

NEWSLETTERFILTHY RICH AND CATFLAPS

Another year swirls away and it's time again for that big night in the club calendar - The A.G.M..

The faithful gather round the stage to hear our chairman, Mr. Earle, strike off last year and usher us into a new one. All's going well, I thought, until he slagged off the Newsletter! That's it! I'm not writing any more! I'll find someone else to do the job!

Little did I know that I would be blogged later to carry on writing these very pages.

The meeting progressed at a good pace, as did the ale guzzling. The first thing to crop up was that you may well find the minutes of the AGM enclosed with this publication. George Parker then brought up the subject of Fire Doors at Stair. These could be in the form of Big Cat Flaps! Someone suggested that they would have to be BIG, as there were certainly some BIG CATS in the FMC! "So long as they were big enough for Steve Swindells they'd be OK" I thought, recalling the incident a few years ago when Steve, returning home from a night on the town had lost his key. The only way in was through the cat flap. Steve was found halfway through the flap, fast asleep obviously finished off by his efforts. The next thing I knew Rule 8 was getting some stick; whatever Rule 8 is? Then followed the election of officers and hopefully a beer break!

No controversy here, but I was a bit worried by the reappointment of the Club Secretary, having caught him on a number of occasions trying to get into the wrong room clutching armfuls of ale! New names were Kevin Stephens, hut secretary at Little Langdale; John Hickman at Stair and Louise Fortune, taking over as Social Secretary from a very impressive Donald Duck. God help her trying to keep you lot happy on a Wednesday evening. An unenviable task! Four new committee members took their seats - Pete Roscoe (new?), Dave Wood, Don Nichol and Cherry Earle.

The Treasurer, Paul Taylor, declared the Club still 'stinking rich' and then proceeded to propose an increase in club fees! Obviously to fund his increasingly frequent trips abroad. Hearing this cheering news, the meeting began to dole out the club's money to various expeditions, guide books, membership cards, tee and sweat shirts etc! Several people felt left out! Mick Tolley appealed for some dosh for new caving equipment and Dave Clark enquired about more coach meets. We were reminded that club car stickers were still available and that the Club Dinner would again 'happen' at the Old Dungeon Ghyll. Kevin appealed for names for the proposed Preston Climbing Wall which definitely looks like happening.

It was 10.55, last orders and the meeting was brought to a close. 'Not bad' as they go, I thought, as I headed for that last pint. The end of another club year and the beginning of a new era. As I walked down the stairs I passed the Secretary - arms full of beer, still trying to get into that room!

NEW MEMBERS

The following are welcomed as Introductory Members:

Mr & Mrs. John and Gaynor Allen	75 Curneragh Lane, Whittingham, Preston, PR3 2AN.
Mark Watson )	
Bridget Williams )	31 Stoke Avenue, Blackpool.
John G. William	6 Enderley Court, Thornton, Blackpool, FY5 5JB. Tel: 825142.
John B. Trevorrow	2 Oxford Road, St. Annes on Sea, FY8 2EA. Tel: 726632.
Jan Sharplos	12 Pennine View, Kirkham. Tel: Kirkham 683498.
Gavin Baxter	99 Bush Lane, Freckleton, Lancs. Tel: Freckleton 635088
Neal Robinson (Robbo)	29 Baldwin Grove, Blackpool. Tel: 67105.
Gary Redford	47 Preston New Rd, Blackpool.
Sion Murray	23 Kirkstone Avenue, Fleetwood, Lancs. Tel: Fleetwood 3058.
Alistair R. Welsh	19 Oregon Ave., Layton, B'pool. Tel: 32487.
Henry E. Iddon	104, Bispham Road, Blackpool. FY2 ONN. Tel: 53916.
Nigel Webster	17 Hillside Ave., Dowbridge, Kirkham. Tel: Kirkham 685147.
David Brock )	
Nichola Bamford )	46, Lancaster Avenue, Great Eccleston, PR3 OXX. Tel: 70996.
Craig Smith	12 Eastway, Freckleton, Lancs. Tel: Freckleton 632078.
Alan Moore (Moz)	16, Sidney Avenue, Blackpool. Tel: 58687.

FULL MEMBERS

John Barnes, Edward G. Eves, Rhona Giles, Mark Jackson, Dave Whitmore, Steve Sherrington and Bob Barker.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Most Members will now have a new address list. If there are any errors on your list, please report them to the Editor.

Pete & Sheila Roscoe	15 Delaware Rd, Hob Hill, Layton, Blackpool. Tel: 302209.
Bob Barker	124 W.7th St., Deer Park, New York 11729, U.S.A.
Martin Pickup	Tel. No. should read: Longridge 3158.
Simon Fenna	29 Caxton Ave., Bispham, Blackpool.
Simon Panton	8 Thornhill Road, Buckden Mount, Edgerton, Huddersfield, W. Yorks.

HUT AVAILABILITY

March 6-7th	Vags' Hut
13-14th	Stair
20-21st	Langdale
27-28th	Stair
April 3-4th	Langdale
10-11th	Stair
17-19th	Stair Easter
24-25th	Stair

May 1-3rd	Langdale	May Day
8-9th	Stair	
15-16th	Langdale	
22-24th	Stair	Whitsun
29-30th	Langdale	
June 5-6th	Stair	
12-13th	Langdale	
19-20th	Stair	
26-27th	Hut to Hut	(Both Huts)
July 3-4th	Stair	
10-11th	Vags Hut	
17-18th	Stair	
24-25th	Langdale	
31-1st Aug.	Stair.	

### SOCIALS

All at the Breck Sports and Social Club, Poulton, on the first Wednesday of the month. 8.30 pm start, unless otherwise indicated.

1st April	Slide Competition
6th May	Malta Rock Climbs.

Roger Brookes shows us the delights of climbing on this island in the Med. and no doubt will be flogging his imminent New Routes Guide Book.

It should be noted that the Club now officially meet at the Breck and members can go to the Club any Wednesday evening to meet in the bar. Stay tuned to the monthly fact sheets for more up-to-date details about meets and socials.

### OUTDOOR MEETS

14-15th March	Family Weekend	Little Langdale
21-22nd March	Working Weekend	Little Langdale

Kevin will be hoping to keep up the good work of Phil Caley on this "Spring Cleaning Meet" so lets have a good turnout from you people out there. Remembers all you intro. members a working weekend counts as two meets towards full membership!

28-29th March Introductory Members Meet, Stair.  
Meet Leader: Pete Roscoe, Tel: Blackpool 302209.

A chance for all you intro. members mentioned earlier plus many more to get into Club meets and going to the huts. Includes Beginners' Rock Climbing, so lets see all you budding Johnny Dawes'es out there doing it!

4th-5th April Tremadoc - Moelwyns Hut  
Meet Leader: Mark Harding.

The weekend after you've learned the ropes, a chance to go out and practice! An excellent meet to a crag with something for everyone. Also walking in the Moelwyns. The hut is just seconds from the crag, or vice versa and the cafe is just over the road. The pub's a bit further but sells good Marstons - well worth the walk!

EASTER 17th-20th April THE SOUTH WEST (Rock Climbing)  
Meet Leader: Phil Caley.

This looks like being a 'full bore' Cornwall meet; the likes of which have not been seen since John Tats left for Hong Kong! For those of you who don't remember that it's a fair few years ago. With the weather hotting up and a new guide to go at with loads of brilliant routes, this promises to be one hell of a meet!

EASTER 17th-20th April ACHNASHELLACH, SCOTLAND  
Meet Leader: Louise Fortune. Tel. Fleetwood 6547.

This place lies somewhere north of Fort Bill, in Scotland -  
Hut Accommodation.

THE NEW SYLLABUS!

Out soon, this valuable piece of card contains new year's  
secrets including all the old favourites plus one or two  
newies, some of which are revealed below!

2-4th May (May Day Weekend) FAMILY WEEKEND, STAIR

9th-10th May CORRIS HUT  
Meet Leader: John Wiseman, Tel. 826594.

Wonderful hut in a village with a wonderful pub. Walking  
in Mid Wales and climbing at Cwm Cowarch or on Cader Idris.

16-17th May INTRODUCTORY MEMBERS' MEET:  
LITTLE LANGDALE.

Meet Leader: John Hickman.

Another chance for the droves of intro. members to show their  
faces at the other hut. Hopefully the meet leader will be  
able to keep his beer down on this occasion!

23-25th May WHIT WEEKEND ISLE OF MAN

Meet Leader: John Hickman.

John is presently investigating the logistics of running a  
meet to this wonderous isle. If this proves a little costly,  
then the usual Arran venue may be used again.

30th May - 6th June CLUNIE LODGE.

Meet Leader: Eddie Craig. Tel: Garstang 4169.

Walking in the highlands of Scotland on this ever popular week  
long meet.

6th-7th June WORKING WEEKEND, STAIR

Some major work pencilled in for this meet. Painting the outside  
walls and erection of a bin store are on the cards. A big turn  
out will be appreciated.

29th August- 6th September LUNDY MEET

Meet Leader: Mick Tolley. Tel: Preston 713817

Mick is now taking names and deposits for this brilliant  
meet. 14 places are up for grabs in the barn. The cost is in  
the region of £20. per person plus your boat fare (yes, no  
helicopters this year!) Payable on the boat. Mick requires  
positive names and deposits of \$5.00. if possible before Easter.  
Contact Mick for more details.

AN APOLOGY

The retiring Social Secretary, Don Nichol, would like to publicly  
aplogise to Pete Roscoe for failing to mention his China Lecture  
in the A.G.M. Social Sec's Report.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO INCREASE SHOCK!

Yes! As mentioned earlier the Annual Subscriptions have been  
raised to £7.00 for single members, and £10.00 for joint  
membership. This takes effect from the Annual General  
meeting, so all your unpaid swines out there have  
copped out! I will remind you, whilst the Treasurer is  
abroad, that this year's fees are now due. Please send them  
off to Mr. Taylor posthaste so that he can deal with them on  
his return from warmer climes.

Martin Dale, self-confessed paid swine.

HUT FEES REMAIN UNCHANGED!

A great victory for the massed actives making the huts the cheapest dosses in the country! So get up there more often, slumbering membership, and make use of the Club's assets.

BIG LECTURE SUCCESS

The big lecture at the Teanlowe Centre back in October, starring our very own members raised £150.00. A cheque for this amount was presented to Kendal Mountain Rescue Team at the recent social by our chairman, Dave Earle.

1987 FYLDE M.C. KHISTWAR EXPEDITION

Plans are already well advanced for an expedition made up of Fylde members to visit the Khistwar region of the Himalayas in Autumn 1987. Members of the expedition, Andy Dunhill, Stuart Gascoyne, Mark Jackson, Al Peel and Roger Brookes are hoping to bag an unclimbed peak, Hagshu, 21/22,000 feet high during their trip. At the A.G.M., the Club agreed to donate £250.00 to the expedition and also make a further £1,000.00 available to the lads whilst they are out there to draw upon in the event of any desperate emergency. This of course would be repayable. The Club wishes you all good luck with this venture. We will keep you informed of any further developments in these pages.

MALTA GUIDEBOOK

Roger Brookes' long awaited, FMC funded, Malta guidebook is due in the shops in April. It contains over 200 new routes with 'E' grades and technical grades. Most of these were put up by Roger and other members of the Club and apparently there's still more to go at. The guide will cost £2.99 but there should be some going at a reduced rate to Club members, available from the Secretary.

WIN A MALTA GUIDEBOOK!!

Yes! To commemorate the release of this fine publication you could win a Malta guide signed by the author, in Stuart Gascoyne's not so very easy competition. Includes fabulous prizes for the runners up! Read on for more details.

GRINDLEFORD HUT

We have now agreed to a reciprocal rights' deal with the University of London Mountain Club for the use of their hut in Grindleford, Derbyshire. This deal is for a year's trial run only at present and allows us to use the hut, booking 10 days in advance and is limited to 4 people at a time, and the same for them at our huts. We had a very successful meet there last year, and the hut is excellent and in a fine situation. Anyone considering taking a team there, contact the Booking Secretary, John Wiseman, for more details.

B.M.C. NEWS AND COURSES

As usual at this time of year the Editor is showered with loads of leaflets, brochures etc. about BMC courses, holidays etc.. This year is no exception. Anyone interested in climbing E5 in a week, using a compass underwater, hunting the yeti in North Wales, ice climbing in Cornwall, being a sherpa in Khistwar, even rock climbing for the over 50s, please contact the Editor



for more details. Other BHC news includes their Annual Dinner; this year at the Royal Oak Hotel, Keswick on Sat. 27th April. Tickets are £10.00 (£9.50 for a group booking of 8 or more). This includes the usual disco and the guest speaker, Sid Cross, of the Langdale Mountain Rescue Team. The AGM will be held at the same venue at 4.30 pm on the same day. Also of note is the Symposium entitled "Rock '87 - The State of the Art" on modern rock climbing to be held at Plas Y Brenin on 21st March 1987 from 10.30 am 'til late. This features a host of big rock climbing names all flexing his or her muscles. Tickets are £5.00 and includes the inevitable disco and bar which will stay open 'til you drop it says here. Not exactly conducive to high standard rock climbing, but in my view probably the best bit'.

Further details from the Editor.

#### NEW JACKET FOR STAIR

An R.C.B. (?) has recently been fitted to Stair which means no more shocks in the showers. Also the immersion tank now has a lovely new red jacket. Simon Fenna has been seen recently walking around wearing the old one. These though will prove no deterrent to the latest menace at both huts. Jerry Evans has recently got into the habit of getting into the wrong bunk when returning from an early morning bog visit. Fortunately Jerry is quite harmless and usually just goes to sleep, regardless of sleeping bag. He has managed to steer himself into the correct dorms so far. How can this man be stopped? You have been warned!

#### BIG NOSE

Greetings nose pickers. It's the start of a new season and there's plenty of good injury news to hit you with. But first back to last season! News dribbling in from over the border is that Paul Greenstick last year managed an ascent of an E.6 on Blue Scar over two days. Whether he was aided and abetted by Paul Clarke, we will never know. Both of them have now sustained injuries training for the new season. Greensponge has an "Andy Pollitt shoulder" and Clarkey was seen recently sloping about at Malham taking it easy on E2's with a bout of "beer elbow". So much for our top team. Back here in "Lankie", following a trip to Malta, Dave Wood smashed down a wall with his bare fist resulting in broken bones. Dave hopes to be fit for his next trip abroad with our illustrious treasurer in March. Back to the Rock. The Malta team returned triumphant before Christmas. Dave Cundry (now known as Chundy following a recent bowling episode) and Paul Taylor managed a new route at HVS. This unfortunately looks set to miss the new guide. Roger Brookes also returned recently with a stack of newies from the same island. Roger has also more recently been involved in a couple of new routes in the Llanberis slate quarries repeating "Long Distance Runner" E2 5B/C, and seconding on "Remain in light" E3 6A. Both required bolt runners as did several of the short routes on the Rain Dog Wall at Malham which Paul Greenperson helped develop this summer, namely Tremelo E 5/6, and Afterburn E4 6A. Requiring none of these dodgy tactics was Martin Dale and Any Dunhill's new route on Pavey Ark climbed in those excellent two weeks of weather last October. Book of Reasons E3 5C. Takes a Wall and Groove left of Roundabout Direct above Jacks Rake. Mick Van Gulik's summer working in Ambleside proved fairly fruitless, except for a couple of second ascents on newly developed Erne Crag, Rydale.

Altogether then, not a bad year for nobs everywhere.

This year's ice has been sparse in most parts but good in Scotland. Al Peel and Mark Jackson will testify to that. Apart from getting drunk and partying 'til 4 a.m. in various parts of Scotland, the boys have ticked off some impressive routes. Parallel B or Lochnagar, and Orion Face Direct/Astral Highway on the Ben, to name but two. Also beavering away up there has been Dave Whitmore, Phil Caley and one Joseph Bone. A bit of ice earlier in January in the Lakes enabled Martin Dale to make his ice comeback after some 8 years and also Jerry Evans, his debut with Simon Fenna in the lead on an incomplete Dove Crag Gully, Grasmoor. Hot on their tails after doing the Force were Mick Tolley, Nev Stephens and Steve Halton. Ice in Wales has been pretty poor. Nevertheless Roger Brookes managed to drag his bolt kit up Pyramid Gully on the Black Ladders. Early though it is, the rock has already been hot. Back at the beginning of February four keen lads hit Crookrise on a brilliant springlike day. Many routes were done, notably Sole and Mother's Little Helper by Glenn Brookes and Andy Blaylock; Hovis Direct by Martin Dale; Crease Direct, Blaylock and Dale and Ruffian by all. A big team went to Malham for the day recently and many routes were done, notably Sundance Wall by Mark Harding. The same weekend in the Lakes Simon Fenna led Kransic Direct with Jerry Evans whilst Martin Dale led a struggling Colin Downer up Grasp. The following day Dale and Fenna dispensed with the nasty Little Battering Ram, the top pitch proving a bit of a pump. News is just in that down in Wales, Bolter Brookes has knocked off a new route in the Llanberis Slate Quarries. The Great Curve is in between the other two previously mentioned routes and is E2 5C. Well done Roger! That's about it kids!

A new bit of prom to climb on has been discovered by Guy Wilson, that flying hairdresser, Mick Van Gulik and mighty Mark Harding. It is now fully laden with arm wrenching "Harding hits". Too much laying off the "L" pinching the "T", slapping for the "F" and dyno'ing off the "T" have left poor Mark nursing a shoulder injury.

I hope I haven't given too much away there! By the way, Guy charges £3. for men and £4. for women. For haircuts that is.

Bye for now,  
The Big Nose.

Stop Press: Chris Thistlethwaite has just landed a job back in this country, so no doubt he will soon be burning up the grit around Colne! Good to have you back, Chris.

### IT'S COMPETITION TIME!!

#### THE GREAT SHEFFIELD NEST MYSTERY

One typical weekend a group of 5 nobs found themselves in Sheffield where they went to a party on the Friday night. In a subsequent discussion in "The Rule" it was revealed that each of the nobs was involved in a significant incident on the Friday night and each did a different thing on the Saturday. Snippets of this recount of a sojourn to that well-known spa were overheard by a certain person. This person (for want of a better name that is what we shall call him) made notes with a view to getting our hapless heroes banned from the club. Unfortunately for him he was too thick to work it all out. Here are his notes:-

1. Andy spent all evening at the party chatting up a girl.
2. Alan slept till 2.00 p.m. on the Saturday but he was not the nob who threw up over the stereo the previous night.
3. The wearer of the BTHREES realised on the Friday night that he had forgot the sandwiches that his mother had made him for the weekend.
4. The nob who did a runner from the curry house went climbing on the Saturday. This was not Glenn.
5. The nob who wore the Dires went walking on the second day. This was not Glenn either.
6. The nob who crashed the car on Friday night did not wear Hanwags. On Saturday someone overslept, someone went climbing and someone else got lost walking back from the house of one of the girls at the party. Martin did none of these.
7. Only Martin and Mark wore yellow legwear.
8. Someone went shopping on the Saturday.

The following is an extract from the transcript of a tape recording made by the "mole" back at the hut in Little Langdale.

- (voice 1) "The best thing I've found for climbing in is my yellow Ron Hill tracksuit bottoms and a pair of Cragratz"
- (voice 2) "You can't beat Hanwags and a pair of LIFA longjohns nob"
- (voice 3) "Yeah but there's no pose value. Get yourself some ballet tights nob"
- (voice 2) "Like yours you mean yellow with purple polka dots. Pity about the cheapo BTHREES that you wear with 'em"
- (voice 4) "Well I wear Fires with mine"
- (voice 2) "Yeah but your tights are fluorescent blue with orange Christmas Trees and purple snowmen. I mean I'm embarrassed to be on the same crag"
- (voice 4) "Well what about him"
- (voice 5) "What do you mean, what about me; Rockstars are great boots"
- (voice 4) "Esq, but your crotchless tights and boxer shorts are obscene"
- (voice 5) "Well they keep me cool in summer"

So who did what, when and what did they wear?

HINT

The answer to this problem may be found logically and I recommend "set theory" as a useful abstraction of the problem.

Any resemblance of those herein slandered to nobbs alive or dead is of course totally intentional.

The winner will receive a copy of the new Club produced Malta guide.

Three runners-up will each receive a signed copy of "A Solo on Lliwedd" by the same author.



Complete the following sentence in not more than twelve words and send your entry to the Editor:

I would like to live in Surrey because .....

Closing Date for this amazing competition is 1st July.  
The best completed sentences may well be published in a future newsletter so long as they are not too obscene!

THE DOLOMITES AND VENICE, AUG/SEPT. 1986.

For anyone with a spare fortnight, the following holiday notes may be of interest:-

Saturday: Fly to Venice, bus to Piazzella Roma. Magical first impressions of canals in the moonlight.

Sunday: Intend to do some of Alta Via 2 - Sella, Marmalada and Pale di San Martino. Leave tourist clothes behind in suit cases and fill up sacks with food such as jam, marmalade, pate, sardines. Train goes to Verona, then north thro' Trento and eventually disembark at Bolzano - about 3 hours from Venice - very cheap, about £6.50. each.

Convenient bus thro' Val Gardena with exquisite ski resorts. After 2 hours disembark at Passo Gardena (2137m), quite a lot of new snow on the ground and we're dressed for a heat wave! Bus only costs £3.50.

Hurry into the nearest rifugio shivering and to our relief they can put us up; palatial rooms.

Monday: Awake to brilliant views of Sella Group. Set off south and are soon climbing an exposed protected path up Val Setus with a fair covering of ice and snow. Is it all going to be like this?

After one hour emerge into sun on Sella plateau and soon at Rifugio Boe (2873m) dormitory booked, then off up Piz Boe (3152m) easy ascent. Fabulous views of Pelmo, Civetta and Marmalada.

Tuesday: Another brilliant morning. Up at 7.30, first experiments with hole in floor type loo. See a golden eagle beneath us and many wild flowers and hear the marmots squeaking. A thumping sound like a clumsy dog running past - we look and see a marmot no more than 5 ft away scurrying down the hillside; it briefly stops for a look at us, Christine in gleeful laughter.

Arrive at Rifugio Castiglioni, old and classy. Food and wine good. Old warden pronounces mountain dangerous, ice field under Forcella de Marmalada needs crampons and axe and via ferrata on west ridge impossible because of ice. We decide to give it a miss.

Wednesday: Huts working out about £10. per night. Ascend 1,000 m to Forcella Rossa (2500m). It takes 4 hours, but then have beautiful pastoral views towards Passo di San Pelligrino. We stagger in to Rifugio Muralago (1919m) - room in cellar down spiral staircase, showers, sit down loo. Fixed meal very good.

Thursday: Down to Passo di Valles in drizzle, rifugio has magnificent spaghetti and wine. Reluctantly set off into the San Martino group up a steep slope, cloud lifts to give good views of M. Mulaz. A high ridge path and good slab

scrambling eventually lead to Rifugio Mulaz (2571m) in a very lonely spot surrounded by enormous cliffs. Only us and 2 other English in the hut, have been camping. We go to bed earlier and earlier each night - about 8 o'clock by this stage.

Friday: It has been snowing but we and Brits go on to the Pedrotti via the exhilarating 'Sentiero delle Farangole'. Soon scrambling up snow covered screes in the mist, the Passo Delle Farangole appears high in the sky (2932m), the highest pass on the route, but we get there and soon the rope is out descending a steep little gully with snow and ice on the wire. Precipitous slopes with chamoix playing a long way below on the glacier and a steep slab above a waterfall requires the rope again and then the Rifugio Pedrotti (2581m). This section is quite an adventure.

The 2 campers depart and we escort Peter and Gillian to cable car, wish Gillian the best of luck in her interview and wave them goodbye. Myself and Christine suddenly feel alone, the hut atmosphere we don't like - they even want our passports. A most spectacular thunderstorm - feel sorry for the 2 Brits camping.

Saturday: Outside 6" of snow and brilliant sunshine. Stylish Italians arrive and stand around the path indicators like sheep waiting to be led - you'd think they would know their own mountains by now! Set off like on a winter's day just following the trail in the snow. Head down a magnificent flat-bottomed valley with campanili on either side and arrive at the Rifugio Pradidali (2278m), offered accommodation up a ladder in the roof. Christine thinks it a great idea! I am awake most of the night with freezing legs. But even in the worst situations there is humour - 2 Germans are in the same boat - 'nice place this, a bargain and only L4500!' and they had the nerve to charge that much.

Sunday: Return to Pedrotti to meet Peter via Passo di Ball (a Brit) (2443m). Better atmosphere this time, even asked where we'd been since our last visit but place heaving with Germans. Peter arrives, it's great to see him again, and we drink all the wine he has brought. All the Germans start singing, quite disturbing, hope its not the thirties all over again.

Monday: Arrive at the Pradidali, with one rucksack set off for the Via Ferrata del Velo, still in mist. The rock, vertical for hundred of feet, is cold and the top is in mist. Peter and myself worried about Christine (and ourselves!), but whilst we're standing with cold feet 3 German ladies arrive - one of them a grandma. They say we should have helmets and gloves which we haven't. However we set off roped together and make progress, blue sky appears, traverse away from the wet corner to nice dry rock, but this is much harder than anything we've seen before, at times the rungs are overhanging. Eventually after a lot of excitement and a little apprehension descend a steep wall and disembark in a grotty gully! - what a place to finish. We stagger up to the col and set off on 714 which proves worse than the via ferrata. A great day but late back. Another night at the Pradidali! But this time at least we're not in the roof.

Tuesday: German snores all night non-stop! Soon scrambling over difficult rocks and arrive at the col in a state of exhaustion, descend rapidly to the valley, and ascend through woods on a beautiful zig-zag path to the Rifugio Treviso (1631m) a charming wood built place, washing is a tap at the back.

A rich Swiss lady has brought her own guide to climb with. Christine finally gets her wish - palenta and funghi (tinned mushrooms) - won't be having it again.

Wednesday: No food left. Two little butter portions cost us L1000! Set off on the last lap to Passo Cereda. Walk down to Fiera di Primiero via alpine pastures amongst people hawing the grass. Tonadico is a charming old town of narrow cobbled streets and Fiera di Primiero provides a welcome sandwich and glass of wine.

Catch a bus to take us straight to Venice and pass down a narrow valley with beautiful little towns like Mazzano. We take our boots off and the smell is horrendous. Down to Treviso, a beautiful old town with canals and fine avenues and eventually to Mestre and over the causeway to Venice. We enjoy a complete change of clothes and a shower and are fit to appear in civilisation again.

Peter rings Gillian. She has got the job. Another bottle of wine!

Thursday: Venice is the most fascinating place in the world. St. Mark's Square and Basilica, stylish shops and bars; lots of glass and masquerades. Catch water-bus to Murano, island of the glass factories. Lovely and quiet; another world from St. Marks.

Friday: Get up at 7.30 but can't get on Grand Canal for commuters - sat on boats reading the papers like on Southern Region. Another day of culture; this morning Titian's Assumption. Lunch on a doorstep on waterfront. Peter has to break into sardine tins. About to start eating when door opens, stylish lady walks out - feel like English vagrants!

In late afternoon visit Island of St. George, this time Tintoretto's. Beautiful evening views from the tower - boats and ships in all directions - and an eccentric priest takes us up and down in the lift and interrogates us in latin.

Saturday: Yet another journey down Grand Canal. You could do it thousands of times. Doge's Palace. Enormous paintings, even on the ceilings, Bridge of Sighs and dungeons they put Casanova in. Streets so busy - Vivaldi over the loudspeakers. Wander into a unfashionable area, narrow streets, almost poverty but still fascinating.

Reluctantly back to the hotel and eventually airborne for Manchester.

Total cost each of a memorable holiday:	flight	£160
	hotel	£ 80
spending money (including large amounts of wine)		£200

Christine Ikin, Barrie Crook, Gillian & Peter Llewellyn.

With sympathy to George Parker who would have been great company on the way but who had to cancel because of injury. Better luck next time, George.

Barrie Crook

MISSILES FROM GOWDER

A pleasant Sunday afternoon, beautiful Borrowdale scenery, a classic route, good company, the occasional wuwhoop! Yep, this is what I've worked all week for - it all seems worth it now.

The setting is Gowder crag, Jerry Evans and myself had decided to do Fool's Paradise. Dave Magnum Wood and Dave Cundy had embarked on Kaleidoscope. On the second pitch, I crossed Dave's ropes and met the gentle aroma of his feet, politely perched a metre or so above my head. We discussed affairs of a route finding nature, as young men do in such circumstances, and proceeded on our separate ways.

Comfortably installed on my belay, although there was an absence of an ashtray or a Hartey's pull pump, my frame of mind was still much higher than normal as Jerry set off on the second pitch. By this time Dave's feet were the only visible signs that there was anybody fastened to the top of his rope as he moved leftwards to ascend the groove to the block belay above.

A few minutes later when only occasional glimpses of the feet were to be seen, the dreaded deep noise of something or somebody detaching itself from the crag was heard. I immediately looked in the direction of the feet and saw two blocks of considerable size (one about 4-5ft long) hurtling towards Dave Cundy. The blocks glanced the buttress and glided above his head with a few inches of scalp space to spare. Dave's "below" shout had already been made at this stage and Dave Cundy's head was well and truly tucked under his arms, one of which took the brunt of the smaller detachments which came down.

My heart stopped during the period between the boulders hitting the deck and Dave's head emerging from beneath his arms. I had begun to get an "Oh s...t No!" feeling. Anyway both Daves were fine and dandy and after the route was done were left with a unique jigsaw puzzle.

My congratulations go out to Dave Cundy for blowing a raspberry at death and sympathies to Magnum for such bad fortune. He described in the Rule (where else?) that awful feeling of sheer fright and helplessness as the block came away.

After a good lay-off from rock climbing, I have noticed a marked increase in general safety standards on rock helped by improved equipment and maybe healthier attitudes but this incident reminds us that the hills are still a potentially dangerous place to be no matter how safety conscious we are.

Steve Halton

THUD SQUEAK, THUD SQUEAK

The sounds of slamming doors and big boots broke the tranquillity of the early morning air. It was 5.00 am and they were arriving already. Poking my head out of the bivi bag into the freezing moonlit morning, I thought - another half an hour.

It was 7.00 am when Dave booted my frost covered pit - coming from the warmth of Crushers car. What a brilliant day - a quick breakfast and the donning of gear saw us on our way, over the golfcourse towards the Ben.



On arrival at the C.I.C. hut, the masses of door slamming early birds were evident. The Curtain contained parties as did all the other classic routes. Hadrian's Wall was a staircase of humans - Saturday on Ben Nevis!

Nearly everything seemed to be in excellent condition, so after minimal thought and weighing up the pros and cons a halfhour walk and we were gearing up at the base of Orion Direct. Several teams in front but well ahead so Mark meandered up the first laced up pitch. Another two superb pitches saw us at the base of the snowbowl about 1 third height. A quick chat and two more pitches on perfect neve across the snowbowl and up to the base of the rib where there was a collection of people. What a stonking day!!

There progress seemed to be agonisingly slow. It was 2.45. We were faced with at least an hour's wait here plus more waiting on the pitches above, and only halfway up the face.

A traverse across the top of the snowbowl and a couple of pitches of relatively easy climbing would take us onto North East Buttress. A tempting alternative to having around on such a perfect day.

While consulting we noticed a team high up to our left on an iced ramp.

"Jesus! that looks brilliant nob", we both said as Mark was getting the guide out. "How hard is it?", I followed "Astro Highway - grade VI" Mark replied "Wow!"

"Oh well, I'll set off traversing to N.E. Buttress"

"Yeh, OK" replied Mark as I set off - Thud Squeak, Thud Squeak. A feeling of failure was in the back of my mind when,

"That's the end of the rope nob", echoed across the face. I had just reached the bottom of Astro Highway's initial pitch and it offered a storming belay - two bomber nuts and a peg that rang its way in!! (A sign maybe!)

As Mark arrived and we were both glacing up the exposed line above, Mark commented, "looks good dunit?" and while he was saying "Do you fancy a look at it?", I was transferring him to the belay and sorting out the rack.

"I'll just go up to that hard-looking bit about 40ft up and have a look - I'll probably be down in a few minutes!" Ten minutes later I was cramming axes into a wide crack gaining those extra few feet to get decent placements over the top of this overhanging wall. Thud, thud, two bombers as I lent out, right foot trying to gain what little purchase there was on the verglassed overhanging wall. A high step and over the top I went. "Jesus! that were 'ard nob! Well that's it now, we're committed" I shouted.

Thud Squeak, Thud Squeak, up the steep neve passing several bulges to the base of a horrendously narrow V groove. In went a screw and off up the groove I went axes and crampons just biting, each move a total concentration of nerves and balance. Another 50ft of grade IV climbing brought me to an ice bollard and the belay. A barrage of whoops woke Mark from whatever he was doing and signalled my arrival at the belay.

He was soon on his way the grunts sighs and whoops drifting up through the still air. On his arrival his face said it all - "What a brilliant ..... pitch nob!"



After regaining his composure and gearing up, off he went up the next pitch; an impressive iced ramp leading to a steep groove. A good nut. Thud Squeak, Thud Squeak, as he disappeared into the gathering dusk.

Looking out from the immenseness of the face, snow capped peaks as far as you could see were turning a reddish pink against the copper blue sky. A rescue helicopter broke the silence as it buzzed the face, the winchman offering a wave.

"When you're ready nob", brought me back to the involvement of stripping the belay and happily saying goodbye to the ice bollard. I was soon Thud Squeaking up the ramp and groove above to Mark's belay.

Darkness was not far away now and we were still below the top pitches of North East Buttress so off I set. Thud Squeak, Thud Squeak, Thud, Thud up a perfect pitch of III/IV placing two ice screws in ice which just beckoned for them. I ran out of rope below the steep 40ft corner on N.E. Buttress just below the ridge. In went the belay, on went the headtorch, whoop whoop and Mark was on his way.

The transition from day to night didn't really happen as the moon just lit everything up as it glistened in the surrounding snow.

As Mark led up the corner a team of 3 arrived, having climbed N.E. Buttress. The 3 were in fact Trevor Jones and friends who were commenting on their best day on the Ben ever.

A whoop and Mark was on belay. Off I went up the corner, a real sting in the tail, trailing our good deed for the day. Quickly bringing up one of the three and then an offer of a pint each later, saw us on our way up the last 200ft of moonlit snow to the top.

The time was 7.30 pm and while viewing moonlit peaks as far as the eye could see, we talked about the perfect end to a perfect day - Beer!!!

Al Peel.

### MALTA III

April 1985 saw my return to Malta, this time with the express intention of producing enough new climbs to fill a supplement guide which I was planning to write with local climber, Simon Alden. Unfortunately, Simon had broken his arm falling off the side of the University Library building and so could not climb! However, he was able to show me round the crags and hold my ropes on a few occasions. He also introduced me to Noel Toledo, round Malta windsurfing record holder, who was just starting climbing. Together we were able to climb routes up to IVS, though he failed to follow me up Short Circuit (E1 5b) a stiff little problem route on the Leaning Block boulder at Wied Babu.

Apart from being able to explore several previously unvisited cliffs on both Malta and Gozo I was not able to do very much climbing until reinforcements from England arrived in the form of one A. Lewandowski plus Stuart Gascoyne and Yvonne, his wife. We all crammed into a small room at Sliema Scouts H.Q. which was my el-cheapo accommodation for this visit arranged through Simon who was a venture scout. Still it was home for a while, and enabled us to have an inexpensive holiday.

The first new climbs we did were at Wied Babu again, where I added The Maltese Falcon (E2 5c) which cleaves a direct line up the front facet of the Diamond Buttress on the east side.

Stuart declined to climb the route I had prepared for him so we left to catch the bus back to Valletta. Next day we got a hired car and drove over to Ghar Lapsi where we added a few eliminates to this well developed escarpment. The best of these being Andy's Peckpicket (E1 5b) and Stuart's A Scoopy-Do (HVS 5a) the former taking a direct line up the Twin Caves Pillar and the latter a steep scoop in the wall of the left-hand of the two caves.

H.T. Slabs then came under scrutiny with Andy producing a loose looking Very Severe Imagine (4c) which presumably is an allusion to his thoughts whilst soloing 100ft above a boulder strewn slope. I then made a roped ascent of Trigger Happy (E2 5c) a well protected, if short, slab route left of The Punic Wind. An even shorter route, Tight Feat (E2 6a) was then climbed after the author had to retreat from the tiny holds on the crux in order to tighten his boots, hence the name.

The next two days were spent developing two new crags on the coastline near Fomm ir-Rih Bay in the north-west of Malta. Here, I got gripped on what is probably the most serious pitch on Malta: Koyaanisquatsi (E3 6a). This finds a devious and technical route up a smooth steep wall directly above the sea with protection of a highly dubious nature. I think it was Joe Brown who is supposed to have said that protection is only as good as the rock in which it is in, a remark highly relevant to this climb, and which weighed heavily on my mind as I attempted the crux section. After this I had the next day off while Andy and Stuart failed on the big groove line left of Koyaanisquatsi due to the presence of a huge loose block.

Since there are some big roofs above this route, it could not be trundled either, prompting Stuart into making the remark that "This route requires a team of more imaginative abseilers or less imaginative climbers!" After this 'debacle' Stuart and Andy had to content themselves with a few good routes up the previously unclimbed, and unnamed 'Stucco Walls'. This is a highly unusual 70ft wall covered in hidden holds but dropping straight into the sea necessitating abseil descents. The best route here is Scirocco (VS 4b) which takes an unbelievable overhanging arete on huge holds.

No trip to Malta would be complete without a visit to Gozo and this was no exception. Again, we stopped at the Inland Sea but this time we camped. Also here was a film crew who were making a French/Italian war picture, though we did not see any filming while we were there. Our main objective was the great 500ft arete of Wardija Point which rises out of the Mediterranean like the prow of some huge ship. Unfortunately, due to a loose band of rock we could not get down to sea level and had to start our route from some ledges 2/3rds of the way down. In the event the route proved easier than expected due to loosish rock but the positions somewhat compensated for this. Another route we did here was Dry Bone Sand (E1 5b), up the line of the abseil route. This proved to be highly enjoyable, especially the first pitch which was just like a Lake District route.

We then shifted our attention to the Inland Valley running north from the Mgarr ix-Xini sea inlet on Gozo's south coast. The cliffs here are mentioned in the old Royal Navy guide but had not had any routes recorded on them. Andy and Stuart soon started putting this right by soloing a number of easier climbs on the introductory cliffs high in the valley's east side (later to become Antipasti Walls). The full wing day Andy continued his solo onslaught on these walls whilst Stuart and I cleaned two lines on the pocketed white walls opposite. These became

Futile Gesture (E2 5c) and Too Late for Yvonne (E1 5b) and are reminiscent of French limestone routes, only without the bolts.

After returning to Malta we added a few fillers in the 100 Yards Slab, and Wied Babu's west side where I got revenge on the overhanging crack that had defeated me before the produce Cat Burglar (E2 5c). Finally, I repeated the route up the Blue Grotto wall which Phil Becking had climbed at New Year.

After abseiling down to sea level I was surprised to find an old in-situ belay peg. Attached to this peg was a rolled up piece of plastic which contained a note giving details of the route, a name 'Hell. Boys' (E3 5b) and the names of the first ascendees Kevin Glass and David Croker. This was quite a surprise and made me feel better about losing the 'first ascent'. The route turned out to be superb, one of the very best in Malta, but at a slightly easier grade than first claimed - E2 5b/c.

The remainder of that day and the whole of the next day we spent sunbathing, swimming, eating, drinking and generally enjoying ourselves before we had to return to the cold and rain of the worst British summer I can remember. At least though it gave me the opportunity to do plenty of work on the new routes supplement which now had enough new climbs to keep me busy for quite a while. Letters published in 'High' and 'Mountain' revealed further routes done by various people over the years, including two more routes by Kevin Glass which his partner, David Croker, told me about since Kevin had been killed in a climbing accident at Houghton Quarry, Lancashire in 1984. The routes were named Nev's Route (E1 5b) and The Glass Wall (E2 5b) in his memory.

Roger Brockes

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