

## Sept 2000

OK I know it's been ages since the last newsletter, what can I say. There were computer problems but I guess we've just been off enjoying the summer. Club members have been busy too. Our recently appointed Hut Meets Sec has also been busy getting himself (and Helen too of course!) engaged. No sooner had the congrats begun, Nick and Helen then announced their wedding date - in September. They don't mess about do they? Congratulations to you both and good luck for the special day. Other happy news is the safe arrival of baby Connor Horsler to proud parents Alison and Mark. Big congratulations to you too from us all! Our own Peter Pan, Steve O, has unbelievably celebrated his 50th birthday and threw open the invite to his party to HMC members. Unfortunately, this date clashed with the Coniston meet! Out and about, members have had varied success mountaineering over the summer months. Mark and I managed to ascend two 4000m peaks (with maximum chairlift assist) in Switzerland. Elsewhere in the globe, we've had reports that Ian Berrington reached the summit of Kilimanjaro - a fine effort. Kev returned to the Pamirs for more new route attempts, and Harry headed for South America. Closer to home there appears to have been plenty of mountain biking, hill walking and climbing happening out there.

Since the last newsletter, there have been several club hut meets. Unfortunately, the official Welsh 3's assault was called off, but thanks to the helpers who were ready to support the weekend and to Pete M for the accommodation. Instead, those who went to Wales for the weekend explored the delights of the Moelwyns. I hear that Barbara and Phil have since completed the challenge, so "Fine Effort" to you both. A mere 34 miles, 13 000 ft and 17 1/2 hours. They achieved this after altitude training following completion of the Tour of Mont Blanc. The Coniston meet was a really excellent weekend, with 21 folks staying at the pretty posh hut (more details below) above sunny Coniston. If you didn't get to these meets, or want to get away for more, then there's Cwm Eigiau and the forthcoming President's meet to book up for. Finally, welcome to the new members, including a name from the past - Mick Shorter!

Hopefully, by now majority of you planning to attend the Presi's will have booked your place(s) with Dave G. If not please ring him ASAP. It's likely to be your last chance to spend the weekend in Newlands for a while, as the committee is looking for an alternative venue for next year. (Any suggestions will be considered).

## Cragging Roundup

Richard and Annette, after an earlier triumph on the Buchaille, then teamed up with Bob T for an Ex-pats (NW Section) climbing meet. They climbed at Cadshaw Castle Rocks in Lancashire and the Hoff near Appleby, bouldered at Kentmere and Langdale. Richard and Annette also found time to enjoy a walk from Grasmere to Threlkeld, ending their trip with an ascent of Troutdale Pinnacle on Black Crag. Swampy and Emilie headed for the Cornish cliffs but found the surf more reliable!

Club climbing during the Coniston meet is reported elsewhere. However, it was the venue for Dan's first lead was at Brantrake (near Eskdale), followed soon after by his first Severe lead at Windgather. Leather Lee has been working his way through the Classics - Three Pebble Slab E1 5a \*\*\*, Tody's W all HVS 5a \*\*, plus various High Neb solos, Impossible crack and numerous other routes at Stanage with Kev. John M and his climbing partner David R had a productive week in Wales. They completed Stromboli, Craig Pant Ifan HVS 5a, The Fang HVS 5a, Grim Wall VS 4c and Seamstress HVS 5a, and Leg Slip, Bwlch y Moch E1 5b at Tremadog. They also completed the Girdle Traverse, Carreg Hylldrem HVS 5a and East Wing, on Dinas Mot HVS 5a 5b. Between climbs they even pulled in a traverse of Tryfan, the Glyders, Y Garn and Elidir Fawr. Alison M and Mark had a day at Birchens knocking off a number of steady leads each. Unfortunately Alison's pride took a bit of a bump, as did her nether region when she took a bit of air! A slight miscalculation of route choice meant that the S 4a Victory Crack subtly evolved into a somewhat trickier little number, The Dancer E1 5c. However, the mid height chockstone stopped Alison's rapid descent rather abruptly. Definitely a dented pride sort of day..... Ouch! Later Alison, Mark and Alastair explored the North Yorkshire delights of bouldering on the Bridestones and cragging on the Wainstones, near Middlesbrough. At the Wainstones, weathered sandstone with strange iron intrusions, Alastair led a superb Severe \*\* which seemed to be very good value for the grade. It was rather surreal experience there as we were smoked off by the huge family group that lit a mountain of disposable BBQs just under the crag.

## *Peak and Pints*

Louise (girt, Leapy's girlfriend), Rich + Annette, and Tim H + Cathy, all went up to Sheffield to visit Leapy Lee in his new bachelor pad. Rich got there early, and took Lee bouldering (Burbage N). Lee, true to form, fell off, twisted his ankle, and spent Saturday morning in casualty. Where they told him to stop being a pansy, and gave him some herbal paracetamol (he wouldn't take the real stuff in case it interfered with his current grade push). Friday evening was when we discovered Lee's local off licence. I think I'm in love... They serve real ale, from a set of hand pumps, and it's cheap... The rest of the evening is a bit of a blur, but I think we watched Pulp fiction, and Cathy spilt wine on Lee's sofa... Saturday morning started late, and saw Bob arrive from the lakes. We ate breakfast, and hit the rock, sharp and keen, at about 2.30pm. We were on some very nice, but steep part of Burbage South. Lee and Louise sat and watched, Cathy and Annette played with the kite, and Rich and Bob climbed. Tim alternated between clinging stationary to the rock, and hanging on the end of the Bob's rope. A few routes of significance were tackled, but mostly was Tim's bailed attempt at a VS 4c \*, which Bob eventually led. Rich, Tim, and Annette followed, leaving a trail of flesh hanging from cracks where relaxing jams had proven necessary - apart from Annette, who refused to compromise her tan. Oh, and Rich finished the mantelshelf in fine style, with only 92% body contact on the rock. Saturday evening was when we re-discovered Lee's local off licence. I think I'm in love... They serve real ale, from a set of hand pumps, and it's cheap... The rest of the evening is a bit of a blur, but I think we watched Boogie Nights, and Cathy spilt beer on Lee's floor... Sunday morning was when we worked out how much beer Bob had drunk. The off licence owner said "Hi" as he retired on the previous night's profits, and Lee decided to go to Hinckley, 'cos he had to "meet the parents" or some other such thing... We went over to Bamford (??), and failed to find the path - so Cathy and Tim had to follow a striding Bob through four foot high bracken for about a mile. On arrival at the wrong end of the crag, Rich's mobile rang, as we'd got bored of looking for him. Some very nice climbing was done, except by Tim, who alternated between clinging stationary to the rock, and hanging on the end of the Bob's rope. Anybody offering a job further north than Essex, please talk to Tim. Bob, Rich and Annette climbed a load of routes - see the route book for details (once they've had chance to fill it in)!!  
Tim H.

## *The "Not the Welsh 3's" Weekend*

Despite a poor forecast, there was a respectable turnout for a wet weekend in North Wales. Over the two days there were outings to the moist Moelwyns and the glistening Glyders, followed by a traditional celebration of success in a local hostelry. Thanks again to all those who had made themselves available to help.

## *End of an Era*

It is with great sadness that I report the recent closure of Turners in Leicester. Over many years Turners have supported the Club, providing consistently sound advice and encouragement to mountaineers and skiers of all abilities. I'm sure you'll agree that we wish Beryl and Roger a long, happy and active retirement. Best Wishes too to Steve Bennet in his new job. Gear shopping in Leicester will not be the same again!

## *Coniston Meet - August*

If you didn't make it - you missed an excellent weekend. The hut was very well equipped if a little short on loos, given that there were two of them and twenty-one of us! Saturday was forecast as sunshine and showers. Well there was sun for the best part of the day - then one hell of a shower! For the mass-walkers (Annette, Alison, Melanie, Cathy, Tim H, Dave G, Ewan, Martin, Dan, Helen, Nick) Cheryl led off, map in hand for a traverse of the tops. Poor Cathy felt the "exposure" on the ridge which led to "seam splitting" merriment of her companions. What a good sport! Elsewhere, Ed, Dave, and Elvyn were doing their respective walking things. Dave and Elvyn walked similar routes to the main group, taking in Weatherlam, Swirl How, Coniston Old Man, over Dow Crag to Brown Pike and back via Walna Scar Road. Apparently, Elvyn completed the "mass" walk ahead of the crowd and took in a distant Harter fell too. Which apparently has a summit you have to scramble to attain. Pete H disappeared into the distance with his tripod, camera and self created camouflage shelter. Allegedly, Pete was off to photograph rare birds .... And with Cheryl's full consent apparently?! Ed just disappeared... Dave P took to the saddle for a classic, but backside bruising, 21-mile ride along the

Walna Scar (aptly named!) road. The route from the hut ascended the Wrynose pass from Little Langdale, then along the Duddon valley to pick up the Walna Scar. Dave took comfort in his sketchpad on the Sunday for a more gentle form of activity.

The Beast dusted off his rock boots and ventured back onto the crags. Richard suggested a few easy warm ups but the Beast had other ideas. Pete was soon demonstrating that he was back on form. Richard and Pete climbed Thomas S\*\* and Trinity Slabs VD\*\*, whilst Leather Lee and Mark climbed Digitation MVS 4b \*\* and Western Wall MVS 4b \*\* at Wallowbarrow. Inspired by the accounts of Saturday's cragging successes, majority of the group headed en masse for a superb crag - Brantrake, near to Eskdale. Whilst most cragged, others chilled and tanned in the sunshine. It's a pity Harry Potter books are so engaging - Melanie really looked like she wanted a climb, but it's so much more difficult when you can't grip with both hands. "Melanie - JUST PUT THE BOOK DOWN". Maybe next time. The crag offers a variety of single pitch routes, and leads ranged from VD to HVS. Climbing partnerships varied throughout the day. In fact it was almost a variation to "keys on the table", being more a question of "who's on the other end of the rope"? Variety being the spice and all that... During the day, Alison managed to regain some confidence in her leading abilities after her brief but dramatic flight at Birchens, whilst Dan confidently executed first lead, safe in the belay of Mr Ellis. Watch out Nick, you'll have got competition for the sharp end in future... Nick and Helen took to their bikes on Sunday, cycling through the tracks of Grisedale Forest. They experienced a rather unusual vision when they came across (at speed) around 50+ members of the 90 yrs+ members of Penrith rambles wending their collective way steadily along the narrow bridleway! The days cycling ended with a satisfying, mud removing paddle in the Lake. Well when "in" the Lakes, why not ...

### *Scottish HMC Virgins in Munro Avoidance Shocker!*

Sordid details are emerging that reveal how an unsuspecting group of Munro Baggers was infiltrated by members of WAM (What's a Munro?) on a recent expedition to the little known area of Ben Nevis and Glencoe. All appeared normal at first, with fine mountains being climbed in crappy weather with no views, in the best Scottish tradition. Lulled into a false sense of security by this cunning facade, key members of the Bagging Team allowed the infiltrators into the hills unsupervised. Perhaps it was the tales of "ooh it's my first time in Scotland so be gentle with me". Or was it the whisky? Someone made the fatal decision. The first rumours filtered back to camp on Monday night. Grassy mounds had been climbed. People were openly admitting to it too. The reaction was terrible. The Entertainments Committee demanded that the Munro Game was played that same evening. Despite this appalling torture, members of WAM remained defiant. WAM struck back and were reported to have left several of the Baggers speechless. On Wednesday, Sgurr Elide Mor, such a noble peak, was defiled. WAM members tramped across the moors to the foot of the mountain, and then proceeded to WALK AROUND IT!! The summit, beckoning through the mist, was BLATANTLY IGNORED. After such a reckless demonstration of Munro avoidance, morale in the camp plummeted and the Baggers returned to the Flatlands. This gave the WAMs chance to strike again, rubbing salt into the wounds. On Saturday, in glorious sunshine, the WAMs did the Ring of Steall, backwards, poring scorn on the centuries of experience gained by the Master Baggers who had done the same only the day before. When interviewed last week the President stated "The whole of HMC is stunned. The perpetrators will be brought to justice. At least they didn't go rock climbing". Nick P.

### *Mountain biking - Clwydian Hills*

Dave P and Nick B, basing themselves at Moel Arthur, planned a figure of eight cycling route. The morning route was a lovely 12 mile ride following roads, bridleways and miners tracks. After a quick lunch, the route was downhill. After around 1/2 a mile Dave hit a ditch at about 25 - 30 mph and his bike ejected him! Another smashed helmet, concussion, a few nasty scrapes plus £70 of damage later, the afternoon's route ambitions also bit the dust. Who was it that said cycling was a healthy form of exercise?

### *Navigation Skills Course - Plas y Brenin.*

In May, I spent two days at the National Mountain Centre on an advanced navigation course. My apologies to all of you, whose activities were curtailed by the bad weather that weekend. It was all my fault - I prayed for clag and I was not disappointed! On Saturday we headed into the Moelwyns for an all-day lesson in map interpretation. No sooner had we left the road than we were learning - we were

on a convex slope, which soon levelled out to a small plateau. There were tiny features on this plateau - a shallow spur and some ring contours, all of which I would have been totally oblivious to, but which became apparent when they were pointed out to me. We were then shown a tiny sheepfold on the map, and discussed how we might find it. It was situated between a steep stream (which we could see up ahead - our first encounter with a re-entrant), and a small crag. We followed the stream, keeping between it and the crag until we found the sheepfold. Our first "handrailing" experience. The day continued in this very "hands on" kind of way, covering such things as pacing & timing, attack points, aiming off, and so on. As the day progressed I gained confidence in using contours as tick-off features to determine our exact position. All this, on relatively featureless terrain and in thick fog! I suddenly understood the true meaning of phrase "the freedom of the hills" - I was hooked! The second day was similar, but we did most of the navigation ourselves. We each had short sections to do in turn, which was a great confidence building exercise. Finally, one person was given a destination, which was kept secret from the others. When the navigator found the destination, the rest of the group had to identify the exact position on the map to which we had been led. It was then that I realised just how much I had learnt in two short days. Obviously, competent navigation doesn't happen overnight, but the important thing now is to go out and practice. There was also a short lecture on Saturday evening on new routing on Patagonian Big Walls: a long way from the Moelwyns maybe, but inspiring all the same! Although the course had seemed rather expensive, it was money well spent and I'd highly recommend it to anyone who - like myself - is still "serving their apprenticeship". If anyone is interested, I have a spare brochure - and no, I don't get commission! Cheryl.

## *LAMM - June '00*

On Thursday evening the web-site said Shiel Bridge. This confirmed it was not only going to be a tiring weekend on foot but also by car!

Part of the art of mountain marathons is honing down your kit aiming down to a light, compact rucksack. As a pair, you need to be self sufficient for two days on the hill and carry kit for a night's camp. We felt quite optimistic this time, our bags were fairly light and we had a late start at 9.26 am. We'd be one of the last to set off in our class which gave a psychological advantage. Theoretically for each pair we passed, we gained a place. The other art is mastering the trenches. The "basic" (what an understatement!) toilet facilities surpassed any previous years. Trenches had been dug way too wide, "straddles" were out of the question and the banks were far too soft for "squats" near the edge. The only solution was team tactics!!! How nice. The competition area was new territory for us too. Our checkpoints were located in the hills west of the A87 in Glen Shiel. The route would take us, along with fellow competitors, to a small field on the coast near to Arnisdale for the overnight camp. A few walkers expecting to enjoy a pleasant outing on the Forcan Ridge, were temporarily accompanied on the approach path by around 250 runners. Let's hope it didn't spoil their day too much. The highest point reached on Day 1 was Sgurr na Sgine, a Munro at 946 metres. Sadly the gathering mist prevented us from enjoying a view. In better visibility we were surprised to see relatively few tents in the overnight camp. As updated results were stuck up on the wall of the farm outbuilding, the picture was looking good. We'd certainly had one of our best Day 1's ever. In fact we appeared to be in 10th place in our class and were only the second mixed pair back! We'd been hoping for top twenty so this was a great surprise. That evening was the England v Germany match. In anticipation, we'd taken a little radio in the hope of getting reception. Despite our best efforts with lengths of tin foil and tent pole modifications to the aerial, radio Glen Nevis was all we could muster during the ninety minutes. The distinct lack of mention during the station's news update led us to speculate that England weren't losing. That would've made the Scots news! A neighbour had been more lucky - England had won. We contentedly settled down to a well-earned sleep... On Sunday we awoke to clearer skies and a view of the majestic Beinn Sgritheall rising out of the morning mist. As is usual on these events, you need to be packed up for a 7.00 am mass start, which invariably involves a slog up a steep hillside for the first checkpoint of the day. This was no exception. The checkpoints to be visited allowed for a degree of route choice - either up and over or more contouring. We stuck to contouring. Later we discovered we'd misunderstood the woodland crossing info which we took to be a compulsory route to follow if you went that way. It wasn't compulsory and as a result we ended up climbing somewhat out of our way whilst heading for a valley based checkpoint in the opposite direction. With hindsight this cost us places and time. By midday the white marquees were in view again, the end was in sight. A steep, rough descent funnelled the courses towards a final communal checkpoint on a ridge above the event centre. Despite being in view for what seemed like ages, our objective, the finish line, seemed to take an age to be reached. Finish tapes were beyond the field where the car was parked. We both confessed later to having had an overwhelming desire to throw our bags down at the car and

run into the finish tunnel unencumbered. Somehow the sight of the finish line and spectators encouraged us on, or was it more the desire to get the drinks and meal voucher! As we collected our voucher we knew we'd not done quite so well on Day 2. Faces familiar from the day before were already sitting with steaming polystyrene cups of tea, tucking in to their veggie stew. Results confirmed that we had got into the top twenty - fifteenth place to be exact. We were pleased once the initial disappointment of slipping back those places had faded. Back home checking out the web-site report ([www.lamm.co.uk](http://www.lamm.co.uk) if you want to check it out for yourselves), we discovered we'd been overtaken by a team from "Vets in Practice" and their TV crew. Do we not like Vet's in Practice...  
Alison M and Mark.

### *And finally - AGM*

16th November 2000 Don't forget the AGM - 8.00 pm start at the Black Horse. Please try to attend. After all, it's your club!