

## Summer 2002

Once again, summer's here, the evenings are light, the weekends are sometimes sunny and England's out of the World Cup! Time to get Outside Now! If my informants are correct that's exactly what you've been doing. I hear that veteran member John T has led walkers on a circuit based around Hanbury, then more recently for a twelve mile circular walk in the Charnwood forest, let alone the couple of day trips to Mid Wales he's managed with Colin Green. Meanwhile, Dave P has led cycle rides in the Cotswolds and further rides more locally, whilst Nick & Helen have continued to explore their new "local" countryside by bike and even horseback.

Elsewhere, there's been cragging in Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Wales, with a continued group meeting on Thursday evening at Beaumont Leys wall (6ish if you fancy going along). If that's not enough to have worn you all out, there have been hut meets to Skye, the Brecons, Yorkshire, the Lakes and most recently Bosigran. With a busy programme of events still to come, why not try an attempt at the Welsh 3's on the Rhydd Ddu weekend? If you're interested please contact Pete Marston ASAP . Alternatively, if you can help on the support team Pete will be very pleased to hear from you too.

As the President's Meet 2002 approaches, see later for menu details. After the great success of the Presi's 2001 once again, we're heading to the Snowdon Ranger YHA so book early to reserve your place. It's also planned that Lee and the band will be back to entertain us. What more could you ask for at a mere £35 for the full weekend. Hope to see you there..... Alison.

### *Perth-y-Pia, Brecon Beacons - March '02*

Perth y Pia bunkhouse, nestled in the foothills of the Black Mountains near Crickhowell, was the base for the eleven attending the March hut weekend. Lee L and Brian arrived early on Friday with time to complete an ascent of Pen Y Fan. The others arrived later - Pete & Cheryl, Helen B, Sue, brother Paul, Andrea & Ed, Alison & Mark, Ackie & Birthday Boy Brother-in-Law. Nice Pub... On Saturday in less than ideal weather, each of the three parties independently completed the traverse of the ridge and valley taking in Table Mountain, Pen Cerrig-calch, Pen Allt-mawr to complete an average of ten miles. The three groups made a joint unplanned rendez-vous for lunch just below the summit of Pentwynglas, with its distinct two boundary stones marking the hill's highest point.

A much fairer day dawned on Sunday as the parties again headed to the hills. The Ed family made for Llangorse Lake, Lee and Helen ascended Sugar Loaf together, Pete and Cheryl climbed at Llangattock escarpment whilst Alison and Mark headed for the Southern Brecon Beacons. Their walk began amongst the forest and riverside scenery with its numerous waterfalls, followed by a steep ascent of Craig y Fan Ddu to join the wide sweeping peat bogged ridge. The route passes the site of a Wellington R1465 which crashed in 1941 into the hillside in bad weather, before returning to the valley to rejoin the river back to the start.

That same day Brian claims to have made a solo ascent of Lord Hereford's Knob (GR SO 350225), or TWMPA to the natives ... oh I say!

### *Cragging Titbits*

Having got your attention - come on all you rock jocks, what have you been up to? Under pressure I hear that E points are being amassed by some, with Lee bagging Three Pebble slab for starters. Lee and Kev have also been spotted heading for North Wales, allegedly in pursuit of cragging in the Corner on the Cromlech...

Tony C has been exploring the delights of climbing at Castle Ellin, abseiling down to the sea some 65/70 metres below then climbing, practically vertically, back up. He is also rumoured to have visited Markfield with Mr T for a spot of cragging. Apparently together they climbed a few Severe's - Trowie's first time on the rock for about 5 years, ably led by Tony. The things you can do in retirement... Rich and Annette have also paid their first visit to Markfield after taking me 'n Mark to some of their "local" crags Rylestone near Grassington, and Brownstones near Bolton.

A recent trip to Harborough Rocks gave Alastair the opportunity to refine his gear placement skills whilst ascending Little Crack, described as an overhanging crack graded Severe. Thought for the day "Climbing past your gear can sometimes pull your placements out" - scary moments, adrenaline rushes but route bagged - enough said. Al, Alison and Mark climbed various routes (mainly solos, M to S) including Little Chimney, Little Gulley, Little Little Crack, Scooped Wall and Trident Arete. Andy T also managed to do some Mods and Diffs at Harborough and Bichens, in between decorating the lounge, whilst Helen B did loads of V Diffs at Stanage, leading 3 and 1 severe, including Intermediate Buttress and Curved Corner. And finally, Pete The Beast has been flexing his muscles at Stanage, warming up a few HVS's no less.

No doubt there's been plenty more cragging going on but I'm a bit off the scene as you can see!

### *NEC Outdoor Show*

Those of us who went had mixed fortunes. Due to overwhelming interest on Saturday, complimentary ticket holders were frustratingly denied access to the show. On Sunday the tickets were honoured but the venue was heaving by mid morning. Those who attended the free lectures and seminars seemed fairly impressed. The actual stands were of varying interest and quality, ranging from solely information stands to those selling clothing, equipment or holidays. There were some good freebies to be had/won, ranging from malt loaf courtesy of the YHA/Screen to torches and multi tools on the OS maps trade stand. For those willing to queue and risk public humiliation there were "come-&-try" sessions available to "mountain" bike outside the arena on a selection of off road bikes (there was even a tandem mountain bike for the brave), "ice" climb up polystyrene, "rock" climb up resin or even cyber "hangliding". If that's not enough, you could watch participants on the Indoor Adventure Race (weird). Whilst it was an OK way to spend half a day, it did make you question why you were inside on a glorious sunny morning, watching other people doing things indoors that you could be doing yourself outdoors if you hadn't gone along. Ho hum... Alison.

### *Successful Polar Lecture Evening*

Despite a few technical difficulties on the night, husband and wife team Fiona and Mike Thornewill entertained over 100 people during the recent club lecture evening at William Bradford Community Centre. Over the evening they recounted their successful bid to be the first married couple to walk to both North and South poles. Thanks to all who supported this event, and thanks also to Elvyn for arranging the evening.

### *24 May '02 - Fylde Hut, Little Langdale*

Friday's rain lasted well in to Saturday morning so pre pub plans for the hills and crags evolved into trips to climbing in Kendall and the cafes of Coniston, whilst the intrepid (or should that read tepid?) mountain bikers were off to "kick some pedal" (or "chuck some chain" Mr Ed).

In gear-test formation the cagoule-clad-Coniston-clan tramped onwards with Dawn demonstrating her recently honed map reading skills as she led the low levellers towards the teapots of Coniston.

There was an air of urgency on the return lap (The Tigers kick off at Cardiff), yet the mountain bikers had already made for the local! The ensuing session culminated in a trip across the swollen ford to visit a local cave by torchlight. You really don't want to see the monstrously hairy creatures of the cave, but beware there are photos....

Initially brighter weather on Sunday generated a surge of activity - Pete B, Kev, Lee, Dawn, Tracy, Alison, Carolyn, Helen, Tim and Mark made a mass ascent of Jack's Rake (a cracking Grade 1 scramble above the New Dungeon Ghyll) then a hasty retreat to the Stickle Barn as the heavens opened.

### **ON THE EDGES**

"Who needs a compass when you can point straight to the nearest pub? "

Bored out of my skull, and the thought of the mother in law visiting on Saturday, I galvanized myself and half a dozen members into action. We drove up to the Robin Hood car park at Birchens Edge and set off in glorious weather, ticking off the monuments, followed by Froggatt and Curbar Edges, then scrambling on some boulders (even Don – but don't tell Val) and finally into the Grouse Inn J for lunch, where Tony and John reminisced about the good times in the forces in nineteen hundred and frozen to death.

The return was supposed to have come along the valley, but Tony, Elvyn and Helen had got other ideas. The climbing on Froggatt looked more appealing. Oh for a rope! I could see them drooling at 50 paces. No time to stop guys, we've got a Bar-B to go to. We covered about ten miles in all. The sun was beating down, and a nice breeze regulated the temperature. It was a couple of days later when my head broke out with what I thought was raging dandruff. Great sheets of skin came peeling off. Leprosy had set in.

'Er indoors told me I must wear me hat, but, hey, I won't need it when me fringe grows back!

Sir Edward N Gruntfootock

## Skittles Evening

We must be loosing our touch because we certainly lost the trophy (again!). During this year's annual contest despite stern opposition, like England we seemed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory as Rugby MC triumphed to retain the coveted trophy. We have a year to regroup, train and prepare - or alternatively recruit new HMC'ers from the local skittles league. Its over to you guys now. We need a Svengali - is there a short, softly spoken gent with a receding hairline and spectacles out there to lead us on...no not you Eddie again!

## Isle of Skye - April 2002

Saturday 20 April - Sixteen HMC members checked in at the Glen Brittle Memorial Hut after a marathon drive from the midlands. Steve O, Brian G, Dave P, Tony C, Colin G, Nick B, Lee L, Helen B, Nick P, Helen T, Dan P and John T made up the party

Sunday 21 April - A party of eight decided to walk down to Rubh 'an Duhain via Loch Brittle. Crossing several busy streams was achieved without falling in. Reaching the tip of the peninsula revealed a craggy and very rough seas. The rains then decided to start and persisted all the way back to the hut where the drying room made its first acquaintance with our very wet gear.

Monday 22 April - Six brave souls set out in cars for Eynort. Tony, John, Colin, Nick, Brian and Dave, set off in driving rain through Glen brittle forest. A tricky descent through old tree brashings (potentially leg breaking), led to a track below. The return to the hut was made by the crossing of the wire bridge over the River Brittle, and the rain stopped. We toasted our drying toes in front of the roaring fire.

Tuesday 23 April - The weather was poor so we made a tour to Portree via Struan to look in the Cioch outdoor shop (proper fester!). In Portree further shop browsing and lunch added to the days activities. We returned to the hut dry for a change.

Wednesday 24 April - A more ambitious mood than yesterday saw us heading up Coire Lagan into the Cuillin and Sgurr Alasdair's Great Stone Chute, but strong winds and the start of rain made us decide against going any further. We hit sunshine again as we dropped below the clouds, and stopped on Loch Brittle beach to soak up the sunshine while it lasted.

Thursday 25 April - This was our best day, and made it onto the ridge by scrambling up to Sgurr Dearg, with a murky glimpse of the Innaccessilbe Pinnacle through the clag. The descent down An Stac screes into Corrie Lagan was rather exhilarating, and were still dry when we arrived back at the hut!

Friday 26 April - John T and Tony C took a tour around Carbost, Ardtreck Point, Fiskavaig Bay and Talisker Bay accomplishing an extensive photo session en route. Nick Barr did a solo walk on the hills and moors above Talisker Bay.

In the evening, Brian, Dave, Tony, Kris, Bill and John rounded off the trip with a celebrity meal at the Three Chimneys Restaurant. This may well have been the most expensive meal in the history of the Club. John T

## Scotland - Scorcio!!

What better time to head for the far North West of Scotland than a Jubilee Weekend whilst England are playing their first World Cup game. The roads were a dream although the same could not be said for the driving conditions, nor the weather forecast. As Mark and I headed North hitting storm after storm the thought of four days backpacking in reputedly one of the last Wilderness areas was starting to lose its appeal. However, after a night sleeping in the car it was actually a relief to head off into the hills with our lightweight backpacking kit for a few days of adventure, and hopes of returning with a few more Munros under our boots.

To our surprise the rain soon eased off and before long the waterproofs were unzipping. A slight hint of blue even seemed to appear above.... had hallucinations set in already?

Our route took us from the A832 near Dundonnell along and around the eastern spur of the awe inspiring An Teallach which loomed imposingly with its narrow ridges and crenolated pinnacles through the mist. But this was not our objective. Instead, as we approached the isolated Shenavall bothy at the head of Loch na Sealga our expedition for the next few days revealed itself as the cloud level rose. Initially we were to follow part of the Wilderness Walk route (Poolewe to Dundonnell) to meet western ridge of the Fisherfield six around Gleann na Muice. Over the next couple of days we planned to traverse the full horseshoe around the glen, wild camping en route as we took in the peaks of Ruadh Stac Mor, A Mhaighdean, Beinn Tarsuinn, Mullach Coire Mhich Fhearchair, Sgurr Ban and finally Beinn a Chlaidheimh. It was late afternoon as we approached the first peak, with ever improving views inspiring us on to the summit. The summit panorama was truly breathtaking. The shores of Fuar Loch Mor below looked promising for an overnight camp, and what a location this proved to be. With lush grass to pitch on, a babbling stream and a heated "sofa stone" we were set for the evening. The ensuing sunset over Dubh Loch, Fionn Loch and the coastline was a memorable sight to see.

Day two was the most testing day, as we bagged the Five remaining Munros. Once again the views were incredible, with Slioch and An Teallach dominating the near ground, then the Islands or Torridon's hills further away. Our first objective, A Mhaighdean has the reputation for being the most remote Munro, at around 9 miles from the nearest road. However, it was its neighbour Beinn Tarsuinn that provided the most enjoyment as we picked and scrambled our way across its narrowing ridge. Our backpacking sacks made the moves all the more exhilarating!

Fuelled by the scrambling we decided to deviate from the main ridge, to traverse from Mullach Coire Mhich Fhearchair along its SE ridge to the top of Sgurr Dubh (having temporarily dumped our bags first).

The last section of the main ridge proved to be the most arduous, mainly due to the "stumble stone" rocks which coated the remaining hillsides. After nearly two days walking, with laden sacks and in lightweight fell running shoes the "stumble stones" made the going heavy. However, a partial cloud inversion maintained the interest as we progressed along the ridge.

With relief we reached our campsite for the night, another grassy flower packed spot alongside the bank of Abhainn Gleann na Muice before the midges reached their most active! Another cracking spot to spend the night, and another fantastic sunset which turned the hillsides auburn as the sun headed for the horizon.

Having had the flanks of Beinn Dearg Mhor in our sights for two days, further good weather lured us off in search of its summit. Storer describes the route as "a circuit of a magnificent hidden mountain", "a compelling mountain with a unique purity of line". It certainly looked great, but the alleged scramble

to the summit seemed to elude us. After a very steep ascent over increasingly loose ground we broke out onto the ridge. Again it proved to be an amazing vantage point.

After a traverse of the ridge enclosing Coire nan Clach we descended from the col to the shores of Loch na Sealga where our feet had a welcome dip! On the following morning, with food supplies and energy running low, we regrettably retraced our route to the car via Shenavall.

Possibly in honour of our triumphant return, we were treated to a very low level fly past by a crazy jet pilot. I'm sure I saw the whites of his eyes, and he was definitely laughing. That wasn't quite the emotion I was experiencing at the time, particularly as he had appeared well before any sound reached us. But when it did, boy was it chest-rumblingly loud! Oh the peace and tranquillity of the great outdoors!

Wading with jelly fishes at the glorious, sandy shores of Gruinard Bay gave us the welcome chance to wash our feet and legs (the first time in days) and to soothe our Scottish sunburn (outrageous)! We had high hopes of climbing An Teallach or Slioch but a increasingly painful right leg put an end to such dreams. Instead we settled for a drive around the coastline, and a scenic ride down the Bealach na Ba. There's some great cragging to be had round there folks. Check out Classic Rock for details!

Roll on the next visit - don't suppose the Queen could rustle up another Jubilee Day for us?!

## GIRL POWER HITS YORKSHIRE

*"Why do men break wind more than women?"*

*"Because women can't shut up long enough to build up the required pressure!"*

And so it was, trekking across the Yorkshire Dales, that us lads were finally outnumbered.

The inter-hostel weekend started at Grassington, and initially followed the Dales Way to Kettlewell, our first stop for tea and cakes. Whilst sitting around the village monument, the conversation turned to Debbie's attire the night before. A cool pink polka dot nighty was produced that reminded me of a wind sock I'd seen on Telly Tubbies or somewhere. "I've got a leopard skin one as well" she proudly announced. Nice one Deb's. Can't wait.

The weather was fantastic, and we made excellent time over the hills to the pub at Arncliffe – beer straight out of the barrel, and the landlord straight of the 1930's. The Essex girls (Dawn and Debbie) insisted on a second pint, and reluctantly, the lads agreed. We set off again, the girls, with more rattle than a farmers cart, setting the pace. We took the Monks Road (path) via Blue Scar and over Dew Bottom (really) before picking up the Pennine Way at Malham Tarn. The limestone pavement above Malham Cove was impressive, but the view from the bottom is awesome. We'd completed 18-19 miles and were in the pub for seven and in bed for 8.30 pm. Wusses.

Next day, I awoke at 5:30 am to sound of about a million birds. Seemed like it anyway. I got up and did about 3 miles before breakfast. Nice. I half expected the tea fairy (Richard) to have a brew going when I got back, but he'd rebelled, saying "the kitchens too far" (next door).

As I was feeling healthy, I'd opted for the vegetarian breakfast. Mistake. The sausage looked hideous and tasted foul. How can anyone eat this s\*\*t?

We plodded off to scramble up Goredale Scar, Ackie kindly setting Helen up to drench me in the stream, a revenge attack after I'd done the same to them the previous day. Bah...Kids. Picking up the green lane (Mastiles Lane) that's more of a dirt track, we sauntered on, hesitating briefly to try and soak Tracy, Brian and Annette in the usual fashion as we crossed the stream. Alison and Dad Stuart seemed to be hanging back at this point. Can't think why. Anyway, after about 10 easy miles we reached Grassington and to our dismay every café was full.

We'd had a great weekend, and good to see some new faces. Every one seemed keen to do another, possibly in the Lakes, so watch this space. You don't have to be a member of the YHA, as the club now has group membership and I've got the card if anyone wants it.

Sir Edward N Gruntfootock.

Foreword planning.... with my 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday looming (Aug 2003) 'er indoors has given me a pass out to do three weeks, possibly Peru, **next** August. Any one interested, contact Sir Eddy.

## Lowe Alpine Mountain Marathon 2002

2001 was a year when I found avoiding mountain marathons quite easy. A very depressing and arduous KIMM 2000 followed by foot and mouth keeping us all off the hills justified the "year off" that I was planning. However, when the LAMM email arrived I read it with mixed feelings. I like the LAMM, but would I have enough time to train? (unlikely), and would I be left with the same feelings that I brought away from my last KIMM?

I shared my thoughts with Ali, and mentioned that the entry website was up and running. She replied that we had from the end of Feb to train for an event in June, no problem, so we entered. At the beginning of May when all of the best-laid training plans had been thwarted alternatively by the weather, illness, and work commitments, I was starting to think that my initial thoughts were well founded.

In almost desperation I scoured the walking books for a suitable training objective. That trip is chronicled elsewhere in this newsletter, so I won't bore you, but it had mixed value for the LAMM team this year as Ali managed to pick up an injury, which resulted in her shin swelling after serious exercise. Time to formulate another plan.....

So it was that the Sunday before the event weekend I rang my long time, and occasional running bud Mark Weaver. Mark and I have known each other for 15 years. I introduced him to mountain marathons in 1990, but we had never competed together. We have often wondered about how well we would get on together in an event and now was the opportunity to find out.

A late start on Friday ensured that we arrived at the event centre in the Trossachs at around 1:30am. By the demi-gloom of the Scottish mid-summer twilight that passes for night time we silently(?) unpacked the essentials and pitched the base tents on the least boggy bits we could find. Although it was the middle of the night the midges feasted well; we must have been their equivalent of last orders in a nightclub!

We arose around 6:30 and quickly packed rucksacks to register for the start. The LAMM is well known for its surprises and we expected to be bussed somewhere and travel back to the finish. If we had registered on Friday we would have had a boat ride as well, but we missed that. The bus dropped us at Stronachlachar ferry terminal near the western end of Loch Katrine, earlier runners having reached the same point by the steamboat. Our start was not until 11:00 so we sheltered for a while from the drizzle and midges that plagued us in equal measure.

The day one course described a clockwise route around the western end of Loch Katrine and as far North as Beinn Chabhair the most southerly of the Glen Falloch Munros. It nearly broke my heart to be within 150m vertical metres and 300 horizontal metres of the summit, but you should only "play" one game at a time.

The weather worsened around 2:00pm to a "five minute shower" that lasted 2 ½ hours, until we reached the day 1 finish line. We pitched the tent on a dry looking bit and sorted out a huge pasta meal and chocolate cake pudding, a bit bulky but definitely worth their weight. A results check later in the evening showed that we were 5<sup>th</sup>, which was a lot better than expectations. Needless to say it rained most of the night.

Due to the lack of foresight and excess speed on Saturday we had an early start on the Sunday as we were part of the chasing start. This is the where the real racing takes place. Oh dear, what had we

done? A steady start with no-one around us probably meant that we were a bit more relaxed than normal, but may have cost us time as we went for easier underfoot conditions to start the day.

The route started at Inverlochlarig, which is approximately 10km from Balquhidder and finished at the East end of Loch Achray taking almost the most logical route. The weather was claggy and it was a real navigators day. We acquitted ourselves reasonably well and with the benefit of hindsight and a pint will admit to making a couple of little errors of route choice. These combined with improving visibility for later competitors resulted in a 29<sup>th</sup> place for the Sunday, and a 9<sup>th</sup> place for the whole competition. The first overall top ten finish for either of us, and our first chasing start.

Not bad for a team that had not really trained properly and hadn't been on a hill together for probably 3 years. If you want to know more about mountain marathons look at [www.lamm.co.uk](http://www.lamm.co.uk), or buy me beer and I'll bore you about them.

Ali came to Scotland to drive us home, and bagged a couple of sneaky Munros on Saturday. On Sunday, she managed to get us as far as Tebay services before she broke my car, the things some people will do to get out of driving home! After a brilliant weekend even the hour wait and the Relay home couldn't dampen our satisfied feeling. Can't wait for next one! Mark.

## And Finally

A question - are you happy with the "new" venue? The Committee will take it that no news is good news, but if you're not happy at the Railway let one of us know.