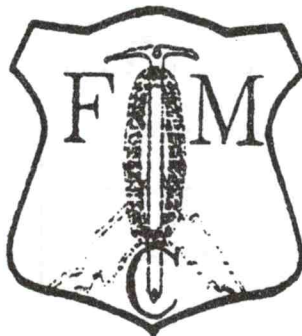


FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST '93

As I write these words I'm already begining to think about my forthcoming holiday in Colorado and by the time you read these words I'll no doubt be sunning myself on some sundrenched crag near Boulder. I hope you enjoy reading this news letter. Unfortunately my plans to make it more newsy havent really materialised and I would like to make another plea to the 176 or so people who recieve this missive....

Please send me all your news and info, unfortunately I'm not a mind reader and you'll have to help me with snippits of info (preferably drip fed) and not a week before I'm due to put another newsletter together.

The next newsletter should be around November time, so get writing. The more articles the better, they don't have to be all meet reports just let us know what you've been getting up to on half a side of A4. How about telling us about your summer holiday, a noteworthy route you've done or even a line about a particularly good pint you've had recently!

Anyway you've got the message I hope so I'll look forward to a bulging mail sack.

S. Wrigley

NEWS AND INFO

1. Don Whillans Memorial Hut

This hut (Rockhall cottage) is now open. Owned by the BMC and situated beneath the Roaches in Staffordshire it is an ideal spot from which to view climbers struggling up The Sloth. Hut fees are 3 pounds per night and bookings should be made through the honorary booking secretary Dave Brown 22 Chelmorton Drv. Normacot, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 7SA. Tel. 0782 332097.

2. Bowland Rescue

Following the lecture given to the FMC the committee donated 50 pounds to their rescue fund.

3. Congratulations etc.

Phil and Jan Morris on the birth of their son Toby Jay.

Kevin and Elaine Hindle on the birth of their daughter Laura Michelle.

Andy Blakelock on his forthcoming Nuptuals (28 th. ish August) in Boulder Colorado USA. (A few club members will be attending this event as well as grabbing a spot of climbing over there.

4. Lost and Found

Nothing to report found but we do seem to have lost the MUG OF THE YEAR. This historic trophy went missing following last years club dinner. Anyone providing information leading to its recovery will be bought a drink by Donald at this years dinner.

5. Criminals !

Seemingly gangs of Liverpool youths have been 'working' car parks in Wales, the Peak and the Lakes so try not to leave all your valuables lying around in your car at the bottom of crags.

6. Intro Members

There only seems to have been one brought to the attention of the committee and that is :

Andrew Horrocks 12 Danesbury place Blackpool.

If there are any other new members lurking around who haven't filled in a form yet please see Clair Addy our membership secretary.

STOP PRESS ! INTRO MEMBER

SIMON COLE

FLAT 3

8a PARK ST

LYTHAM

0253 739121

HUT AVAILABILITY.

SEPT

4 - 5 L (Ducks grub meet)
11 - 12 No Huts
18 - 19 L & S (family w/e Stair)
25 - 26 S (intro members meet)

OCT

2 - 3 L
9 - 10 S
16 - 17 L (Mountain bike meet)
23 - 24 S
30 - 31 L (working weekend)

NOV

6 - 7 S (firework meet)
13 - 14 L
20 - 21 L & S (family w/e langdale)
27 - 28 L

DEC

11 - 12 S
18 - 19 L
20 - 24 Stair all week
25 - 2 Jan
Stair & Langdale

AND NOW FOR THE BIT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR
THE MEET REPORTS !**

SOCIALS!!! SOCIALS!!!

THE SUMMER SCENE

REBECCA HARGREAVES

AUGUST

Tues 3 Crag meet:Eastby
Wed 4 Boozy Bike Ride 6.30 Thatched Gordon Heywood
Wed II Walkers/Climbers, Farleton, Pub King's Arms, Gary Bird
Thurs 19 Crag meet:Warton
Wed 25 Crag meet:Bridestones

SEPTEMBER (note change of programme)

Thurs 9 Crag meet:Longridge
Tues 14 Boozy Bike Ride 6.30 Thatched Claire Addy

THE WINTER SCENE

OCTOBER

Wed 6 Con Club 8.30 "North to Alaska" Geoff Newey's story in words, music and pictures of a unique 4700 mile cycle tour.

NOVEMBER

Wed 3 Con Club 8.30 "Antipodean Ice" Steve Wrigley's slide show of snow and ice climbing last Christmas in New Zealand.

DECEMBER

Wed I Con Club 8.30 (really will have to start this one on time) Slide and print Competition. Dave Bibby is once more our annual judge.

RULES FOR THE SLIDE/PRINT COMPETITION

Members of the club can enter both competitions.

As usual, there will be three sections: scenery, action and humour. Up to 3 slides/prints may be submitted for any section.

All slides must have been taken in the past year i.e. since the last competition in December. As this is the first year of the print competition, prints may have been taken at any time - so search for those Golden Oldies, colour or black and white.

Prints must be genuine prints- not taken from a slide.

DUE TO THE LENGTH OF TIME IT TAKES TO JUDGE THIS COMPETITION, ALL PRINTS NEED TO BE HANDED TO ME BY THE NOVEMBER SLIDE SHOW SO DAVE CAN JUDGE THEM IN ADVANCE.

Keep on supporting the events. There's been a good turn-out for the summer socials so far.

CORRIS May 93 J.Wiseman

Way past closing time on Friday the team left the Slaters Arms to walk back to the hut. Some had come direct from Pembroke having had a week of sunny weather. Gerry Senior had come from the deepest south of England, the rest from the Fylde - but someone was missing! the Duck. Next morning however the Duck was found asleep in the upstairs room having arrived at approximately 2 a.m. (he had set off at 9 p.m. having refused a lift. as far as we could tell he turned off the M6 for Chester, followed the North Wales signs until he reached the outskirts of Bangor. As he now thought he was going wrong he backtracked to the A5 went up the Ogwyn valley and along to Betws-y-Coed. From here he turned towards Blaenau-Ffestiniog. Once at Ffestiniog he followed signs to Bala went onto the moors about turned heading for Dolgellou and eventually Corris.

Sat was spent on the Arrans a good day out in clear, breezy weather. John and Clair headed off to bag each summit which left Barry & Chris, Brian Nelson, Gerry Senior, Dave Earle, Donald and ourselves to have a good chin-wag. a good day as long as you forget about the forest (a slight navigational error!).

Sunday was not so good weather wise. people went in various directions Canals, Tea shops and even a quick peak.

CHESTER HUT J.Wiseman.

A large group went to the new extended hut which still needs some final finishing touches to its spacious kitchen.

This year we did not have the sun and clear blue skies of last July's meet. It was overcast with low cloud and some showers. Having said that everyone managed to get something done.

On the Sat night everyone congregated in the Victoria were plenty of seating and a reasonable pint of beer made for a good night.

EXTREME ROCK M.Tolley

Now being a long standing member of mature years and body (old fat git to the lads) it's not very often that I get to tick an Extreme Rock route and so I will now bore you all with an account of a recent tick.

The meet was to Wales and on Thursday night the T.V. was full of news about floods in Llandudno etc. Undeterred we went, the weather all down was foul so a drinking & shopping weekend was forecast.

NOT SO the weather on Saturday was glorious and routes on Llanberis slate were led and fringed. Sunday was however the day, slightly overcast but dry. Martin says "lets try Suicide Wall" (this being the steep bit on the side of the Idwal slabs) "you should be able to stand on your feet and not hang from my waist!". Great I thought, there's a classic on there, I should have known better! The new guide was subsequently bought as we did not have one and Martin pointed out Capital Punishment E4 with "it's an extreme rock tick Nob".

We walked up accompanied by a grumbling George. George (a new member) does not like to walk anywhere and was not happy, since then he has considered giving up climbing, at least in Yorkshire, but that is another story.

The route when seen looks wet, I'm not sure if I'm glad or not. On closer inspection it's dry on the crux but looks like it might be saturated higher up. (A warning at this point the new guide on this area is crap!! Route lines on the diagram are mixed up and there are skimpy descriptions on where each route starts) be careful!

A short 5a pitch leads to a stance. So far OK . Martin sets off a couple of moves then a good runner. The guide says cross the intricate triangular slab, it is across a bit, down a bit , down some more and up to a reasonable foothold. All of this about 20 feet in a straight line on barely adequate holds. Literaly dozens of moves with the feet so as not to put weight on the hands.

Martin puts in about six runners most quite technical placements and moves up past the crux with ease to a thin thread.

The wall above is vertical but has good holds so he is soon on the half way ledge.

I ask him to belay here as I am getting cold and frightened and I will have a rope directly above me on the crux. I follow tremendous delicate climbing just about within my limit with the rope going up slightly faster than me ! I am warmed up now more relaxed and absolutely buzzing.

Martin leads the top pitch, again with only just enough gear trying to find his way around all the damp bits. The wall is well named suicide, runners are difficult to place, a long way apart but the rock is magic.

A stonker of a route. Thanks Martin.

BOLT CLIPPERS M. Dale

A good turn out for this meet the first real rock climbing weekend of the year. The meet was titled bolt clippers so we made our way to Parrock Quarry through Tilberthwaite to search out some clips.

Here they exist in large numbers so we clipped 'em! The routes here are clean and on excellent slate with all grades from VS to E5 meaning that everyone was able to push themselves safely.

Almost all the routes were ascended with good efforts from Steve Wrigley (E2's) , Chris Bell (E1's), George Nisbet and Mike Sissons (E2's) , Kevin Stephens (E3's) and myself on only the third route of the the year with a bit of dogging on an E5.

Some of the meet then moved into Hodge Close to try some big routes. Kevin and myself were joined by Lakeland new router and guidebook writer Bill Young for an attempt at Limited Edition E4 with it's new resined bolts. Kev had his first lob of the year so I took over and finished the job off, as the sun, low in the sky, raked the face.

Meanwhile Steve had led the bold Mirrormere E2 and Iggy had a bit of a gripper following the traversing top pich. I finished the day with a clean ascent of curtain call E5 now fully rebolted with the chipped holds emptied of their cement. Finger searing stuff.

An excellent night was spent in the Dry shits recounting tales of the days deeds and taking the mick out of Kevin Hindle & Andy Horrocks who spurned the clipping to go to sleep at the bottom of Castle Rock of Triermain. They did actually do some routes as well.

Sunday dawned dull so for a dull day we all went climbing the dull grey slate of Runestone Quarry. After some initial scepticism some routes were climbed but the general opinion was that it was a heap of choss.

The majority returned to Hodge Close and Parrock to push themselves some more. A large party gathered to watch Kevin attempt Shattered Image E4 with it's long reaches and run outs between bolts. Anyhow the big fall did not occur and Kevin backed off. The vultures had to settle for top roping the chairman to safety in what turned out to be the first epic of the year. Kevin followed the route immaculately and vowed to return to finish his lead another day.

Anyway a great start to the years rock climbing and a good fun weekend.

CORNWALL EASTER 93 BY M. DALE.

Well the meet on the syllabus this year was down as Wye Valley Camping but as interest waned someone suggested going to Cornwall and before you could say Mick's a grandad Dunhill had booked a caravan for the week and a team was formulated. And a rum team it was to!

I travelled down with Mick and Jenny Tolley to meet in the Star in St. Just team Dunhill, Andy and Christine and Howard who also had some mates in tow. The Fennas and the Swindells camped as did the now notorious Gordon, the guy who in case you didn't know is in to throwing all his kit away down Scottish gullies in winter. Other people who turned up included Martin Bennett and Roger Brookes. With such a team down we were bound to have some good fun if nothing else.

The first day dawned bright and breezy so a visit to St. Loy was called for. Everyone had a great day. Jenny went walking, Simon led an E2 that Andy had backed off much to his amazement. Steve and Michelle ticked off a HVS, Gordon managed to jettison some of his gear much to everyones amusement. I did the Baldest E4 which also brought a few laughs as with Tolley in tow it was team Baldest. The highlight of the day was Jills lead of a 5a pitch great stuff! We finished with beer in St. Buryan a new venue for us which was to prove popular all week. Then back to St. Just and the Kines.

The next day was very wet so we did Penzance and some real ale ticking. The Fishermans Arms at Newlyn and then we crawled our way back along the North Coast path via the Tinnars at Zennor, the Radjel and then the Wellington in St. Just. We hoped for a better day on Sunday but we were let down again. After many brews we braved the elements and went to a wet and greasy Carn Barra. Andy and Roger threw themselves ay what proved to be the very undergraded Holiday Tripper E1. Martin and Simon did very well with a little help to get up Crack in the Sky E1. Meanwhile me and Mick did Silent Sleeper E2 then lay siege to Touch of Glass E4 6b. But due mainly to drizzle (honest) and sheer difficulty I gave up just short of half height. We then gave up on the day and went for a brew or was it a pint?

Monday wasn't a bad day but Mr. Dunhill decided to take us to a crag obscura dangerously close to Helston. Trewarvas was windy cold etc and truely esoteric in typical Dunhill style. Christine refused to do a route and left in protest. Me and Mick decided we'd better show willing and did a couple of E1's which weren't too bad. One in particular was like bridging up Fennas arse with not even cleft fluff to grab hold of - very scary!

We all went for a brew and an ice cream and then went to look at Bashers Harbour. Team Dunhill failed to actually reach the crag along the beach so me and Mick took the direct approach and abbed in for a look. We climbed out up the very photogenic slab and arete of Double or Quits E3 6a, cheating slightly at the top due to wet rock etc.

We amazingly managed to avoid the Blue Anchor that evening. Talking of Fenna (if ever we were) he pulled out the big one at Bosigran by leading Bow Wall with Martin Bennett following. A very good effort!

Tuesday was a few peoples last day. It was also a day for wild weather weather changes. Martin Bennett and myself set off to do Astrall Stroll E2 but didn't move from St. Gurnards Head car park as we were pelted by heavy rain then hail and on the way back to the caravan what resembled snow! We had a brew in Pendeen whilst outside lay a good inch of snow/hail. A mile up the road it was dry and the sun was out! Amazing! So off to Sennen we went and did a HVS before Martin had to set off home. Tolley turned up with Andy and Roger who threw themselves at a slimy HVS so I led Delilah E2 a tough little pitch. We finished off by throwing ourselves at an E3 but after some frigging both Andy and myself backed off. Beer was had in the old Success and then in the Wellington.

I decided that wednesday would be the day I stopped prattling about and attacked some good routes. So first stop was Carn Barra for a go at the now dry Grand Plage E3 6a. After a tough start above a gnarly landing the well protected crux starts then more tough moves up the slab and crack followed. A tremendous pitch. One to put on your list. Mick followed in his usual style complete with grimaces. After a brew Gurnards Head was the next port of call - not the pub the crag! The tide state was going to be OK for an attempt at Mastadon E3. However getting going was hard work. Andy pulling off a good lead on the greasy first pitch. As light began to fade I tried to do the middle pitch quickly but intricate climbing made this impossible. This left Andy with the last overhanging pitch in the near dark. An absolutely brilliant route. Justifiably chuffed we quaffed copious amounts of ale in the Gurnards, the North Inn and then the Star followed by a Dunhill curry back at the van. A stonking day!

From here on it could only go downhill. The only thing that could improve was the beer and that would only happen if we headed back up north! Another bright day saw us down on Bosigran Ridge to have a look at Deja- Vu. We did a couple of tough E1's first to warm up and let the landing ledge at the other side of the famous jump dry out. Now Mick hadn't slept a wink all night thinking about this jump. He wasn't very happy about it at all and did everything in his power to convince me that the route was wet, dirty, covered in bird shit you name it! In reality unfortunately it was seeping and there was luminous green slime hanging down the crux slab, so we gave it a miss. Tolley offered to carry all the gear out in thanks!

We finished off at the very quiet Fordenack Point trying Immaculate Arrete. We found out later that mother nature had removed half of it so it was no wonder that we didn't make much progress on it. We opted for a pokey E1 Vietnamera and some beer in St. Buryans and the Star.

The next day we decided to head north to Hartland in Devon. Here things just went from bad to Dyer! I decked out of Bulging Speedeye Wall E1 when a foothold broke. Fortunately I hit Andy's strategically placed rucksack from 20 ft. rather than the boulders. I dusted myself off and finished the route as the rain set in. We walked to Smoothlands to glance at the new lines of pegs on the main face - for next time! And then rounded off the night with a crawl around the areas better hostelries.

The next day it was pissing it down but things did improve. We went up north and had Saturday night in the Wyre lounge, Fleetwood, where the beer was definitely better!

◆ LUN DY ◆

THERE ARE STILL 4 PLACES LEFT
ON THE LUN DY TRIP SAT 28th AUG TO
SAT 4th SEPT.

ACCOMODATION ON THE ISLAND IS IN THE
QUARTERS. Excellent FACILITIES WITH
SEPARATE BEDROOMS.

PRICE INCLUDING ACCOMODATION AND
RETURN FERRY CROSSING IS £86.50

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SAMPLE
THE SHEER DELIGHTS OF LUN DY ROCK

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OR WORK 0772 855341

Witnessing a Pembroke meet is like sitting through a rainstorm in a desert. Calm interrupted by frenzied activity. This year the same pattern, except for an open range all week. No firing only birds left to inhabit the vertical world of Huntsman's Leap.

Howard Davies actually looked pleased to see us this year. He'd filled the heated indoor 'pool' to the brim. Howard is the sort of farmer who makes you feel sorry for engaging his services. In his letter to me he wrote "Dear Mr. Wood, I am pleased to be able to offer you the same terms as last year - a £20 reduction on brochure prices". He added "We have to eat as well" I began to feel guilty that nobody used his pool.

Had the weather been poorer a few of the nobbs might have got their feet wet. As it was late nights followed early starts, followed by late nights at the Swan Lake where the top nobbs held court on the days activities. Red faces, chalked hands, forearms like Popeye and big thirsts.

Lots of routes were done - perhaps even a club record. We also had a fashion show, John Tats, hot off the catwalk, modelled some tasteful crimplene slacks in cream with perfect creases. They at least appeared to help with his climbing and the next day saw his rapid ascent of the Gadfly VS with a short pause at the crux to light up.

Crystal slabs also saw a disciplined effort by the major and Paul Taylor who found himself in a steeper spot in Mother Careys Kitchen by the end of the week. Mark, suffering from a bad back, gave his verterbae an outing on B Team Buttress (E1) a rather testing piece of physiotherapy. Meanwhile down the coast the Arrow (E1) saw an ascent by Phil Caley, Phil Lee, and Hal.

Elsewhere Mr. South, Chris Bell and party tackled a number of succulent varieties in Mother Careys Kitchen. Frank Towne found Pembroke rock steeper than expected but much to his liking. Down in the Leap, the Brookes and Peel Parties did battle with the Beast (E2). Further along the zawn our illustrious Chairman and the ever youthful Mr. Tolley, set about taming some of the harder V. Diffs on the Monster Face. Our Editor Steve also scrutinised this hostile territory. "Monsters took on an entirely different meaning for the youthful Anthony as in enforced horizontal hangover mode he recollected events of the previous nights disco.

Sadly precise details of everyones efforts were not recorded. I can confirm that the coastal paths were enjoyed by Rebecca, Paul and Irene, John and Clare, Dave and Libby, John and June and the Seniors. (apologies are offered to those whose efforts go unmentioned.)

For the record, the meet was attended by thirty one members and three guests with a further three members camping in the village. Several nobbs chose to take advantage of the weather (which is invariably settled on the coast in early May) and stayed on site for the remainder of the week.

Entertaining climbing, good accomodation and a reasonable chance of good weather, combine to make Pembroke a popular starting point for the season. Events may conspire to extend this enjoyment through the opening of the Range West, or curtail it significantly if the government's proposals to move the May Day holiday to October become a reality.

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The Range West issue is receiving the attention of the BMC. They hope to influence the MOD to allow increased access to the areas west of Stack Rocks by increasing membership of the local 'access' committee from nil to one. Apparently the camp Commandant is becoming environmentally conscious and is listening to arguments about damage caused by the belay stakes and the effect of climbing on the bird and wildlife populations. The camp Commandant is a powerful figure and don't forget it is by his kind permission says the notice, that the telephone is placed by the coastal path for emergencies (crawl, crawl, vomit, vomit.) Now it can't have escaped the attention of anyone who knows the area that the Commandant has been remorsefully shelling the area for years and all this for the benefit of training soldiers from the richest country in Europe which is not allowed a major standing army in peacetime.

Hopefully our representative on the committee will point out that the Pembroke Parkie has observed that climbers and birds do manage to co-exist. Also I have read that climbers do not necessarily degrade the flora but sometimes allow wild flowers to flourish by keeping down the encroaching vegetation. - Anyone for a mass tresspass ?

John Wiseman has volunteered some advice about the Governments latest attempt to upset the people by shifting May Day - write to your MP. For those contemplating such an idea the following hints may be of help. Avoid at all costs mentioning the word 'enjoyment'. Do include terms like 'cost effective' preferably every second line. Slip in the phrase 'performance related leisure' and maybe even make a reference to unemployed ice cream salesmen. Yes that should impress them. If all else fails move abroad or see me down in Pembroke next year. I'll be there the whole week.

BIG CRAGS JUNE '93 M. DALE

Having just experienced an awful Whit weekend's weather in Torridon I didn't hold out much hope for the weekends Big Crag meet. On thursday however the weather changed for the better, we were in for a chance.

Yes ! Sunshine burst through the hut door on saturday morning and the Big Crag for the day was to be Dow. The attendance was small probably because of last weekends weather. My partner hadn't arrived so I tagged onto Steve Wrigley and Richard Stevensons rope for an ascent of Nimrod (EI). Richard had been boasting about his mid-week heroics in the quarries so he was rewarded with the middle pitch at 5b. He seemed to do OK but Steve darn't look "if he had any technique he'd go far" said Steve as Richard made an 'arms only ascent'.

Meanwhile cool George Nisbet appeared having made an ascent of Leopards Crawl HVS whilst wearing a pair of shades. Mike Sissons followed and they then decided to have a go at Nimrod behind Mick Van Gulik, Simon and Jill Fenna who were now snapping at our heels. Steve dispensed with the crux pitch and we were soon wandering down for a brew at the sacs, stopping on the way to admire Hughie from Chester M.C. demolish Tumble E4 with only about 5 runners! No brains that lad! Steve offered me the chance to do something a little harder so I jumped at the chance of doing Tumble "I bet I can get as many runners in as Hughie did even before I get to the groove" I boasted. Which I did! The crux groove is delicate and precarious but good gear is never far away. The top overhang is a pumpy finale to one of the best pitches on the crag. Hughie was now throwing himself at Holocaust much to the amusement of the gathering throng. George had also been doing a bit of swinging having come

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unstuck on the first pitch of Nimrod which Mike had just led. Richard decided to second Tumble. "If he used his feet he'd be dangerous" shouted Steve as Richard somehow climbed the pitch using his arms only with some assistance from the rope. Steve followed it immaculately and was justly pleased with his performance. We finished the day with Steve leading Tarkus EI 5b. A good day was had by all.

By the time Sunday arrived the hut was full to bursting point with heaps of folks coming out of the wood-work realising that the weather was going to be good. Hell even the family Morris arrived for the day and got dragged off by Kevin Stephens to Hodge Close to go climbing, or did Kevin get left holding the baby? Steve and Richard went for Pavey where they had a great day doing Astra E2, Arcturus HVS and golden slipper HVS. The Fennas and the mid-European git Van-Bollock went to Gimmer where they knocked off Springbank EI and Pacher EI followed by a new route from the supplement. The two balding heroes Chris Thistlethwaite and Paul Taylor went to Esk as did Hal and Woodsy.

My partner had also arrived in the form of Mr. Dunhill so we opted for Esk which of course meant we were going to have to pit our wits against the Cumbrian E5. Having already been on it before with that sports commentator climber Jimmy Greaves I was keen for another go. Moving across to the foot of the groove the exposure grasps you. I knew there was a hard move up the wall to below the leaning groove. A nut above my head was hard won and then I managed to make the move, reached left to the foot of the groove, moved up but then my arms got pumped and I had to slump back onto the nut. Next go and I managed to fiddle a nut into the bottom of the groove just in time to jump out again and back down the wall. A long rest and I'm in the bottom of the groove, no rest here. Precarious moves up the groove with better gear lead eventually to a bridging rest. It keeps on going all the way to the top, just remember to look down between your legs when your in that groove! An absolutely gobsmacking position.

A very cold Andy followed. Numb fingers unfortunately spoilt it for him. We soon warmed up in the sun at the top of the crag. A slightly flawed ascent but never the less I'd done all the moves free.

My apologies for not mentioning everybody's activities but after Whit everyone was glad to be out on those BIG CRAGS having fun in the sun.

Although John Hickman informed me that the Black Mountains were in Dakota, Libby and I set off for South Wales via the scenic route. In the early evening we climbed the ridge opposite Offa's Dyke Path and then had supper in the old Half Moon pub. That was the last we saw of civilisation for the weekend.

The Hereford Club hut can be found down miles of country roads and forest trails. As the directions had suggested that the quarter of a mile track to the hut was passable in dry weather, we set off, only to become stuck in a rut when we were nearly there. Grabbing the gear, we struggled the remainder of the way, finding the hut apparently locked and in gloomy darkness. Pressing our noses to the windows, we could just see John and Claire making supper with the assistance of head-torches. This was not promising.

We eventually discovered the place to be lit by ghostly gas lamps (which leaked) and flickered in the gloom. Gradually adjusting our eyes to the dim light, we picked out the familiar features of John and Jenny Parker and Dave Earle. The Earle, having arrived first, had spent some time searching for the facilities - before discovering that the only washroom was the kitchen, and the loo was a basic broken bucket without the provision of chemical fluid. This was not what we'd expected.

Over mugs of tea, we took a sweep on the time Donald, Dave Cundy and Paul Taylor would arrive. Hours later we were woken by the clatter of gear and the muffled voices of the rear guard. Torches were switched on as watches were examined. 2.15 a.m.. John Parker had won - but we had forgotten to put our money down, but no-one was going to remind him 'cos he'd booked this hut in the first place. As they came upstairs we put out our torches and pretended to be asleep.

In the morning the hut wasn't much lighter than the night before. However Paul Taylor clearly was not present. (We later discovered that he'd arrived at Dave Cundy's at 10.30 - two hours after the Duck.) Donald wanted to know how much we were being paid to stay here, and it was generally put to the Meet Leader that the club should stand everyone B & B. Libby, walking round the hut, discovered it was South Wales' answer to the Himalayan Kleenex Trail - without the views. John Hickman awarded the hut "Three Dead Rats", and this started all the 'estate agent' jokes: "Desirable, secluded residence, with room for the imaginative purchaser." As we left, the birds were singing, "They don't have to live here," grumbled Donald.

After a mammoth journey round the Brecon Beacons, unsuccessfully searching for sun, we eventually decided to climb Cefn (2024') near Merthyr Tydfil in the mist and the rain. As we splashed through the puddles on the way back, Dave Earle dryly remarked, "I've often wondered why I'd never been to this area before. Now I think I know." We then lifted our sprits with afternoon tea at Abergavenny - and a visit to real flushing loos.

In the evening, seated round a log fire with good food and wine, the place looked almost homely. A minor pub crawl later led the intrepid party to a local pub where the landlord thought something was wrong with his beer when we left after midnight.

The next morning saw a fine display of dark clouds. Two journeys with gear along the quarter of a mile track took us back to the cars. John and Claire set off for a two-thousander on the eastern side of the Brecon Beacons but had to descend due to horizontal rain

and settle for a walk along the canal followed by coffee and cakes in Hay-on Wye. The rest of us set off for the hills. The heavens opened so we emptied into the Parker's new Mobile Mansion and ate our lunch before assessing the local beer guide and likewise moving off to Hay-on-Wye.

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It was difficult knowing what to write in my 'thank-you' letter to Hereford Mountaineering Club. I know that I won't be going back to the Black Mountains or the hut, but thanks to everyone who kept the jokes going all weekend.

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INTRO MEMBERS' MEET - JULY

REBECCA HARGREAVES

The forecast for the weekend was poor, and it was right. Despite this, a good team turned out to 'The Three Shires' on the Friday night: Dave Wood, John Tats, Phil Lee, Richard and friend Michael, Paul Taylor, Donald, Dave Earle, and myself - Richard and Michael having already done a route on Middlefell Buttress.

I'd chosen Little Langdale for a change of crag, as Intro Meets are usually held at Stair. I needn't have bothered; climbing was out. Tats and Phil tackled the only route on Saturday - a loose and steep V.Diff near Huptable Crag, but they returned very late, having survived the long journey "to hell and back". Paul and Donald walked "in the teeth of a gale" from Thirlmere up Wythburn Valley to Ullscarth and back by Harrop Tarn.

Dave, Richard, Michael and I went off to +++++ in search of new crags. Dave wanted to retrace his steps of a previous walk and check whether the crags which he thought he'd seen were in fact reality or hallucination. We are very pleased to announce that they are real. The afternoon was spent looking for potential routes, belays, etc, and a good time was had by all in surprisingly fine weather.

On the Sunday Donald was the only person to do anything: at Elterwater it threw it down so, deciding that God didn't like mountaineers, he went for the Marstons at 'The Britannia', before venturing to Loughrigg Clappersgate, Skelwith, Tarn Hows, Oxenpark and back via Hodge Close.

Paul, Richard, Dave and myself had a totally lazy day as it constantly poured. We dived off to 'Rock and Fun' for breakfast to see if the New Route Book contained our crag - and it didn't. The main business of the day being done, we settled for gear shops and 'The Golden Rule'.

A pity about the weather, but it was still an enjoyable and interesting meet.