

## *May '05*

What an excellent first half of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year and a great programme of events for the second half of the year too. There's been much hard graft behind the scenes to bring you lecture evenings with the famous Harry P (Ascent of Alpamayo, Peru) and Ted C (Ascent of Kilimanjaro). We've also welcomed Mick Fowler (not bad with an ice axe apparently?) and Simon Yates (made a film and been on a TV cookery show?) who both showed a few holiday snaps. All of these evenings were really well supported so thanks for supporting your club. The club had a promotional stand at the recent Countryside Open Day on Burbage Common. As expected, we met some local mountaineers who were apparently surprised to hear that Hinckley had a MC so we hope to welcome new members as a result!

Meets wise, there's a revised list on page 5 plus a reminder that Ian is now taking a £5 deposit for each hut place you book. On the social side, Andrea's slickly organised skittles match was only marred by a loss of the trophy to Rugby MC but if you have any particular ideas for forthcoming socials give her a ring.

Finally, with the onset of summer (!) reports have been drifting in that many members have been seen climbing at crags such as Birchens where new member, Nigel Moggeridge has been "shown the ropes" by Lee S, Richard E and Swampy. There have been several day walks (many led by John T), and Ken W instigated a trip for MTB in Sherwood Forest. All articles gratefully received.

## *Skittles 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005*

Our annual skittles match against Rugby MC took place on Thursday May 12th at the Red Lion in Huncote. Thanks to all who came along to take part in the contest. Sadly, despite an excellent turnout from both clubs, and after a valiant battle against Rugby, Hinckley eventually conceded defeat (just!) so we won't be holding onto the trophy this year! Still, there are twelve whole months to train ... get some practice in.... eat healthily ... etc. Andrea.

## *Simon Yates: Beyond the Void*

A great event for the club, supported by members old and new, I eventually turned away around 150 and hardly advertised it. Thanks to Dave G, Sue & Andrea, Mark, Ted and anyone else who did their bit – a great team effort. I have had nothing but positive feedback from the night, so the sleepless nights were worth it. Looking ahead, I've been in touch with Ray Mears for next winter, but he's committed at present. Any suggestions? (Alan Hinkes/Bonnington/Messner etc). ED

## *Patterdale Hut Meet 19/20 March '05*

For those of us lucky enough to get Friday off work (or not even bother to work) the trip up the M6 to the Lakes must be quite leisurely – and you can even pull in good walk, which is just what John T, Brian K, Pete J and Tracy W managed with pleasant six mile stroll around Brotherswater. Nice.

Wainwright once said "The best form of walking is fell walking and the best part of fell walking is ridge walking and the best part of ridge walking is the traverse of high connecting skylines between summits". And so it was that Emma S, Sue E, Paul B, Annette E, Nigel C and I set off to do the skyline of the Eastern Fells above Ullswater.

Starting from Dockray, we traversed the Old Coach Road across Matterdale Common from where we gained height quickly to our first summit Clough Head. We had a brilliant cloud inversion, with Skiddaw, the central fells and Helvellyn poking out above the cloud. With the sun now blazing overhead, we walked south to Great Dodd where one unfit Nigel decided to bail out. The rest of us ticked off the Dodd's, Raise and Whiteside before ascending Helvellyn. On our ascent, we bumped into Carolyn and Andrea's group descending toward Glenridding after their ascent of Striding Edge. They seemed shocked to see me steaming ahead of my group. Obviously months of hard training was now paying off!

Sue and I decided to go down Swirral Edge, having run out of water, whilst the rest headed for Dollywaggon Pike. We all arrived back at Patterdale within minutes of each other, having covered around 16 miles of "hot" high level walking. Brilliant.

Tracy W & Richard E spent most of Saturday climbing on Shepherds Crag in Borrowdale. Not bad for March however, some bloke fell off, quite badly, requiring assistance from our pair. Upon their return to Patterdale, they stopped at Glenridding for provisions, spotted Carolyn's party, and drove off chuckling at high speed, with 8 walkers in hot pursuit.

John T managed to sandbag Paul J with the promise of a gentle six miler. After pulling in several "outliers" around Angle Tarn the pair clocked up 13 miles and arrived back at the hut just in time to see everyone disappearing to the pub - and Mark; Ali & Ben arriving in their new charabanc – a VW camper with room for several members inside, and even more in the awning. Can't wait!

The evening was spent in the White Lion although Swampy, Sinc, Ewan and Co did manage to watch the Rugby at the Patterdale Hotel. The Welsh had won the Grand Slam. We'll never hear the last of it.

The following day, Tracy, Emma, Trowie, Alastair and Brian (K) walked from Little Selked via the "impressive" Little Meg standing stones, to St Michaels Church – where it was noted that some old dear had lived to the ripe old age of 105. I bet she drank Everards.

They joined the River Eden at Dale Raven Bridge, passing Lacey's Caves – room's dugout in the sandstone - before starting the second phase of their walk at Kirk Oswald. This turned out to be an area of rough farmland, but a pleasant end to the weekend nevertheless. Reinhold Edwards.

### *Nant Gwynant 23/24 April '05*

Pete Marston's hut has, as always, proved to be a popular fixture in the clubs programme year in, year out. Despite an increase in fees (thanks to the National Trust) the hut was oversubscribed and reminder to all hut users – book early to avoid disappointment!

Richard & Annette travelled up on Wednesday and had a very peaceful couple of days.... before we descended en masse. Having already been up Snowdon via the Watkin Path on Thursday didn't deter them from doing the south ridge on Saturday, assisting "Dad" George to bag Snowdon for the first time. George (98) has ticked off Ben Nevis and Carantoul (Eire) on previous occasions and can't wait to bag Scafell later this year. "Bring it on".

Teeth, Andy A, Rob G, Ken and others pulled in the Nantle ridge before descending to the pub at Rhyd Ddu. Nigel and Michelle did Portmeirion and I had a stroll in the Gwyder Forest before visiting the RSPB reserve at Conwy. Serious stuff this.

Annette had foolishly offered to cook a spag bog Saturday evening if anyone was interested. Anyone turned out to be everyone and "Netty" rose to the occasion brilliantly. A starter, main course and choice of one (or all three) of the homemade puds she'd prepared earlier. Fantastic effort and our grateful thanks once again.

Next morning the Tea Fairy in the shape of Acker arrived at a respectable 8 am. Ken W couldn't believe that he'd just spent two nights in a snore-free hut. Told him the only person known to have snored was Pete H, and I think that was in Nov 2003 after a heavy cold.

Anyway, the sun was beating down so we packed up quick to get about our activities. Teeth; Andy & Ken went up Tryfan, Brian K went walking up the Ogwen Valley somewhere, Mark T went for a kip after his midnight ascent of Snowdon!?? and I went round to do some routes on little Tryfan with Richard, Annette, George and new boy Nigel M.

Nigel 'n Netty did some nice routes including Central Buttress (VDiff) whilst I managed Grassy Arête (Diff) and Golden Slumber (VDiff). Richard took George up the 150ft Outside Edge (VDiff) – George's first climb for over 50 years – "brilliant" he said - "when's the next hut meet". Steady. Phil McCavity

## *Munro Bagging at Easter*

We (Ted and Carol C) returned to Scotland to get to grips with some of the mountains we saw last year when we walked the West Highland Way (WHW):

Day One - Not on the WHW but we found a nice b&b at Kilmahog (near Callendar) with an excellent pub a hundred yards away which brewed its own beer.

Ben Vorlich 3224ft, on the south side of Loch Earn, was our first objective; unfortunately a landslide had blocked the south loch side road so it was the long way around via the north side of the loch before we could start. However there was a good track to the summit, which with a sprinkling on snow was soon reached. I left Carol at the col and scrambled up to the neighbouring Stuc a'Chroin 3189ft. Descended by a steep grass and rock filled gully to rejoin Carol and then a simply walk off to the car.

For the rest of the week we stayed at Crianlarich SYH. Fine hostel but being half term was filled with teachers escaping from the classroom. Ah well, nothing can be perfect. Dinner that night at the Drovers Arms down at Inverarnan. Good beer, good food and full of WHW walkers on their third day. (We had missed this one and had stayed further down the road)

Day Two - Ben Vorlich.... no, not that one but the Arrochar Alps Ben Vorlich (3055 ft) above Ardlui.

Although lower than the Loch Earn Vorlich, a bit more difficult as there is no path, either on the map or in general on the ground, so we make our way up as best we could,

First problem is to get over or under the railway line by a little tunnel; there are several tunnels but none signposted from the road. Found one at Stuckindroin (farm) and in the pouring rain climbed up the soggy hillside on the south side of the burn to Coire Creagach, the rain gave way to sleet and then to snow and unlike the previous day the snow level was down to 2000ft. We hacked our way up through the deep snow and arrived at the summit trig point at the same time as a lone walker who had come up from the Loch Sloy side. He pointed out that the trig point wasn't the highest point, but a small cairn a couple of hundred yards.

So we duly carried along the ridge to tick it off and had lunch, the weather by now was fine although a bit nippy, We descended on the other side of the burn and found the faintest of tracks, good but it left us to ford the burn at the bottom to get back under the railway.

Dinner that night at the Rod and Reel pub in the village, food ok but nothing special, rather sloppy service we thought.

Day Three - Ben Dorain 3524ft. This is that massive 3000 ft slope opposite The Bridge of Orchy on the other side of the railway line. It looks simple from the roadside, but around the back it's all mountain, especially with deep snow, high winds, driving snow and thick mist. A boggy start from the railway station in rain again, turning to snow as we got higher and into the clag. Two Scots lads overtook us as we floundered around in the snow trying to work out the best line of ascent, we chatted, one of them had been there before and thought he knew the way so I decided to put away the compass, forget the GPS and use FSF (follow someone else's footsteps). It worked, just; despite the snow filling up the steps they appeared often enough to get us the giant cairn at the stop where we met them again. No time for nibbles here, too windy, too snowy, too much clag. Some would say blizzard conditions. In fact that was the official mountain forecast for the day. There is another Munro next to it, but decided that tea and coffee at the Bridge of Orchy Hotel was the better option.

Postscript. Told the Warden (managers, now) at the hostel where we had been. And he said that he hoped we had been to the SECOND smaller cairn about a hundred yards further on, as that was the true summit, Bollocks, anyway we all know that the Ordnance Survey get it wrong sometimes, otherwise the Munro lists wouldn't be updated every so often! (*Better go back and do it properly then!* Alison)

Dinner that night at the Ben More Lodge in Crianlarich, good food, good beer but with three or four folk in the place a little lacking in atmosphere.

Final Day - Beinn Chabhair 3061ft. Unseen from the road, this mountain hides away above Beinn Glas Farm, a WHW campsite and bunkhouse at Inverarnan. Joined today by Anna, a teacher from New Zealand (teaching in London) she had just completed the WHW.

A fine almost sunny day with clear blue skies but with a forecasted 60mph wind on the tops.

A steep ascent from the farm up and past the Grey Mares Tail Waterfall led to a flattish upland bog with a well-trodden track to a small lochan. Here two more Scots lads joined us, the guidebook said; take track north east of the lochan to a bealach. But which bit of the lochan and to which bealach. The two parties took different directions, and both were wrong, but eventually with out ever seeing them again we came upon their footsteps in the snow, so obviously we followed the footsteps, again slogging up steep snow slopes until we reached the ridge, where the forecasted 60mph winds proved correct.

I hauled myself on my hands and knees through thick snow to touch the cairn and b\*gg\*red off back into the lee of a rock, whipped out the camera to see what would happen when the ladies arrived a few moments later. Of course they kept on their feet to the cairn, but did use their rear anatomy to get down. Followed the ridge back and found what was the correct line along the ridge out of the snow and onto the faintest of tracks which took us back to the lochan.

Dinner that night, back to the Drovers for a final meal and drink and a meeting with a stuffed bear.....