

OUT & ABOUT

2007 was a very active year for HMC members. We've seen members off to Peru, Chamonix, Bavaria, Spain and Morocco, not to mention the successful monthly meets around the country.

Back in May, we elected Harry as our new President, and then in October we had yet another excellent President's Meet.

The week before Christmas we had our nibbles night at the Holywell, which saw a huge number of members turn up to catch up on the years events over sausage and chips! We have a busy programme this year, so make sure you get your names down early on any meets you want to go on.

Subs are due from 1st Jan, they're staying at £15 for the year - bargain!

Climbers are still meeting inside for anyone that wants to join them - the Tower was closed over Christmas, but there were outings to other walls in the area, such as Warwick. Richard and Maureen also braved the cold on Dec 30th for the last climb of 2007. They did Yo-Ho Crack (V.Diff), Stocked Severe (4a) and Stokers Wall (Diff) before heading to the café. Also, congratulations on behalf of the club to Lee and Louise on the birth of their daughter, Florence on Dec 8th, and also to Andy and Annette, who also welcomed a beautiful little girl, Hannah, into the world on Dec 16th. Well done to both families, we're looking forward to seeing the little ones out on the hills soon...

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.

Trail Magazine has got involved with Alan Hinkes' favourite charity, WaterAid, to create a mountain challenge in order to enable some of the world's poorest people to have access to clean water. Teams of walkers will climb one of the 100 hills and mountains in Britain chosen by Trail, in order to raise money for Water Aid, who will in turn 'provide access to clean water, safe sanitation and hygiene education for the world's poorest people'. HMC have currently entered 3 teams into the challenge, including 1 all girls team. Let Dave T know if you'd like to join a team. We will climb Cnicht, North Wales, on June 7th 2008, from Pete M's hut in Nant Gwynant. This is an excellent cause, and every penny counts, so please give generously when the sponsorship forms come out or visit www.justgiving.com/hmc

AGM

The AGM in November was in "the big tent" at the back of the Holywell. We had a very good turn out, and the meeting was short and sweet, due to the sub-zero temperature of the tent and the dripping condensation!

Thanks were given to Ed for yet another excellent meets programme, and there was recognition for Dave P and Pete H for their outstanding achievements in the club this year. **Subs will remain at £15 for a year's membership, and are due from the 1st Jan 2008. Please try to pay your membership before 20th Feb, otherwise you will not be included in the initial BMC insurance cover, and it makes Brian K's life very difficult if you pay after their deadline.** Brian looked into setting up direct debit, but it has since been discovered that this will not be possible.

The committee mostly remains the same, but Andy T has stepped down from Social Secretary, with Martin A taking up the post. Brian K also announced that this would be his final year as Treasurer, so we will be looking for someone to fill this position on the committee in November 2008.

It was decided that as the President's Meet was such a success that we will return once again to the Chamois Hut, with some kind of entertainment this year.

The forum and website have been very effective, and there is now a route book on the website for you to use. Mark H mentioned that if anyone is interested in helping maintain the website in any way, he is willing to show you the ropes, just get in touch with him.

Thanks to everyone who turned up for the meeting.

DOLGELLAU by Andy & Bradley C and Ackie

We woke early on Saturday morning and the weather looked grim. It wasn't raining, but the cloud base was really low. It was either a bike ride to Barmouth or a walk up Cader Idris. I know which Ackie and I preferred, but being his first club meet, Bradley (7) wanted to climb Cader Idris. We started out up the Pony Track and after about half a mile, Bradley's heels started to rub in his new boots. A quick pit stop to fit some preventative plasters and we pressed on. "We'll just aim to get to get up on top of the ridge, and then probably call it a day" we said, quite relieved, as the weather was getting worse.

We reached the ridge and I'd made too good a job with the plasters because Brad's feet had stopped hurting! Half way along the ridge in rain and wind, we stopped for a cuppa and bite to eat, hoping that we might be able to turn back if Bradley's feet were hurting. But no, he wanted to press on. Not wanting to dampen his spirits, we carried on. The wind became so strong that we had to hold Bradley's hands to stop him falling over. We touched the trig point and found a sheltered place to rest for a few minutes. We didn't hang around, as it was cold. We hurried down back to the car and Bradley was very pleased with himself!

The next day saw the weather improve slightly. Ackie made his way home so Bradley and I headed up to Coed y Brenin to tackle the family route. Brad wanted to tackle a more severe route, but I told him he wasn't old enough. Really it was because my last trip here resulted in me falling off my bike with really bad cramp! This was a great route for kids and an hour and a half later we were tucking in to a bowl of hot soup. A great weekend overall and one that Bradley really enjoyed.

Meanwhile, Dave P and Brian G started out on Saturday morning at Penmaenpool, and went into the hills behind, and then down to the coast, followed by a walk back to the car along the disused railway.

Ken's group, consisting of Ewan, Elvyn, Ian B, Ken, Megan and Andy A did the Red Dragon in Coed y Brenin, with this being Elvyn's first outing on his new bike - he was the only one of the lot not to fall off! Ian B had a mechanical nightmare during the ride, wearing body armour under his clothes to protect himself! The highlight was half way round, when Andy A fetched out his bread and butter pudding with double dairy cream for the others to drool over!

Andy T and Jane went on a bike ride to Barmouth along the disused railway, followed by a ride on the beach - "It was hard work, but good fun" said Andy.

On Sunday, possibly still inebriated from the previous night, Dave G, Jane and Elvyn decided to run the Precipice walk - three and a half miles which, according to Dave, was 'absolutely brilliant' despite feeling very ill afterwards due to the big breakfast he had consumed just prior the run!

At the end of the weekend, Ackie was conned into collecting the fees for the weekend and...as he had just been promoted to Prison Officer, nobody dared to try and avoid coughing up...

IN A TIZI IN MORROCO by Brian K

In mid November Peter H and I went to Morocco to attempt a winter ascent of Mount Toubkal, at 4,167 metres the highest peak in the Atlas Mountains. We arrived in Marrakech late on Saturday evening, and on Sunday the remaining people of our tour joined us. Sunday morning was taken up by an informative tour of the old town to sample local life. After lunch we climbed into our transport for the journey up to Aroumd - the highest permanent settlement in the village.

Monday saw us on an acclimatisation walk up to a col (or tizi) at about 2,520 metres and then return to our gite for lunch. Tuesday was a much harder day with a climb from Aroumd at 1,920 metres up to the Neltner refuge at 3,207m. We passed the holy shrine of Sidi Chamharouch at 2310m where legend has it that a holy man lies entombed under a large white painted boulder. Here we enjoyed one of the many glasses of sweet mint tea that were becoming a ritual on this trek. Later at 2700m we passed a shop (or at least a shack clinging to the hillside full of souvenirs). The Neltner refuge, operated by the Club Alpin Français, was completed in 2000 and can accommodate up to 80 people. There were no signs for the toilets but in fact you just have to follow your nose. After lunch some of us went further up the valley to Tizi Ouanoums, at col at about 3,650 metres. The total ascent

that day was over 1700m. Although this trip was advertised as a winter ascent of Toubkal unfortunately no one had informed the snow to arrive on time. The hills around the refuge were still clear of snow and in fact there was very little snow anywhere.

Wednesday was the day we were to climb Toubkal itself. We left the refuge at dawn for the climb up a steep scree and boulder slope. The route took us up to Tizi Toubkal and on to a ridge that eventually came to the final ridge to the summit. The views were impressive even though the weather was closing in. Neither Peter nor I were happy with the amount of graffiti on the triangular steel structure and boulders. During our return to the refuge the weather deteriorated and started to snow and a good covering was on the higher parts of the path.

We were up early again on Thursday morning with the intention of climbing Mount Ouanoukrim at 4,084 meters, the second highest peak in the Atlas Mountains. The weather had just caught up with the idea that this is a winter holiday – it had snowed all night and was still doing so. We resigned ourselves to a short trudge up the valley for a return for early mint tea and a very early lunch. However, as we gained height the weather started to clear, and we eventually made it all the way to Tizi Ouanoukrim at 3,750m. Mohammed the guide and Matt the leader agreed that the weather conditions were not settled enough to proceed up the narrow rock ridge to the summit so after a brief rest we left the col to return to the hut. After lunch we all adjourned outside to admire the scenery now cloaked in snow, sunbathe and play frisbee.

Our final day in the hills started brightly and we all agreed to climb up to Tizi Ouanoums – the col some visited earlier in the trek. Friday's walk was substantially different to the trip up to the same col a few days earlier. The snow now covered the boulders in the valley and up to the col. After a time for photographs at the col we returned to the refuge for a mug of mint tea and a sardine butty, before the long trek down to the Gite at Aroumd for lunch and a final dinner in the hills.

On Friday evening wet snow started to fall at the gite at about 1900 meters and it continued to fall throughout the night. On Saturday we had to walk through good old British wet snow down to the road head and then we denatured to a very cold and wet Marrakech for our last day in Morocco.

Overall a very enjoyable, and at times quite challenging trip.

CRAGGING

In early December, Chris G, Stacey and Richard went to Portland for a spot of sport climbing to escape Christmas shopping.

Friday started at 3pm with an easy scramble to as many bars as possible thereafter.

Saturday was very windy but we managed to do Fallen Slab Arête 3 *** (Chris led, Rich & Stacy 2nd) and Fallen Slab 3 *** (Rich led, C&S 2nd). Stacey started Imperfect 3 * but a quick shower brought a swift end to the day.....scramble to more bars in the evening!

Sunday was a washout so a quick trip to Bournemouth Uni wall (not a patch on Warwick).

Monday was clear blue skies with six routes conquered in before 2pm including Stacey's first completed sport lead. Eat stick and Die 2+ (SG led, Rich 2nd - CG solo). We're Only Placing Bolts For Nigel 2+ (all top rope)

On Manoeuvres 3 (SG led, Rich & CG 2nd)

Charity Work Mate 3 (Rich led, SG & CG 2nd)

The Great Hamburger Disaster 4+ (CG led SG 2nd).

There are still weekly trips to the wall, so just contact Rich, Chris, and Tracy etc if you fancy going along.

XMAS PLOD

Around a dozen of us turned out on a mild and dry morning for another cracking pud walk, devised by John & Dave, from Shipston on Stour. There were some lovely Cotswold villages and some fine views en route, but one of the best was when we spotted a sparrow hawk, being mocked by a crow, take out a pigeon right above us. Wow.

Talking of birds, now, I'm not one to gossip, but have you heard the one about Brian & Liz G's Christmas Turkey?

Well, they had a goose this year, and put a turkey in the oven for later (for turkey butties etc). After stuffing the turkey and themselves, they put their feet up on the new settee - one of those with the automatic foot rest and er....nodded off!

Several hours later...

Well. I'll leave the rest to Brian.

Anyway, back to the walk. After dropping off "Gillett Hill" (no lie) we then plodded over one of those fields where the mud sticks like glue and you weigh several pounds more on the other side.

We finished off with lunch, Old Hooky and Adnams at the White Bear in Shipston.

Nice one John/Dave.

INGLETON by Ed

There are many reasons for returning to the same old haunts, year in year out, but if you like area and there's a great pub serving great food, why not?

Our third December meet at Ingleton Youth Hostel turned out to be one of the wettest, but the weather still didn't deter our 16 members from getting out.

Harry, Stef, Ash & Alex completed the direct route up Whernside, had blizzard conditions on the top, and were glad to be off early and into the pub. Teeth & Jane set out to do some mountain-biking, and cut short after some 8 miles of battling with the elements and Elvin & Ian B pulled in Ingleborough, arriving back around 5pm.

The Glens & Waterfalls walk, perhaps one of the best of its type in Britain, was completed by Ed & Sue, the highlight was watching 3 or 4 salmon attempting the leap up Beezley Falls, which were in full spate. Where's the camera when you need it?

Meanwhile, whilst the rest of us were getting soaked, Brian C, Sarah, Richard and Tracy opted for some indoor climbing at the local wall, followed by the usual teashop traverse. Stuart & Dave had also cut short their walk and were in danger of overdosing on tea back at the hostel.

As it was Christmas, Ye Olde Sweet Shoppe in the village took a hammering and after this extensive shopping expedition, well, you can't beat sitting in front of a log fire with a pint of Black Sheep and a gale blowing outside. Snug.

Having booked a table at the Old Hill Inn, we weren't disappointed. The meal was excellent, but the heating could have been cranked up a bit as poor Harry had a job playing the piano with his numb fingers!

Sunday arrived and hey presto, no rain. A mass ascent of the Glens & Waterfalls walk for some and a trip to Malham Cove for the rest.

It doesn't matter how many times you go, Malham is terrific and impressive.

So, on to next year...I have pencilled in a Yorkshire meet for December, utilising a Youth Hostel again as numbers can fluctuate wildly. Do we go for Ingleton or do we try somewhere different? Let me know and I'll get it booked. Plenty of time.

OUR CLUB....Your History....

2000

The 2000 Xmas Pud Walk was from The Cock at Hanbury (wasn't this where that stalker was caught?) and included a visit to the Fauld Crater: the scene of Britain's biggest ever explosion when an ammunition dump went pop. In February, at Pete's hut in Nant Gwynant, Trowie, Gillett & Wardy ascended Moel Siabod in pouring rain, but Dawn & Debbie's group, including Richard, Alison, Ian, Lee, Helen, Kev and others had better weather and ticked off Cnicht.

It was noted in the February newsletter that Ewan had been spotted in B&Q. Seven years on, married with two children and guess what? He's still at it.

During the spring, the Foot & Mouth outbreak was the worst experienced by Britain since records began, with 6 million animals culled. It also had a devastating impact on our trips and hut meets, but on the first day the Tisington trail re-opened, Ed, Beastly, Trowie, Monty & Mark H were there, stopping off at the Royal Oak en route, and a desperate landlord.

At least Dave Pybus had found something else to do. He'd discovered art, and was busy sketching and painting and sold quite a few pieces at the club.

1991

Held at the Helvellyn Youth Hostel, 55 members enjoyed a 3 course meal, ably prepared by Jackie Crockford, Val Ward & Debbie Lee.

Richard Ellis was overall winner of the photo competition and home grown entertainment included some dodgy "dance" from Val W, Anne S, Delith J and others and a sketch by Andy S, Steve O & Ed.

SAGA LOUTS

November, and Monty Pybus had cobbled together a walk from Edge Hill, on the edge of the Cotswolds.

The tower at the Castle Inn, Edgehill marks the spot where, on the afternoon of Sunday 23 October 1642, King Charles 1st raised his standard and summoned his officers about him to prepare for the first major battle of the English Civil War.

365 years later, after battling over hill and dale, on a sunny Monday, The Saga Louts took refuge in The Castle, raised their pints of Old Hooky and proclaimed "beats working, eh lads".

At the beginning of December, they travelled to Winster in The Peak for a 10 miler combining wild unspoilt woodland with Stanton Moor and Robin Hoods Stride -via The Red Lion at Birchover. Having put my gaiters on "the wrong way round" - according to Brian, I thought nothing of it until, crossing one of those four bar stiles (without a plank) I got my footing all wrong and...Ooh, it was painful - made me eyes water, I can tell you.

Make sure you put yer gaiters on the right way!

PS. Monty Pybus has now clocked over 2800 miles.

YOU COULD BE HERE....

JAN 18/19 Clyngwyn Bunkhouse is situated in the Brecon Beacons National Park, and very near to the famous caves & waterfalls of Ystradfellte. About half an hour away is The Glynccorwg Mountain Biking Centre, which has superb facilities and is the trailhead for Whites Level and the Skyline mountain biking trails. There is also a bike shop, café, lounge area, open-air deck, changing/shower rooms, and a bike park.

The Bunkhouse has a fully equipped kitchen with full gas central heating, which ensures a nice cosy stay and also heats the drying area.

In February, we have a cottage booked in Glencoe for some real mountain stuff, followed by a weekend at Borrowdale Youth Hostel. Same format as last year-if you can't get to Scotland, why not join us at Borrowdale in The Lakes.

March sees a welcome return to the Chapel @ Capel where we may even get some outdoor climbing, weather permitting!! It's also a superb venue for walking on the Carneddys/Tryfan or even MTB in Gwydir Forest, just before Skiing on 15th - Val Thorens in the 3 Valleys.

Busy bees aren't we!

Let me know where you want to go.

See you there! ED