first ascent of the Matterhorn. She obviously didn't of course.

From the col a beautiful curving ridge arced up to the summit of Sgorr Dhearg. The ridge comprised of pristine neve with absolutely no trace of footprints and could easily have been in the Alps. Needless to say we had the summit to ourselves and had tremendous 360 degree views of The Mamores, Grey Corries, The Ben, The Pap of Glencoe, The Aonach Eagach, Bidean nan Bian, and our second Munro Sgorr Dhonuill. An easy 200M descent downwards led us to a col, lunch then a nice scrambly ridge took us up to the summit. We then retraced our steps back to the col stopping briefly to chat to Tim, Ted, and Pete halfway down, then descended Coire Sgreamach into the Forestry workings of Glenn a Chaolais, St John's Church and the A82. The old romantic that I am and, given the fact that it was Valentines Day, Ruth and I headed off to the fleshpots of Fort William, 4 course dinner and a hotel for the night. Richard, Lucia, and Eddie walked the section of The West Highland Way from Kinlochleven to Glencoe, whilst Nigel and Harry went up to the Ben via the CIC Hut (in record time, 2 hours) to check out conditions and do some climbing. The completed No 2 Gully. On Thursday the weather was awful, so Ruth and I ambled around Fort Bill having breakfast, morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea before driving over to the Ice Factor to book a session for Friday. Harry, Nigel, Stef, and Pete climbed at the Ice Factor. Pete must have had a busy day because he went up the Pap of Glencoe with Tim and Ted earlier and all three of them got absolutely drenched in the aforementioned appalling weather (what fools). Friday most people headed off to the Lakes for the weekend, that I guess is another story. Ruth and I went to the Ice Factor for a couple of hours Ice climbing where we bumped into Al and his father who we met in Chamonix last summer (small world). We then went back to Fort William for the weekend to try and get something done on the Ben. Saturdays forecast was supposed to be good. The plan was to go up to the CIC Hut to either climb North Climb then No4 Gully or Garadh Gully then No2 Gully. Driving up Glen Nevis at 6:30am in torrential rain was not very convincing. We stuck to our guns and headed off up to the CIC Hut. The rain subsided occasionally but on arrival conditions were still not great, the clag was down almost to the bottom of Tower Ridge, it was still raining, and half the world were vying for the handful of routes available. Prudence seemed the much better option so we walked back down.

Saturday night saw the first and only valley frost of the holiday, which meant that Sunday turned into a glorious day. Unfortunately we had to drive home. All in all the meet was very successful and everyone got lots done and enjoyed themselves immensely. It was great to meet Lucia (nice one Rich). My apologies for missing anything out, spelling mistakes and any anomalies. Can the club book this event again next year?

Postscript. The following Tuesday (20th) happened to be Ruth's day off this week. After only one day at work she got stir crazy and made me take her up to Wales for the day. We did the North ridge of Tryfan, up Bristly ridge then traversed the Glyders to return via the Devils Kitchen. The weather was superb with a cloud inversion on the Glyder plateau, no "Brocken Spectres" this time though. The only incident of the day was having to rescue this bloke and his wife off Bristly who were completely out of their depth. Fortunately for them we had a short rope in my rucksack just in case conditions were icy.

DIAMOD RWTSH - A WEEKEND IN WALES by Andy

Ed's weather forecast was spot on yet again. Travelling up to North Wales early on Friday, Dave and Brian got to the Hut (part of the Plas Y Brenin empire) at Capel Curig first. Brian, who - as his wife Liz would tell you - is a keen gardener!, spied a pile of free sheep manure outside the hut door and unable to resist something for nothing, set about collecting it (with Dave's help) before the others arrived. By the time Ed, Pete and myself turned up there was hardly any left. Never mind, we joined everyone for a pint and pizza in the bar at the Tyn y Coed instead.

Saturday in Capel Curig dawned sunny and bright without a breath of wind. (The village is said to be the driest place in Wales according to Pete). The hut was full of enthusiasm as people packed rucksacks and hastily ate their breakfast, eager to make the most of the fantastic January weather. Others wondered whether they had packed their sun hat. A group including Dave, Tim, Pete, Brian and Ted set off to do a Carneddau traverse and try and find some breeze. They avoided the high tops and after much lying down, opted for some sunbathing instead. Harry and Stef also drove down the Ogwen valley to escape the heat wave. They were followed shortly after by Martin and Julie with their dog. Both parties found the cool mountain air much to their liking.

Brian and Dave enjoyed a valley walk, which gave them many fine views and limited their exposure to the sun. Meanwhile, back at the Hut, Ed himself was clearly suffering from sun-stroke and all he could manage was a short walk down to Cobdens Hotel "to check out a possible new hut" he assured me. I went for a run in the woods to keep out of the sun. Someone, who shall remain nameless, forgot his sun-hat and was forced to borrow a tea towel from the bar at Plas y Brenin.

Andy and Annette walked down to Betwys y Coed to see the newly dried up Swallow Falls. They encountered scenes of panic as tourists, unable to cope with the drought, high temperatures and lack of breeze rushed into the nearest Pub. They were even forced to catch the bus back to Capel as temperatures soared into the 40's making walking nigh on impossible.

On Saturday evening, after such a dry day, everyone was keen to top up their fluid levels, so we visited the Tyn y Coed yet again and carried on re-hydrating back at the Hut! Sunday morning arrived and with it the realisation that the weekend was nearly over. Never mind, there was still time for the Carneddau Crew to set off over on a great walk, over the Glyders this time. Some members found time to top up their logbooks for their MGSS (Winter) Award, others drove home exhausted and sun-burnt. Ed, Pete and myself enjoyed a full breakfast at the Café and a stroll along the Ogwen valley. Ed even found some rare wild liquorish growing by the side of a track and unable to pick this protected plant, took a photograph for his wife, Sue. After this unexpected treat we stopped on the way home for a trip on foot across the Froncysyllte (try saying that while chewing a toffee) Aqueduct near Chirk. At 121 feet above the River Dee, this was the highest level walk we had done over the weekend. Roll on Glencoe! (Who writes this crap?) 'EDLESS'

Bikers

Every Thursday during the winter months, a merry band of nutters, (including Mark H, Swampy, Ian, Andy T, Andy A and others) meet somewhere in the Charnwood Forest, for a dose of night-time riding. It is always off-road, always pitch black, and always ends up in a pub. They go out for 1-2 hours at a time, and as Ian said 'It's always a laugh'. Ian, Ali & Mark have also completed some more Trailquests, although "not very competitively".

Climbers

Brian K, Tracy, Richard, Andy T, Dave and Mark T are amongst the regulars that meet every Thursday at either the Tower or Warwick climbing wall. As usual, we try to get as many members as possible along for the first Thursday of the month during winter. As spring approaches, no doubt there'll be trips up to Stanage, Frogett etc, so check out the forum for any arrangements, or contact any of the above.

Warriors!

Calling themselves the Weekly Warriors, Dave, John and Stuart regularly venture out midweek- usually Wednesdays. Their walks range from 7 to 12+ miles and always involve a pub. Recent walks have been around Cubbington, Sutton Stop and Corley Moor (all near Coventry) as well as walks from Adelstrop and Blockley in the Cotswolds. The three warriors are, of course, always open to company on these walks, so if you want to join them, see them in the Holywell on a Thursday night.

Your Club. Our History: Jottings from old Log Books

26 YEARS AGO On New Years Eve 1981, Mark B set out with some friends to climb Hells Lum in the Cairngorms. Tragedy struck when one climber lost a boot and crampon in the final chimney and in rapidly deteriorating conditions died from exposure (hypothermia). Mark made it to the top, tired and exhausted and whilst getting into a survival bag, slipped and fell down the Face. He was found alive the next morning by the Mountain Rescue Team who told him he had fallen 500 feet to the bottom of the crag. Miraculously he suffered only bruises. Scarcely had we got over that when Brian G, climbing with Jim in Main Gully, Glyder Fach, fell, suffering severe injuries, which necessitated a helicopter ride to Bangor Hospital where he stayed for two weeks before being transferred to George Eliot Hospital. Happily he made a full recovery. Don Note: Don is still having difficulty with his knee, but is hoping to come down the club soon and sends best wishes to everyone. AE 16 YEARS AGO A feast of climbing took place throughout 1991 with Birchens, Stanage, Tremadoc, The Roaches, Curbar and Chatsworth featuring heavily in the logbook. The wall at both The Moat (Sundays) and The Foundry, Sheffield (Wednesdays) were also popular. John was elected President and new members included Alan T & Ian B. Harry, Stacey and Andy completed 3 days of exceptional climbing, from their campsite at the Clachaig Hotel, Glencoe. Having completed No 6 gully on the west face of Anoch Dubh, they crossed the avalanche slopes of Stob Coire Nam Bieth for Deep Cut Chimney III/IV*** and later did Central Gully. Harry, Stacey, Brian, Simon and Andy travelled out to Chamonix in July and completed the North Spur on the Aiguille du Chardonnet (3824) commenting "the Italians had kicked shit down on us all day". Also in July, Andy, Matt, Kev, Brian & Harry climbed at Chee Dale - Matt & Andy completing "Rave On" E3 5C* and "Splintered Perspex" E3 6a**. Pete, James & Kev wrote "there are some quality routes at Garbage Edge" and ticked off "Moyer Buttress" E1 5b and "Cave Arête" HVS 5a amongst others. 26 members attended the Kays Hut weekend at Seathwaite, John, Nigel and Mick completing the Fairfield Horseshoe in thick clag and with a large helping of Pussers Rum!

Saga Louts by Ed Once again, the boys have been out in the Peak. Dave led the January walk, a circuit from Monyash with a pub stop at the Mill Inn. Richard & Lucia had joined us for the day, before heading off for the highlands, and had brought some rather inclement weather with them-it absolutely slashed it down, just as we arrived at the pub. As usual, the place was packed and we had to sit in the restaurant. Those pubs that shut on a Monday should take note. The

grey pound is on the march!! February's walk from Tideswell took in Cressbrook Dale and chip butties at the Anglers. Delightful.

The "louts" are about, usually on the first Monday of the month and welcome any one along. Next walk is Monday 12 March in the Cotswolds. No mountains there I know, but hey, it beats working! Mon 2 April is also booked.

You Could Be Here Our next hut meet is at the Penstar Bunkhouse, Brecon Beacons. Cost is around £25 for the weekend and is in superior accommodation sleeping in 2, 6 and 12 berth rooms. There's a drying room and fully equipped kitchen, ample living space and under floor heating. There is also direct access to the Brecon Beacons via the Taff Trail and pubs are a short distance away. We haven't been down to this part of the country for some time, but the walking is excellent and no doubt the bikers could find some challenging routes as well. Tap in Penstar Bunkhouse on Google and have a look! Easter: and in a departure from tradition, i.e. avoid Bank Holidays; why not try out Buttermere Youth Hostel. Both Crummock Water & Buttermere are within a stones throw of the hostel and walks for all start from the doorstep. With views of Red Pike & High Stile from the lounge, the hostel also has a self-catering kitchen, table licence and mainly 4-6 bedded rooms. There are two pubs about 5 mins walk serving excellent beer and food. If you want to go you must contact ED immediately as these bank holiday weekends tend to be very popular. Looking further ahead, we've got Pete's hut in Nant Gwynant over the May Day bank holiday, (3 nights) Always a favourite hut. Spring in the Gwynant...mmm See you there!