

FYLDE
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1994

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition especially those who having access to a typewriter or PC have sent me typed manuscripts.

Keep the articles coming in especially nice short interesting or funny ones.

Also if you want to sell any gear, need info about an area you are planning on visiting etc. then drop me a line and I'll incorporate it in the next newsletter.

S. Wrigley
14 Bagot St
Blackpool
FY1 6EZ

News and Info

1 New Members

The club extends it's usual welcoming hand to:

Dave Ball
7 Lime Grove
Thornton-Cleveleys
FY5 4DE

Michael Sissons
87 Waverley Rd.
North Shore
Blackpool
FY1 2LN
Tel: 0253 751249

George Nisbet
36 Pilling Cres.
Grange Park
FY3 7DP
Tel: 0253 393604

2 Discount at Climbing Shops

On production of club membership cards discount can be got at a number of climbing shops including:

Harry Robinsons, Lancaster
Frank Davies, Ambleside
Needle Sport, Keswick (15% for orders on items not stocked)
Rock and Run, Ambleside
Alpine Centre, Blackpool
Outside, Hathersage and Sheffield

3 Hut Security

Following an incident at New Year whereby the hut was left unlocked for several hours (whilst members made jolly in the Swinny) could all members please ensure that the hut is locked at all times when empty. If the hut is not locked the majority of members insurance policies would be invalid.

Whilst on the subject of huts could everyone ensure that the water is turned off when locking up after a visit especially during the winter months.

4 Change of address

John Sealey & Di Norris
41 Redburn Ave.,
Culloden,
Inverness,
IV1 2AZ
Tel: 0463 794067.

5 Aggravated Trespass

Attached to this news letter is an important letter from the BMC regarding legislation that may effect our access rights to crags and open moorland. Please read the letter and write to your local MP stating your concerns. If an MP receives more than half a dozen letters on a particular subject they will usually take some action. So get writing!

SUMMER SOCIALS

REBECCA HARGREAVES

Calling all craggers, walkers, boozy bikers and mountain bikers.....

MAY

THURS 5:FROGSMOUTH
WED 11:MEET OF THE MONTH : ANGLEZARKE - GEORGE NISBET & MICHAEL SISSONS
TUES 17:RYLSTONE
WED 18:BOOZY BIKE RIDE -6.30 THATCHED - DAVE BALL
WED 25:HOGHTON QUARRY

JUNE

WED 1:SCOUTSCAR
TUES 7:MOUNTAIN BIKING NEAR DARWEN - MARTIN DALE & DAVE BALL
THURS 9:MALHAM
WED 15:MEET OF THE MONTH : ATTERMIRE - GARRY BIRD
TUES 21:BRIDESTONES
THURS 23:BOOZY BIKE RIDE - 6.30 THATCHED - STEVE WRIGLEY
WED 29:WILTON

JULY

WED 6:MEET OF THE MONTH : TWISTLETON - REBECCA HARGREAVES
THURS 14: HUMPREY HEAD
TUES 19:BOOZY BIKE RIDE - 6.30 THATCHED - IAN EVANS
WED 20:CRUMMACKDALE
TUES 26:JACKSCOUT

AUG

WED 3:MEET OF THE MONTH : LANGCLIFFE SKYLINE BUTTRESS - MARTIN DALE
(INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKING)
TUES 9:EARL CRAG
WED 10:BOOZY BIKE RIDE -6.30 THATCHED - GORDON HEYWOOD
WED 17:CROOKRISE
THURS 25:BROWNSTONES
TUES 30:TROY QUARRY

SEPT

WED 7:WINTER SOCIAL : MEMBERS'SLIDES II (as there wasn't time to see
all the slides last spring. Please bring them
again - and more.)
RIVER WYRE HOTEL (LARGE ROOM - for the same
price as the small room because you drink a lot !)

Hope there's plenty here to keep you all happy.

Have a good summer,

Rebecca

HUT AVAILABILITY

MAY

30-2 L
7-8 S
14-15 L
21-22 S
28-30 S (Stair all week)

JUNE

4-5 L&S (family w/e Stair)
11-12 L&S (hut to hut)
18-19 L&S
25-26 L&S (fell race Langdale)

JULY

2-3 L
9-10 S
16-17 L
23-24 S
30-31 L

AUG

6-7 S
13-14 L
20-21 S
27-29 L&S (families w/e Stair)

Driving in a Winter Wonderland

Simon Fenna

What were you doing at 4.30 am on Dec 28th ?

Drunk ? Asleep ? Shagging ?

Well, Mr Peel was doing none of those - he was trying to destroy his new car by coming over Snake Pass at the start of a guaranteed 100% ace ice, nobs trip to Jockland.

You may remember all the snow and cold ? Kindly, before it all left us the next night, it paid a parting visit by washing into Jerry's pit at 3.00am behind the Kings House.

The tone of our trip was set - we spent two shite days cruising the delights of Scottish hospitality (Egon Ronay award to the Invervay Hotel at Tyndrum - NOT !)

Somehow we ended up in an apartment in Aviemore - pissed on, pissed off, and needing to get very pissed ! (ho ho ho !)

We found Gordon the Axe having a jolly birthday (400) in the putrid campsite at Loch Morlich, and tempted him into the Owl.

After 2 days of crap, we finally got a stonking day on the 30th Dec - bloo skies, sodding cold and not a scrap of ice in Coire an thingy. AAAAAARRRRRRGGGGH.

As a last resort we whizzed over to Hells Lum.

This crag apparently had the only ice in Scotland and loads of it. We did Brimstone Groove and Salamander.

Steve now thinks Al is(quote) "a mad bastard" for his lead up thru' the overlap.

All agreed that this was an excellent day as we sat on the top watching the setting sun - before heading for the Mitchells in the Bleedin' Owl. There we were treated to live entertainment by some seriously jerk students who had apparently climbed the Mantrap on Bosigran (or somewhere). Who lets this kind of people onto the hill ? They were ranting about their big plans for the next day (2.00 am start to the first "pherique up the midi to Shelter stone to climb Smiths Route - or some such bollocks.)

- we saw them leaving the car park at noon the next day as we returned from the crag.

We hit Aviemore for lunch at the Happy Haggis where we had the best ever haggis -go there ! Order it ! - before returning to celebrate Hogmanay where it should be celebrated with nobs in the Swinney !

HEYWOODS HAPPY HOLIDAYS DAVE EARLE

Deep in the innermost recesses of the Thatched House a silver haired old gent busies himself with the task of organising ski trips of the utmost quality. With the faultless secretarial work ably provided by his wife Joan. The 1994 trip to Bormio slotted easily into the upper echelons of a successful run of winter breaks.

The venue was the Gira Sol hotel at Bormio 2000 run by Frank Lord, past chairman of the FMC, past everything else and now simply past it, his friend Elizabeth and her husband Alfred Cantoni.

Having suffered with the hordes at Bergamo airport we enjoyed the drive along lake Como with views of a still misty lake and snow covered mountains rising all around. A mid-morning break was made at a cafe with stunning views of the Bregalia. On arrival at the hotel the bar was sniffed out and Alfredo was once again amazed at the drinking capacity of the Heywood holiday mob.

The first few days saw the multitude divide itself easily into various groups of differing abilities, the beginners, intermediates, the experts and the drinkers who cruised around the pistes from bar to bar.

So it was that a large crowd of disciples followed the silver haired gent into La Rocca for a welcoming kiss and free drink from the lovely Marcia and Gabriella. Few skis could pass La Rocca without hurling their owners into the clutches of their Bianco Sporco's, Fil de Fers and many other delights. Most evenings were spent here until finally the skis took us back down in fading light and the peace and quiet of empty pistes. These last trips of the day were the best for the writer.

Several groups made it over to Santa Catonia a neighbouring resort for a change of scene. The mountains around this area looked particularly fine from high on the piste.

Meanwhile back at Bormio Allan Bell was doling out excellent advice to the intermediate skiers. The major fault with the authors technique was an almost pathological fear of plummeting down the slope at 32 ft per second per second (or 9.81 m/s^2 in SI or very fast! For those not technically versed ..ED.) which resulted in an insistence to turn backwards and forwards across the slope. At least Martin Dale got the hang of things entertaining the masses with a number of spectacular wipe outs including bouncing down the cable car station steps and hurtling backwards down an avalanche slope.

After several days on the piste the author felt the need to plug into the peace, serenity and majesty of the mountains and with skins attached set off through the trees under the moonlight to soak up the mountain atmosphere. Mysterious shadows cast themselves across the snow as he wound his way up the mountain. Alone stars cascaded overhead and all around the mountains glowed in an unearthly light above the twinkling of the valley. Around him there was only peace and quiet broken by the occasional squeak of the snow. Gradually the sky misted over and as the scene began to fade from his eyes he turned for the descent to the hotel with just the beam of his head torch to point the way to the warmth and companionship glowing inside the sunflower hotel; and the beer and the song.

He discovered on his return that he had a sleeping companion. Could it be the lovely Gabriella resting there so expectant and so desperate for his manly charms. Not likely just sundry waste bins wearing pretty bonnets ski boots and sundry bits of unromantic junk. There was nothing left to do but go to the bar to join that real live glamorous grandmother Joyce Foster Kent in another bout of drinking and carousing.

During the week there was an orgy of spending on ski equipment with the combination of Alfredo, his sisters shop, a local ski factory and a weak Lira making for some real bargains. Using other peoples money the author bought some ski mountaineering skis and downhill skis and was glad of his YHA ski bag bought in the sales.

And so to the blackest hour on the piste. The author was bullied into taking part in the ski race organised by Alfredo. His boots and skis shone in the afternoon glow as he set off down the icy course into the gathering gloom. He jinked to the left and he jinked to the right but to no avail, on the night he was just not up to the job. With teeth gritted he barely managed to put in three turns in the stygian gloom, crushing defeat was heaped upon him. The clock gave its own cold verdict on his racing abilities 30 seconds behind the slowest lady. The shame, the ignominy. The golden tortoise award.

Some top FMC stars missed gates and were disqualified but Matty Smith crushed the opposition with a devastating display of iron nerve leaving honorary life member for Millwall to reflect on the probability that most of the people there could have walked down quicker than he skied.

So to the last day the final gathering at the Rocca lasted until 7pm to be concluded by a torchlight procession back to the hotel. The authors newly perfected "racing snowplough" came into its own as he easily kept up with the crocodile of drunken skiers.

And so to bed, crashing out early for once the authors slumbers were disturbed by the cries of ecstasy ! emanating from the chairmans invisible bed. "The lucky swines probably bonking the busty blonde from the Norwich party " he thought, resentful of not being young and good looking and desired by women. The Sam. Start however showed not a busty blonde rushing from the chairmans bed , but a chairmans knee inflated to the size of a football. A fall in the torchlight procession was the culprit

As we drove south Gordon gave out the badges to the ski school class attendees, all that remained as we looked down lake Como was to reflect that the absence of John Holland was felt deeply by all who knew him.



Oh God ! He'll bore us to tears for years about this one.

Simon Fenna

And justifiably so.

Have you ever done a route solely to annoy, make jealous, and generally goad a grinning, balding, granddad ?

I've not - but given the opportunity I'd like to think I would.

So, risking divorce by getting Gill out of bed at 6.00 am (after 4 hours kip) to give us a lift, hard man Evans and I glided up to Lochnagar.

Ice was everywhere during the effortless slog up the track - we were sure that the routes would be in better nick than in that fabled winter of 1956 - 74. We were, however, unimpressed to see the crag plastered in soft snow and less ice than somewhere with very little ice on it.

Teams descended all around muttering "Crap" "No way" and other healthy ideas.

So another pointless visit to Lochnagar ? Well, we went up to check out the line - Parallel B - and it looked less than mediocre. At this point I surprised myself and actually got my finger out and set off up it we could always ab. off. (like hell)

Against expectations, the first 2/3 of the pitch gave the best climbing ever, until I had to suddenly learn how to bridge a chimney just longer than my leg while pulling (gently) on axes in soft snow.

I would like to register my total appreciation of the moral fibre, integrity and general ace person-ness of Alistair Mctavish who I believe put that peg in on the crux - and left it there.

The next pitch, the top half of the chimney, was truly desperate. I got myself well frozen before following Jerry up it - using every possible "hold" (Mike Tolly would have been proud of me !) - purely because time was of the essence (honest).

An easier pitch followed, before an innocent looking groove on the right led through the headwall. Cruise up this and out we thought. NOT !

I got up to Jerry, having seen no runners for 130' , and passed him belayed to a frozen sod and an inch of warthog on a 70° wall. With the light fading, I thoroughly scared myself getting up the remaining 160' of overlapping 45° slabs - not iced as promised in the guide but covered in 8" of loose snow. Good job I had all that extremely expensive, and utterly useless, gear dangling around me.

Up the last 100' foot to the plateau and darkness. What a relief ! Frozen solid in ice armour we followed footsteps along the edge and down to the real world again.

I'd recommend the route to anyone - it's the best and hardest winter route either of us have done - but do get order up a little more ice in advance.

ps. Jerry now officially recommends Warthogs.

Addendum : I hope this sudden flurry of Fenna writing isn't too tedious, but Steve Wrigley said I should forget the quality and just write it, and put it in the post before I thought about it !

TO CLIMB OR NOT TO CLIMB?

Introductory Members Meet 25/26th September 1993

Andy Horrocks and myself left Poulton on the Friday evening in driving rain, calling at Little Ecclestone to collect Paul Dooay on route to Ambleside. I had made arrangements to meet Martin Dale at the Rule.

Several pints later we left and drove to the Swinside to meet with the rest of the in crowd. After drinking enough to ensure even Tats would not wake me up we headed for the hut.

Saturday morning arrived late for some of us but at least we made the morning. The sky was blue, the sun was out, all that we needed to do was locate a crag that was in the sunshine and above all else "dry".

Several abortive attempts were made to locate the afformentioned crag but none seemed to fit the bill. What else could we do? Parking in Keswick did not cause Mr Dale any problems and we were soon aimlessly wandering around the gear shop circuit.

Once all the money had been spent the only thing left to do was go climbing, Shepherds seemed to be the most logical choice.

Three teams were to be seen doing their stuff Tats with Phil Lea climbing Adam, Martin, Paul Dooay, Andy and myself climbed Eve. The others went on to greater things I decided it was just as much fun to sit and watch.

Several of us returned to Keswick for food and drink before joining the rest in the Swinside to drink the night away.

Sunday proved to be another good day so once Gary Bird had negotiated his way to the hut several members headed of to Buttermere. Rebecca Hargreaves went for a stroll round the lake while Martin decided to hit the tops. Gary, Paul, Andy, and myself made for Grey Craggs.

Oxford and Cambridge Direct saw a mass ascent for the team including Martin who just popped in to see what was going on before resuming his walk. On leaving the crag we wandered of along the tops in the evening sunlight before returning to the cars for the drive back to the hut.

On the way home we called into the Kings Arms for a final drink and some food, it proved to be a popular venue most of the members who had been on the weekend called in with the same thought in mind. All in all we had an excellent weekend to look back on.

Kevin Hindle
Introductory Members Meet Leader

BETTER THAN SEX S. WRIGLEY

Remember that first time, when as a child you saw snow and all you wanted to do was get out of the house, run around throw snowballs and make snowmen with your friends. I do and the feeling returns as an adult every year as I drive up to Scotland, catching the first glimpse of snow. It might be as I drive over Rannoch Moor or perhaps in a layby in "the Coe" as I peer up to Stob Coire Nan Lochain.

Winter climbing in the British Isles is a mixture of such highs interspersed with many lows. This year I was privileged to spend four hours snowbound on the A74 at Lockerbie one evening, was nearly washed away in my tent from outside the Kingshouse as the river began to thaw during the night and spent a freezing cold night in a bivi bag in the car park at Glen Muick.

But then there were the highs. The ascent of Route 2 Direct on Carn Dearg, a ten hour experience (with I might add a very experienced climber, Jerry Gore), my first major mixed climb on the Ben. The icy runnels, the glazed slabs, the abseil over the roofs to get back on route and the grade V ice pitch climbed by headtorch as our 10 am start made itself felt. The thrill as we reached the end of the difficulties and made our way to the top of Carn Dearg before the long slog back past the Lochain to the car and bed.

Then there was the route to end all routes. The route that made me feel "complete", "satisfied", the route that would stay with me for the rest of my life, every foot of it's 1400 ft. etched onto my brain. The "Orion Face Direct".

If I was a poet I'd write a poem, A musician I'd write a song, an artist I'd paint a picture. But I'm not and the best I can offer is a few disjointed scribblings.

Jerry, Simon and myself stood below Observatory Ridge. Hadrians Wall looked like it had enough ice on to last until August, Zero Gully was not a gully just a wall of ice and all the minus gullies were in perfect nick. But above was the Orion Face winking at us all three of whom were secretly wanting to step onto it but each knowing that a team of three on the longest Grade v on the Ben would be "foolish".

I think Jerry cracked first, Simon and myself quickly following him up to the base of the buttress.

How can I do it justice, eleven pitches with just one rock belay! Memories of blue/green ice that sucked ice axes into its bosom. The perfect neve, the steady rhythm of a team all going well. Then there were the spindrift avalanches, Simon's cool lead up the iced wall above the basin. There was Jerry's attempt at throwing his ice hammer away only for it to embed itself in the neve of the basin. We were privileged and we knew it as we topped out onto the NE Ridge after eight hours of ecstasy. We even reached the ruined observatory before dusk, a novelty for Jerry "night climber" Evans.

The photo's didn't turn out particularly well, but on this occasion it didn't matter. The images in my head are far stronger and more vivid than any two dimensional photo.

I've not been back to Scotland again since that trip and have already packed away my ice gear. How could I hope to better that day, every thing else would be an anticlimax.

Next season however when the memories have faded the ice gear will once again be dug out and the car pointed north in search for that ultimate day after which one can truly feel "satisfied"



Dear Club Secretary

24 March 1994

CLIMBERS FACE THREAT OF PRISON

As you may be aware the Government is planning to create a new offence of 'aggravated trespass' in the Criminal Justice Bill which the BMC believes poses a very serious threat to our freedoms to enjoy the open countryside in this country.

As it currently stands the Bill is worded so that anyone who does not have a legal right to be on land and knows that their actions might have the effect of disrupting *any* lawful activity taking place on that land, will be committing a criminal offence. Anyone familiar with the outdoors knows that by walking across a heather moor, grouse will be disturbed. If this took place shortly before a shoot, or perhaps even in the nesting season, a landowner could call the police who could arrest the walker or direct him or her to leave the land. Furthermore a police officer can direct people to leave the land if he believes they intend to put themselves in this situation, even if they are on a right of way.

Such a change in the law will be a fundamental setback to the rights of climbers and hillwalkers to enjoy quiet recreation on Britain's hills and crags. Over the past month BMC staff have been working flat out to put forward sensible alternatives to MPs, the Lords and the Press. We believe that quite minor changes to the wording of the Bill could safeguard the interests of climbers and hillwalkers.

Please write, as soon as possible, to your local MP, expressing your concern. Please don't enclose this letter but simply ask your MP to make representations to the Home Secretary urging that the Bill be amended so that there is no risk of it applying to climbers and hillwalkers, legitimately enjoying the countryside. We are also urging the Government to exclude Scotland from these sections of the Bill.

Thanks for your support.

Derek Walker

Derek Walker
General Secretary

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