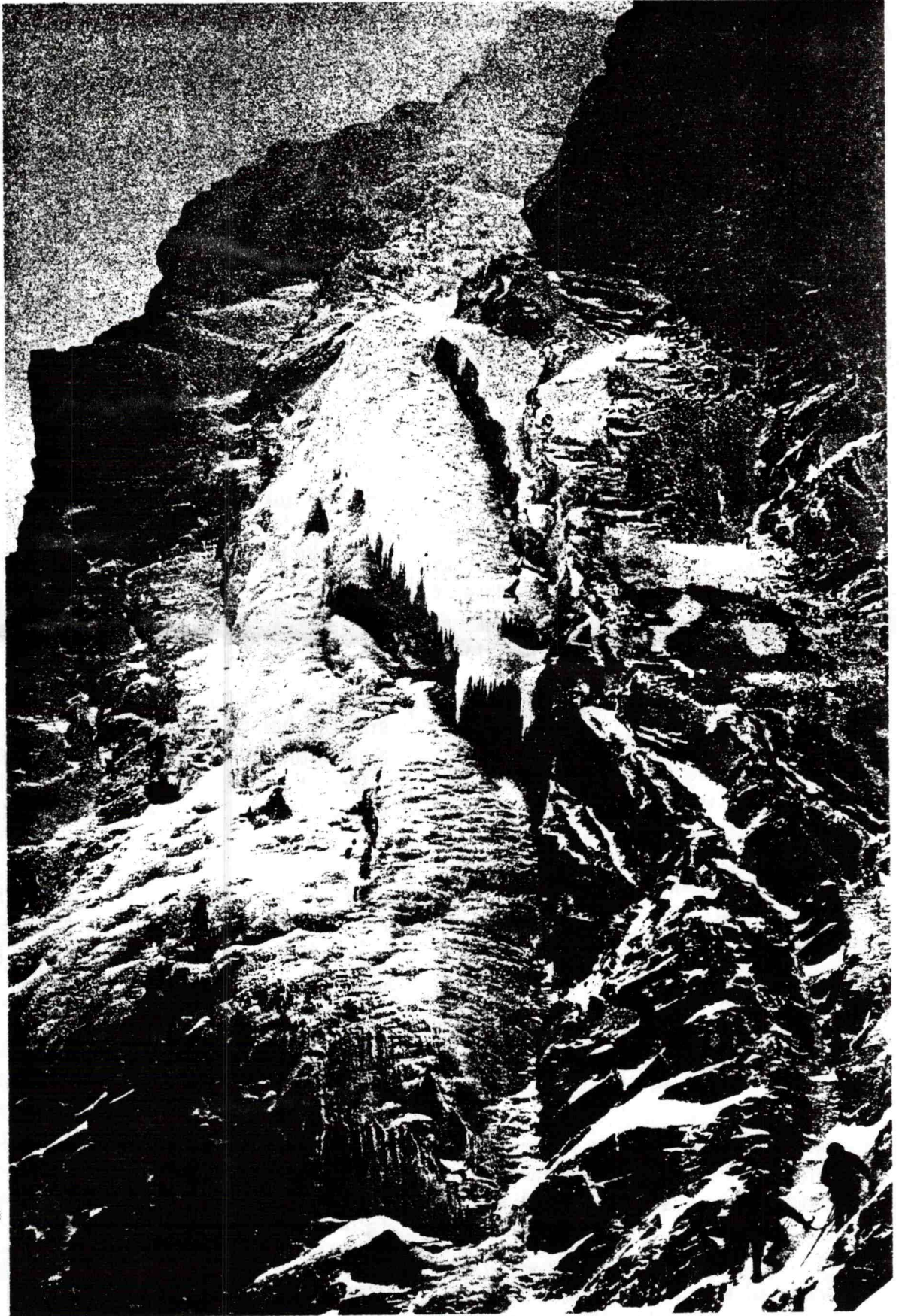


Newsletter - Winter 1996

Exide Mountaineering Club



Intro....

Greetings Folks! The party season is upon us! A Happy Christmas to all our readers. May your glass be full and your Christmas Dinner a gastronomic delight....free from E.Coli 0157, salmonella, CJD, botulism, BSE, listeria, shhl don't say 'McDonalds'

News....

The club dinner was another success this year with a full house treated to the usual high standard cuisine. Rather less of it seemed to be airborne this year. I suspect this is largely due to Mike Tolley's absence, although Fenna's use of his newly born son as a human shield worked well in keeping our corner of the room free of Brussels sprouts.

Lush of the year went to Phil Lee which is just as well as he's offa dane souf in the new year (watch out White Cliffs of Dover). Dave Cundy is going down south as well although he didn't win Mug of the Year this time. That honour went to Glenn Brookes for (none) route finding in Jordan. The FMC's equivalent to the Booker Prize went to Dave Earle for his account of his exploits in Corsica.

The summer seems a long time past. Counting the days has been our chairman Steve Wrigley who badly broke his ankle in Wales in summer. Steve has been undergoing physiotherapy and we all hope he will be back in action next year.

A more permanent loss to the club follows from the news that Barbara Overton, known to members as Barbara Sealey, suffered fatal injuries during a road accident in early September. Barbara was an active member of the club in past years and will be sadly missed by those who knew

her well. Dave Earle pays tribute to her many skills later in this newsletter.

The annual fell race took place in November at Stair over a new course set up by Mark Broughton. This involved a circuit from the hut, taking in Cat Bells. Despite some 'creative' handicapping, the event passed off well and was followed by an Andy Dunhill curry special, a fair amount of which seemed to end up over Mike Sissons.

The winter social calendar has seen talks from the Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team and a well attended talk from the Fort William Guide, Mike Tighe, in association with 'Boots Across Scotland'. Glenn Brookes and Steve Wrigley gave a slide presentation on Jordan followed by the editor on Australia and Thailand.

Most recently the slide competition produced the usual spread of excellent entries with the slide landscape award going to Barry Crook, the humour section being taken by Mari Angeles Solera and the action prize going to the editor himself. Print prizes went to Steve Wrigley, Mari Angeles, Martin or was it Mike ?

Thanks again is due to all who have contributed articles or summaries of meets, particularly to those who have managed to get them typed or onto disk. Do keep your articles coming.

Finally congratulations are due to Simon and Gill Fenna in doing their bit for the FMC baby boom. They are the proud parents of James Robert (Jim-Bob). Will he be anything like his father?

Dave Wood
Newsletter Editor December 1996

Update

Chester Hut Secretary

Now Brian Wilderspin (01244 349594)

Membership

New Members:- The Club Welcomes the following new members:-

Jeffrey Carr , 1 Abbots Close, Kirkham. PR4 2XE

Neil Dawson, The Old Barn, South St, Grt Eccleston. PR3 0YH

Full Members

David Stott, 38 Aintree Rd., Thornton Cleveleys

Dennis Carrigan, 21 Chalfont Way, Meadowfield, Durham. DH7 8UP

Change of Address / Tel Number

Mike Penn now on 0033 4 6824 4684 or 04 6824 4684 if in France only.

Nils Tremmil: c/o Project HAI/95/010, PO Box 557, Port Au Prince, Haiti. West Indies.

Member's Achievements

Members will be pleased to learn that Stewart Sykes has recently received a reward from Princess Anne in commendation of his work with young people and the D of E Award scheme.

Also Henry Iddon continues to reach new heights in his cycling career having recently won a local 12hr time trial (269 mls). He came 8th in the national 100 mile time trial.

Sponsored by Thwaites, Henry came 30th in the Irish milk Race. He recently raced, dressed as a fairy (!) at the Manchester Velodrome for Children in Need. Well done Henry. You should have had an extra pudding at the Club dinner!

Working Weekend - Langdale

The November working weekend has been re-scheduled for Jan 22/23 '97.

Club Library

New members might wish to know that the Club has a library containing some old books including titles which are not easily available elsewhere. Dave Earle holds these books in trust for the club and has compiled a list of the contents which will appear in the next newsletter.

Access Notes

Members are advised to refer to the last copy of BMC's Summit Magazine and the most recent issue (which may be with this newsletter) for information about access. I have a copy of the BMC's project expenditure on access if any member is interested.

Committee Business

The Committee has met on several occasions since the last newsletter. Members will be pleased to know that 'Unblock Cumbria' has relieved Stair of its septic tank contents. This was not a cheap undertaking but few volunteers made themselves available for this task. Double glazing has been installed in Stair and re-painting of the outside has commenced. The bunks now have access ladders. The wheely bins have grown in number at Stair and the bin store at Langdale is undergoing renovation. Donations have been made to Mountain Rescue Teams including Ogwen who attended to Steve in his hour of need. The Club has also made a conditional donation of £240 to the 'Save Trowbarrow Appeal' which is a registered charity aimed at purchasing the quarry for recreational use.

The idea of commemorating the Club's 50th birthday in pictures is currently being considered. The outcome will depend upon cost.

Members with ideas about meets should let the incoming Committee know immediately after the AGM

Social Syllabus

Martin is finalising speakers. The venue, unless you hear otherwise, will be the Castle Gardens at Carleton.

Jan 8 - Possibly slides on climbing in Germany by our own Chris This and / or members slide quiz. Volunteers needed.

Jan 15 - Blackburn Climbing Wall

Feb 5 - To be arranged

Feb 12 - Kendal Wall

Mar 5 Possibly John Rigby (Lakeland Climber) on 'Simien Skies' - an illustrated account of a trip through Africa.

Mar 12 - Cliffs Barn Wall

April - Falls during Easter.No Social.

May etc - Outdoor events

Final arrangements will appear with AGM notification and minutes.

Hut Availability

Jan 4/5	Both Huts
Jan 11/12	Langdale
Jan 18/19	Stair
Jan 25/26	Langdale (Working WE)
Feb 1/2	Stair
Feb 8/9	Chester Swap (No Huts)
Feb 15/16	Stair
Feb 22/23	Langdale
Mar 1/2	Stair
Mar 8/9	Langdale
Mar 15/16	Stair
Mar 22/23	Langdale
Mar 29/30	Stair (Easter)
Apr 5/6	Langdale
Apr 12/13	Stair
Apr 19/20	Langdale
Apr 26/27	Stair
May 3/4	Langdale (May Day)
May 10/11	Stair
May 17/18	Langdale
May 24/25	Stair (Spring Bank)

Subscriptions

Our treasurer would like you to know that he knows the people who haven't paid their subs yet. So this might be the last newsletter you'll get. If in doubt, fork out (or have your picture in the next issue)!

For Sale

Simon Cole (tel 01 253 795017) is selling the following gear :- Scarpa

Vega Winter Boots. Size 10 ('they fit as well on either foot' says Simon) - £100. 8 guidebooks (Lakes, N.Wales). 1 complete rack (17 rocks, 9 Hexs, 4 friends + slings, krabs, extenders) and a 55mt Marlow rope, 2yr old with no falls - sensible offers.

Mike Penn is selling size 7 Scarpa walking boots (hardly used) - £45 ono. Contact Dave Earle on 01253 890283

Ansaphones

Have you noticed that everyone seems to have got a telephone answering device these days? You can hardly phone up a member without encountering a recorded message. Messages vary from the business like "Hello.. this is.....I'm not in....."etc.. etc. through the expansive: H e l l o E.v.e.r.y.b.o.d.y to the camp Julian Cleary or even gross bodily noises! Some messages are current, some out of date and some phones are even answered by computer! What's more members have been caught lurking behind their machines waiting to intercept the caller. All very disturbing.

Ferris Wheel / Bike Shed for Stair

The editor's post bag has been bursting with replies. Most thought that the Ferris Wheel was out of keeping with the rural atmosphere. However, there has been serious discussion about a bike shed. This is a controversial subject with some members wondering if bike owners might not hang their machines outside the windows and sleep with one eye open - as it were. Bring your ideas to the AGM. Thursday 20 Feb at 7.30!!

Articles

Dave Earle - walks a pram around France
George Parker - on another holiday !
Steve Wrigley - is the Chair in the chair
Henry Iddon - the iron man is back
Barry Crook - visits the Lakes of his youth
Andy Dunhill - on his holly with Tolley

Meets >>>>>>>>

Blan -Y-Nant 14-16 June

Ten climbers and one walker had a superb weekend at Blan -Y-Nant hut. Many climbs were done in Llanberris and Ogwen areas.

The weather could not have been better although a little too hot for some feet in tight boots on Sunday.

The hut is a little bit isolated for climbers - good for walkers although I feel sure Gerry would have liked some companions.

Good beer, food and company.

Les Ward

The Old Girls' Reunion - June 1996

I made a celebratory cake for the Silver Anniversary of Ladies Meets. I decorated the top of the cake with a mature lady in icing with a substantial bottom and well rounded bosom. "She" was planting a pennant on the summit of a crag. The caption was to read "25 years of Ladies Meets" but this seemed a far more appropriate heading - "25 years of talking and walking".

Mary Aspin was the founder member of Ladies Meets initiating the idea of escape for those female club members from Toddler dominated existence's. Gradually over the years these weekends evolved to become a regular feature on the club syllabus and were attended by many women even including a token male for a time.

To be eligible for invite to this select gathering you had to have attended a Ladies Meet in the past and to be of female gender. Many past(it) Ladies replied to the invitations we sent out and were prepared to travel some distance to attend - which was very encouraging. Sue Reeve brought her 22 year old daughter Jessica with her. Jessica had no recollections of the previous meets she had attended - probably because she had been a foetus at the time.

The weekend was fully booked at Stair Hut. On Saturday everyone walked choosing either the low level trek along the disused railway track to Castle Rigg and back, the medium walk up Bleaberry Fell and High Seat descending via Ashness Bridge, or the Robinson round finishing on Cat Bells (more strenuous).

The evening meal was provided for all. An elaborate 3 course meal with wine of course and followed by coffee and whisky. The organisation was wonderful - something women excel in. The room was decorated with silver balloons and photographs of triumphs past, provided by individual members. There were cloths on the table, serviettes and table decorations and a candlelit atmosphere.

The grand finale was a short but appropriate speech by Mary and the ceremonial cake cutting. (It is at this point I digress, as I really feel I ought to point out, that the fact that the knife broke in half, as it was thrust into the cake, has got nothing whatsoever to do with the solidity of the cake, but rather to a poor choice of knife. I also admit to feeling a little hurt by the amount of hilarity and mirth this occasion generated.)

The evening was rounded off with a quiz organised by Liz Stevenson. Lots were drawn and 4 teams sorted. Liz was splendid as the Game Show hostess as the contestants were somewhat boisterous and over - enthusiastic at this stage in the

evening (and some groups appeared to cheat!) but not once did Liz lose her temper or get exasperated. The winning team included me (always arrange to be in a team that includes brains) and I was voted the sole winner of the commemorative - especially made for the occasion - mug. This somewhat assuaged my feelings regarding the unfortunate cake episode.

Everyone did the same walk on the Sunday, up Newlands Valley and descending to Grange for a pot of tea in the cafe. The return to the cottage was by the Lakeside, over Cat Bells or catching the ferry. Then we sat about and ate the previous evenings leftovers before our departure accompanied by much chatting.

The quote Steph - "Great Company, Food and Booze".

I'm looking forward to the next celebration in 25 years!

An observation - My only regret is the lack of younger women joining us - to carry the Pennant (ever onwards and upwards) our philosophy of talking and walking. But times change and perhaps a weekend of escape from males and offspring is not to everyone's taste??????

Jennie Tolley

(If you are interested please contact me. Children, Males and Dogs need not apply.)

Intro Members Meet June 1996

As far as Intro Members goes, this meet was a non-event. Where were you all?

Appearing on Saturday afternoons, Myself and Joanne visited Reecastle Crag, Watendlath where we encountered the Fat Boy abseiling incident which somewhat upset our evening. It just shows you how the climbing walls are producing climbers who just don't have the mentality to climb anywhere else but in the wall. As we arrived, two youths were setting up a top rope on 'White Noise,' a classic E3. They had not yet thrown down their rope or declared their intentions. We arrived at the Crag at the same time as Ian Carr and his friend who, like us, were just after ticking off a route before tea. They uncoiled their ropes and racked up below White Noise. Ian started climbing and when he got 15 feet up, down came the rope from above. As he tackled the crux, a fat lad in action sandals abseiled down the rope, threatening to kick Ian off the route stating that he was here first and was going to top rope the route (not correct! - the fat lad had not declared his intentions before Ian started climbing). Ian is a nice polite bloke and would not be provoked into a slanging match. However, his mate was and thus a slanging match did ensue. Whilst all this was going on I was trying to concentrate on leading 'The Rack'.

As I reached the top, the fat boy had hiked round to the top to have it out with Ian. All very nasty and not necessary. Dave Birkett and his girlfriend had arrived and watched the debacle from across the way and because of what was going on decided against doing a route. Joanne followed finding the route a bit steep. We left as the fat boy was hanging off White Noise on a top rope. The only way he was going to actually climb the route was if he lost a lot of weight. Completely out of his depth, he should have stayed in the climbing wall or chosen a crag with some routes he could actually climb. The guy was completely unaware of ethics, an absolute pratt. He spoilt ours and everyone else's afternoon at the crag. Time to write to the Magazines.

Sunday was wonderful, so we all went to the NAPES, on Great Cable. Stuart Gascoigne and Glen Brookes beat us to Tophet Wall, so me and Joanne nipped round the corner to have a go at an E2. However, also round the corner was a very cold wind and about 20ft up my fingers were numb and definitely not happy. I am afraid I had to retreat and finish up the V. Diff to the right, 'Tophet Bastion'. Glen and Stuart joined us. Lou and Pauline had walked over Seafell. Stuart had arranged to run over to meet Pauline on Dunmail Raise so had to leave prematurely. We carried on to the top of Cable and walked down over Green Cable and back to Seatoller.

Beers in the Pheasant signalled the end of an interesting meet.

Martin Dale

Obscure Crag

This meet, although well attended, certainly didn't see us adventuring into obscurity. Must try harder next time.

Saturday saw people climbing on of all places, Shepherds. Myself and Joanne arrived in late afternoon and rubbed shoulders with Bonner's brother on Quayfoot Buttress. Crypt Direct felt a lot harder than I could remember. Joanne breezed up it in fine style.

Sunday saw us visiting Swindale. Only mildly obscure but a better attempt than on Saturday. John Bailey and Roy Turner did Truss Buttress whilst the rest of us did battle with Sostanedo? Fang and Bloodhound. Then the rain set in. We beat a hasty retreat to the pub as Phil Lee and Dennis Corrigan finished with a brisk ascent of Fang, in the rain. Phil had earlier rubbed shoulders with one of his heroes, Graham Ertle of Scottish Winter fame, a torqueing expert.

Even if the crags were not that obscure, the spots definitely were!

M Dale

Cornwall - Summer 96

No years climbing is complete without a trip to the South West. This year was no exception. At August Bank holiday Paul Taylor, Nick Dalzell, Christine and I did battle with the holiday traffic and headed for North Devon. The first few days were a bit wet but we managed to sample a few of the Culm coast cliffs.

The main cliff visited was Lower Sharpnose where we did a classic E1 traverse - The Smile. Unfortunately our car was vandalised while we were climbing. Both locks were ruined so that we could not lock it for a couple of days - be warned.

We then moved on to West Penwith and camped at St Just. We were joined for 10 days by John Tattersall and family who were here on holiday from Hong Kong. The weather improved and we climbed most days in hot sunshine.

We did a lot of climbing including several expeditions onto longer easier routes in relative obscurity. One such example was Hellava Slab, a severe on Hella Point. This involved an exposed scramble and abseil descent, followed by a traverse out above the sea. A short clean slab in an excellent position led to a steep corner and a squeeze up a traditional granite crack. Once on the top we had to find an easy means of descent.

We all went to the Minack open-air Theatre one evening with a picnic, bottles of wine and lots of warm clothes. A must for any trip. A day on Lizard Point enabled us to visit the Blue Anchor at Helston on the way back to sample some Spingo. Another must.

John and family are enjoying Hong Kong and if anything John has put a little weight on. I tried, successfully, to ensure that he did not fall off whilst seconding me! We are going to visit them at New year, so hopefully we will have an article on Hong Kong in the next newsletter.

Andy Dunhill.

Bregalia - Mello Valley Aug 1996

It was some time in my primary school years that I began to walk under ladders and generally disregard superstition; so when Al Blackburn said he and his reputation wanted to come on the Mello trip, I didn't contemplate anything but blue skies. Sure enough August 16th dawned bright and blue, and with Manchester Airport basking in sunshine, we boarded the BA flight to Munich.

As luck would have it most of Europe was under cloud, but undeterred we pushed our somewhat overloaded, but gleaming new hire car, southwards towards Sondrio. Sunset caught us negotiating the tortuous bends of the Val Massino but we had pitched camp in time to welcome the arrival of Phil Lee and Joanna Goorney. Phil had done a virtual non-stop drive through France without incident until reaching the local village when some out of control local lads pulled out of a junction and severely modified the side of his car.

After a few beers, equilibrium was restored and the next day was spent sunbathing and climbing on the local 'boulder' at Sasso di Remmo. This boulder is in fact almost two full pitches and probably qualifies for the largest piece of detached rock in Europe! Nevertheless, this, we hoped would just be by way of familiarisation for the bigger stuff. To sample the delights of the valley we ticked off the low level waterfall granite slabs before plunging into the water for ice cool refreshment.

It was going more or less according to plan when weather stopped play - or severely curtailed ambitions. Cloud cover on the peaks and recurrent mid afternoon rain put the higher climbs out of reach and forced us back on to the low level crags, one of which saw Phil retreating rapidly using five points of contact. Eventually a brightening from the north signalled the possibility of the higher peaks being in condition. Two teams prepared for action. Al, Joanna and Dave Cundy set off carrying food and camping gear with a view to following the 'Roma' path. This would take them to the Gianetti Hut, round the cirque passing Monte Qualido, across the Zocca valley to the Allievi hut, then descending at the south east head of the Mello Valley. Our team (Phil, Hal and I), followed them as far as the Omio Hut then struck off towards the Punte Della Sfinge with the intention of doing the NNE ridge.

Despite Phil's inclination to spend the night testing out his new sleeping bag in a half reclining bivi site, we managed to persuade him to make use of the almost empty hut. This proved a good deal since the presentation of a tattered old FMC card gave us a 50% reduction all round! The morning weather looked fine and within a couple of hours we had established ourselves on the route. At grade IV, the slabs and corners flowed easily until we tried to take in the 'sensationally exposed' A1

variation. Even getting to this proved problematic by virtue of lichenous rock, so we stayed with the ordinary route finishing in sufficient time to pack up and walk the 3 hours to the Gianneti Hut. Arriving in moonlight, we sorted a bivi site and had the benefit of a mountain starscape until the dawn brought cloud.

While Phil ascended the Portcellizzo Pass, Hal and I had breakfast at the hut and watched two well-equipped photographers stand rooted to the spot for two hours, waiting for the appearance of marmots which were in fact only a hundred yards in the other direction! To add to the bizarre atmosphere, three Scottish lads arrived out of the mist wearing the sort of pained expressions which follow a long route. They had done the N ridge of the Badile the previous day and had opted to descend into Italy thinking the walk back was two hours. Following advice they realised the journey was five hours plus and since one of the party had an artificial leg and the other a bad back, this time looked doubtful. They decided to head down to Mello on the understanding that we would try to help them out somehow. Although they set off only fifteen minutes ahead of us we never saw them again!

Al, Dave and Joanna had a good high level trip but were forced to descend before completing the trek. Since the weather was showing signs of continuing instability we opted for low level climbs including trips out of the valley to Sirta - all very English in appearance. Realising we were unlikely to achieve our objectives on the Badile we gave thought to moving on, which for Phil and Joanna involved the long trek home via Chamonix (which was also wet). The night of the 27th proved decisive as the river next to the campsite rose to within inches of the tent. By way of acknowledging our determination, next day the owner gave a 20% reduction on the camp fees for the whole of our stay and thrust a big bottle of Grappa in my direction with an exhortation to return again!

We were surprised to learn that the weather in the whole of Italy, if not Europe, had been very grim, so some three hours after leaving Mello, we found ourselves lucky to be driving towards a cloudless patch of sky in Tuscany. In the distance we could see a seemingly volcanic plug of rock which looked like a truncated version of the Devil's Tower in Wyoming. This was Bismantova and it gave us a good full day's climbing on a kind of chalky sandstone.

Departing southward, the road took us through scenery more characteristic of Germany than Italy, but before long we were seeking out a campsite near La Spezia on the west coast. We had in mind the sea cliffs described in Al Churcher's guidebook as 'Muzzerone'. Other than the busy main wall, this proved an atmospheric spot and had a feeling of Gogarth about it in places.

The final day found us back in the outskirts of Munich with Dave in the local police station practising his 'O' level German (in order to find a hotel that is).

Good trip. Shame about the weather but there's still plenty to do in the future out there. I can confirm Al's reputation as a rainmaker, but at least his dry sense of humour compensated for the rainy days!

Dave Wood

FMC Fell Race Results

Sixteen athletes lined up for the start of the 1996 fell race, the first to be held at Stair. The route traverses Cat Bells starting and finishing at the hut. Most of the handicaps were set on Friday night after a session in the Swinside. The handicaps were not necessarily fair or accurate but we had some fun setting them. Christine was asleep at the time of the handicap setting session (why is nobody surprised?) and benefitted from a rushed appraisal of her fitness in the morning.

Early starters battled through heavy rain or sheltered under trees, depending on how competitive they were feeling. Christine was first back followed by Viv who had not read the bit in the rules that says "the handicapper's wife is not allowed to win" and Hal completed the all female first three. Chris had the fastest time finishing in 35 minutes, a record by virtue of this being the first race on this route. His actual time was slightly faster than this but Andy Dunhill, the official time keeper, was busy cooking the curry so only full minutes were recorded. I was second fastest a couple of minutes behind Chris with the Duck flying in third with a time of 43 minutes.

After the race it was shopping in Keswick and a big team in the George. Then back to the hut for an excellent curry prepared by Andy and Christine followed by a trip to the Swinside.

Full results in finishing order :-

Position		Actual Time	Handicap time	Scratch
1	Christine Barbier	65	78	12
2	Viv Broughton	48	50	6
3	Hal Rzadkiewicz	56	57	9
4	Chris Thistlethwaite	35	35	1
5	Mark Broughton	36	35	2
6	Don Nichol	43	43	3
7	Mike Sissons	52	49	8
8	Dave Woods	45	39	4
9	Paul Taylor	46	40	5
10	Dave Earle	56	47	10
11	Martin Dale	51	41	7
12	Mike Penn	69	51	13
13	Dave Ball	60	42	11
14	Anna Sissons	98	76	16
15	Joanne Nelson	97	75	14
16	Clive Bell	97	52	15

(All times in minutes.)

Additional awards

Most outrageous injury bullshit

Mike Sissons

Heavyweight award (speed to weight ratio)

Paul Taylor

Crap handicap award

Clive Bell (sorry)!

The X Files

Amazing and unexplainable occurrence - Mike Tolley leaves a pint and a half on the table in the Swinside and sets off back to the hut!

Mark Broughton

-Obituary-

BARBARA OVERTON (SEALEY)

As we lazed in the warm afternoon sunshine on the Llanberis meet we reminisced about many things, but especially on the multitude of weekends and week-long holidays we had spent in the company of Barbara Sealey. Whether winter or summer, walking or climbing, rock or ice, Barbara always seemed to be there, a driving force towards another fun day and action packed trip up the hill.

Those days have now gone for ever as our innocent chat held about it an appalling and truly awful prophetic air. At 8 o'clock the following Monday morning the phone refused to be ignored. It was Nick Reeve with the news that Barbara had been killed instantly in a motorcycle accident in Ireland. That she suffered no pain is still the only comfort we can find.

John and Barbara joined the F.M.C. in about 1970 and immediately became part of the active section, partaking in every aspect of club life. Walking, climbing, pot holing and skiing at weekends and holidays, were balanced by a massive input of effort into running the club. Between them they must have held almost every position on the committee. In their spare moments they also organised some pretty powerful parties during which friends could be relied upon to provide much needed demolition and redecoration of their flat on St. Anne's Front.

Unusually for climbing couples, it soon became obvious that Barbara was even keener on mountaineering than John which made for a very powerful force indeed and held the club together during some lean years with a dearth of active members.

Eventually, whilst remaining the very best of friends, they went their separate ways. Barbara was thus able to strengthen still further her ties with the club, both as a mountaineer active on club meets and as a dynamic administrator. As the only lady chairman this club has had to date, she always drove committee business through at a brisk pace. Barbara always had total command of what was going on and always successfully completed club business in time for a well-earned pint. She also made a success of the job of secretary and, for a short time, that of treasurer. Her input into the club and her impact upon it were considerable.

During this time culinary meets at the huts were invented to increase support and usage. These meets soon became a contest between Barbara and Pete Roscoe as to who was the best chef, to the benefit of every one. Barbara eventually won hands down! As an antidote to haut cuisine, Jack Jowett used

to run his beer bangers and beans meet with some lively jiving afterwards. Barbara was the best dancing partner you could have. She was always the first to offer to help out and could be relied on, instinctively, to take appropriate action. Thus was a disaster at the Swinside averted after young Mr Sharples demolished the bar, and it was her that immediately volunteered to help me look for Bill Crowshaw after he had disappeared in a blizzard.

She was a regular on the Cluanie and Torridan meets at Spring Bank holiday, and was always keen on winter mountaineering in Scotland, where her all round technical abilities always contributed to a successful day and could on occasions prove invaluable. Always tough, but always good humoured, she enhanced any meet she was attending, whether it was a party at Stair or the Karrimor mountain marathon.

After a while she drifted more towards the Vagabond Mountaineering Club, eventually marrying Derek Overton and increasing her climbing standard considerably. They were in Ireland to celebrate their 7th wedding anniversary.

The funeral service was at a packed St. Anne's Crematorium with more people standing than had seats. We remembered her tremendous zest for life, her boundless enthusiasm for mountaineering, her unstinting assistance to people who needed help, her ready good humour and we are grateful to have known her. My mind went back to the many winter nights descending Scottish Mountains with the stars spiralling over head. The brightest of those stars had been extinguished for ever. 'Star quality' was Barbara's middle name. It is unlikely that one woman will ever contribute more to the club than Barbara.

The club extends its deepest sympathies to her husband Derek, to her family with whom she was always very close, to John who always remained her best friend and to all those who counted themselves privileged to have known her.

D.A. Earle

Articles

Pralognan Perambulations

As its name suggests Pralognan la Vanoise is situated on the edge of the Vanoise National Park and is squeezed in between the ski area of Coucheval on the west and Tignes on the east. It has a reputation as an excellent walking and climbing centre which was certainly borne out of a recent visit.

Pralognan is a fairly busy village shoe-horned into quite a steep sided valley which has kept ski despoilation to a minimum with the usual shops, hotels, bars, and camp site. One lift takes you to Mt. Bochor for a head start to the days walking, otherwise you walk up and down the equivalent of Ben Nevis every day, not a problem on the excellent and well posted paths that abound in the area.

From Mt. Bocher a high attitude ramble opens up to the north visiting the odd fairly rocky summit before arriving at the refuge de la Grand Bee at the start of a monster decent. Good views throughout. The main valley has a good system of paths leading back to Pralognan plus, in summer, an afternoon bus. The walk over the Col de Rosset opens up some super views of massive peaks as does the trip back to base via the Felix Faure hut. The Grand Casse is ever present.

S.E. of Pralognan, after a steep ascent, a system of walks can be arranged on excellent paths that wind through the marchets range of hills as far as you want. Scenery here is of fine order and views across to the Petit Mt Blanc are excellent. The Cirque de Genepy is also worth a look, either on a monster day out or a separate tour.

Above Pralognan on the west is a super ridge on gypsum rock which threads its way round innumerable sink holes and is a little exposed here and there. Excellent all-round views abound. To its south several routes lead up to the summit of the Petit Mt Blanc and longer routes can be made towards Courcleval along comparatively remote valleys.

From the road head at the bridge of the fish the best ascent is to the Pointe de L'Observatoire - a 3000 metre peak with just a touch of scrambling and a stunning view of the highest Varoise peaks, including the Dent Parraclee and the Polset - Pecllet area. It is also worth walking up the main valley to the Col de Chaviere for the excellent views and rugged scenery. Here an intrusion of dolomite shows just how much more rugged and rough it is compared to the smoother more slippery lime stone above Pralognan. Other walks in the area take you over to the Glacier de Gebroulaz and the Lac Blanc is worth a look.

Five miles motoring to the North brings Champagny en Varoise (a night time ski ascent of this is recounted in the F.M.C. Journal 1950 -1990) and a chance to walk up Roche De Mio. The ski junk summit is more than made up for by the view. From Laissonay at the road head, a superb circular walk can be made under the wall of the Guend Casse and Guard Motte but with a constantly changing scene and views to the North of Mt Pourri.

A 10 day trip gave a full mountain day every day. As a centre it could well be worth a leisurely fortnight for those who do not want to dash around from centre to centre.

D.A. Earle

Another Pensioners Holiday

It's July and it's the Dolomites again - this time it's just Aud and I, the stalwarts of last year's Alte Via having made other plans. We have chosen to stay at Canazie a lovely little village in Val Di Fasse at 1450m and surrounded by mountains.

The first day was a walk up the beautiful Val di Contrin and on up to Rifugio Passo St Nicolo (2338m) for a look at the Marmolada and a close up of Colac (2713m). This was followed by a walk up Rif Passo Principe (2599m) from Ciampedie (reached by bus and gondola) and a superb traverse to Passo Antermojo (2769m) and down Val Duron to Campitello. An ascent of Passo Piatto was the next objective but low cloud restricted the views for some time and also severely limited the number of people on the hill. Nevertheless there were superb atmospheric close up views of Sasso Lungo in breaks in the cloud.

If you like 700m plods up steep loose scree then the climb from Passo Pordoi (2242m reached by bus from Canazie) to Rif Forcella Pordoi (2923m) is a must. However the walk which follows, across to Piz Boe (3152m) fully compensates and was for me extra rewarding in that it fulfilled a long held wish to visit the highest point on the fabulous rock wedding cake known as Sella Gruppe.

Colac is a mountain which reminds me very much of Razor in the Julian Alps and I approached it by taking the Ciampae cable car to 2000m and then walking over Forcella Neigra. There follows an interesting traverse under the south east side of the mountain, with a profusion of flowers including edelweiss, leading to a broken gully at the east end up which runs an easy 300m via ferrata. The rock here is very loose and I was glad there was no one else around - I discovered later about thirty people on the summit enjoying super views of the Marmolada snow dome in brilliant sunshine. The summit book showed only one other British ascent so far this year. On the descent I was greatly impressed by the care of other parties who descended quickly and quietly without appearing to dislodge a single stone. Similar conditions if they existed in Britain would produce a bombardment reminiscent of the worst days of the Western Front.

The penultimate day of the holiday and at 8-30 I was walking across the dam at the west end of Lago di Fedai in perfect conditions to meet the Ice Queen of the Dolomites. First you take the telecabin to 2625m, an open cabin which could accommodate two close friends at most and which reminds me of a larger version of the baskets in which we used to place our clothes at Derby Baths. At 10,000 lire for a return ticket it gives unrivalled value. At the top, as I headed generally west/south west upwards and across the vast jumble of

stone and boulders. There was only one other person in sight but an hour later at Forcella di Marmolada (2890m) tiny figures were visible high up ahead on a traverse line.

The first few airy steps up the via ferrata felt decidedly quiet and lonely until suddenly on stepping round a corner I came upon a large group of Germans and Italians at the back of a queue. Ahead two roped three man French teams were making very slow progress to loud cries of 'Avanti !' which turned to 'Attentione !' and probably more forceful Italian remarks as their efforts dislodged many loose stones. This continued for about half an hour until one of the Germans managed to force a way past as only Germans can and proceeded to hack huge steps in the residual ice which was quite prevalent in this mid section of the west ridge. Progress was now much quicker and the last few metres of rock arrived all too soon leaving a final 80 metres or so of very easy ascent on snow to Punta Penia (3342m).

The views from the summit were stupendous in such brilliant conditions and all too soon I had to drag myself away to commence the descent down the north ridge. As the deep snow began to steepen after about 20 minutes, the ridge was forsaken for steep rocks on the right. The 200 metres down to the glacier is achieved quite quickly and easily down a series of gullies on good holds. This leaves about 500 metres of descent on easy glacier which runs out of a rock wilderness similar to that at the start of the day. Great care would be needed in bad visibility on these final stretches to the chairlift station as there is no obvious path, or way marking amid the vast wilderness.

Thus ended a superb day out on a beautiful and famous mountain calling for the application of many different aspects of our sport. I used an axe, ice pole and crampons (for the several short patches of bare ice) and a 'Tyrolean sling' with two large gate karabiners. I regretted not having a helmet and a companion.

George Parker



WHEELCHAIR CLIMBER

So you've broken your leg, are wheelchair bound and are desperate to get out and prevent your 'totally honed' body from sliding into the abyss of alcohol induced sloppishness.

Well **fear not**, with the help of this article you should have hours of fun and enjoyment throughout your sojourn in the world of the perambulators.

Your first problem after getting plastered - your leg that is - will be to track down a wheelchair. Don't try and make do with just your crutches you'll get a much bigger sympathy vote from the punters if you're in a wheelchair. There are also the added benefits of getting to the front of queues and even getting discounted entrance fees if you really play for the sympathy vote. Try the St. Johns Ambulance for really good value rental deals or for a few quid extra you can get a well serviced machine from the Red Cross. Be warned though it's a renter's market and you'll have to drive a hard bargain and convince them that you'll look after their machine, whatever you do don't mention that you'll be going 'off road'!

So you've got your machine, at first you're going to have to take it easy. Get those 'L' plates out again and go for a few practice runs up and down a nice flat bit of tarmac. Be careful not to choose somewhere with a large camber. Take it easy to start with, leave the technical stuff well alone at this stage, don't worry you'll soon be wheeling up pavements and slaloming the punters on the promenade.

It would be advisable at this stage for you to consider the state of your hands. If you're a namby-pamby office worker you're going to have to soak your hands in alcohol to get them nice and tough. Another option would be the purchase of some padded cycling gloves (these have the added benefit of making you look like a seasoned campaigner and not some 'Rookie' straight out of the hospital).

In the first few days you should concentrate on moving in a straight line, working at building up your upper body muscle groups. Choose a measured distance and time yourself. Day by day the times will come down. You should be aiming for sustaining a pace somewhere between walking and seven minute miles. I chose South to North pier and back and gradually got the times down to around twenty five minutes, from initial runs of sixty.

These early forays at time trialing can be very pleasurable. As you burn off the Grockels strolling up and down the prom, you feel a sense of well being and elation,

especially when you freewheel down gentle inclines reaching dizzy speeds of up to 10 mph.

Of course speed and stamina isn't everything and you will have to devote some time to strength work. Choose any ramp designed for wheelchair access and you will soon find out that the average punter in a wheelchair requires assistance when negotiating these obstacles, but for you here is a real challenge. Your first problem will be your Centre of Gravity: very quickly you will learn to lean forwards in your chair otherwise you'll be back in casualty with a split head when the chair tips over backwards. Choose small ramps at first then go out looking for longer and steeper ones as your forearms develop.

Of course we must not forget agility work For this the town centre on a busy bank holiday weekend has got to be your ultimate challenge. Try going into any multi-floored shop you fancy and see if the staff can get you up to the top floor. This can provide endless hours of amusement and enjoyment on those long wet days when your feeling a little depressed.

Well I hope I've given you a few pointers to coping with your smashed up leg whilst waiting for it to heal. Listed below are a few graded challenges; the list is not exhaustive and is provided as a bit of fun, perhaps stimulating discussion in the pub on those long winter nights. Throughout the official U.I.A.A. grading system has been used, the 'W' grade reflecting the overall difficulty of the expedition from I to IV and the technical difficulty by the ratings 1 to 10. Where a point of aid has been used this is noted in the description - 1h equivalent to one helper, 2h: two helpers etc. A crutch assisted expedition is denoted by a 'C'.

GRADED LIST

W IV Circuit of Tarn Hows (WIV. 7. 2h. C)

This is a serious expedition requiring assistance from two stout helpers and a pair of crutches for the rocky sections. It would be advisable for parties attempting this route to be familiar with advanced wheelchair skills.

W III Malham Cove (WIII. 4. 1h)

Although technically easy this one is not for the faint hearted the initial section out of the village is very steep and requires a helper to allow upward progress. Crutches are only required if the true base of the cove is to be visited.

Pedestrian Bridge Blackpool Prom (WIII. 2)

Situated between central and north piers this bridge is quite a challenge. The ramp access is very steep and long requiring exceptional strength and endurance to reach the top. This should not be attempted until adequate arm strength has been gained as a roll backwards could result in injury.

WII Pedestrian Ramp Blackpool Pleasure Beach (WII. 2)

A good place to practice ascending steep ramps with lots of assistance available should you get into trouble.

Great Orme Road Circuit (WII.3)

Although an easy route this one should be treated as a major expedition . Five miles in length with a long ascent to the lighthouse and a tricky downhill section where braking gloves are advisable. Take a packed lunch and choose a quiet day when objective danger from passing cars is at a minimum.

WI Blackpool Promenade (WI.1)

A excellent place for beginners with long flat sections. Difficulties can be increased by choosing a bank holiday weekend when your slalom skills can be honed. Be careful of fast changing weather conditions as strong headwinds and rain can make progress very trying.

Steve Wrigley

Talus A Story

JULY 21st 1996, this was a day I am unlikely to forget in a hurry. Today, just over three months since that day, I am still not able to put any weight on my right foot. My wheelchair and crutch skills have over the last few months been honed on the many trips up and down the promenade, along with the odd expeditions to the Lakes and Wales, more of which later.

For those not in the know, I had a small flying accident on a route called "Titus" E2 5c on Clogwyn y Bustach, which for those whose Welsh is a bad as mine translates as 'crag of the ox'. We were a small, happy crowd as we walked up to the crag on a very warm Sunday. I had already spent a very pleasant couple of days climbing some classics on the Ogwyn slabs and some lesser known routes on Carnedd y Filiast and was looking forward to getting my teeth into one of the Extremes on the crag.

Martin Bennett and Mick Tolley both recommended the route, they had done battle with it the year previously and Martin had, I was told, been airborne during the ascent. Anyway I won't bore you with all the details. I fell off at the crux, fell about 15 to 20 feet describing an arc across the rock, the gear held but as I swung in space I noticed that my foot was pointing in the wrong direction.

I shouted down to Glenn to lower me back to the ground casually mentioning that I'd dislocated my ankle, (my body's natural pain killers were doing an excellent job). Everyone realised that I was in a bad way and Andy Dunhill ran off to raise the rescue. Maria-Angeles tried to put on a brave face and did a good job of keeping my spirits up; it was quite a shock to her having only just taken her first tentative steps on rock over the last few weeks.

All the action down below wasn't helping - Martin Dale who was having a very exciting time on a scary route called Going Straight. As for me, although my foot was beginning to hurt I was quite relaxed and was trying to do as much talking as possible to keep my mind off the horrible looking foot.

The mid Wales mountain rescue team were on the scene very quickly as they were out on a training exercise. Their paramedic tried to put my ankle back in place but it didn't want to go. By now I was on my first bottle of Entonox, one of three I was to get through before reaching the ambulance. It certainly hit the spot and numbed the pain.

Things I remember about the rescue:

- Being disappointed when the team leader said that the chopper was committed to another rescue and that I was to be stretchered down to the road.
- Feeling like I was floating to the top of the crag when the team lifted the stretcher for the first time.
- Feeling like I was in a formula one race going down hill at incredible speeds (I was in fact being lowered very slowly using a rope pulley system)that Entonox is good stuff!

The next stage of the journey was by ambulance to Bangor Hospital. The only real memory I have of this was the intense pain and the stop at the cottage hospital for some Morphine. It was like something out of a Hammer Horror movie. The ambulance doors opened and there stood this ancient looking Doctor and his equally antiquated nurse assistant. In he came and started to waggle my foot around 'Just to see if it really warranted Morphine'. I think my screams convinced him and so I was relieved from my distress for the rest of the journey with a shot of that wonderful drug.

At Bangor after the X-rays and diagnosis I was whisked off to the Operating Theatre, but only after I nearly got another patients medicine (in my backside). Unbelievable in casualty that day there were two Stephen Wrigley's both with right leg injuries!!

The end result was an 'open reduction and internal fixation with two cannulated screws' or to you and me they relocated my ankle and screwed together the two bits of my Talus bone then sewed my foot up. I was put into plaster and after three days watching the Olympics in the Bueno ward I was discharged.

After twelve weeks in plaster the world was given the pleasure of seeing and smelling my right foot again. The surgeons had done their bit and I was introduced to the physiotherapists for the next stage of my treatment.

And so fourteen weeks later here I am I know a lot more about the anatomy of the foot, have a much better appreciation about the difficulties experienced by disabled people. Maybe by Christmas I'll be able to walk around unassisted and I thought I'd be fit and well after only six weeks!!

So if there is anyone out there thinking of breaking a bone I can say with some authority make sure it's not your Talus because it's a bugger to treat. Oh and by the way, yes, I am looking forward to getting back on the rock.

Hopalong Wrigley

Two Men and Gerry's Baby

KIMM Objective: The race is to test the fitness, equipment, navigational ability to traverse mountainous terrain in safety, over a period of two days. From the start to finish on the second day, including over night camp, the team is a self sufficient unit, responsible for it's own safety and well being. Outside help can not be sought or accepted, unless the team has retired or is seeking help for an injured party.

KIMM Objective, although it may sound like the code for an elite military forces training exercise it is in fact only a game, dreamt up eighteen years ago by the late Gerry Charnley. Ah yes, the Karrimor International Mountain Marathon or 'the Karrimor' as it is popularly known among the in crowd, is the big test to mountain folk, fell runners, orienteers and other like - minded souls. The state of their minds could be open to some debate however. The basic ethos of this truly British event:- mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the late October wind, driving rain and freezing temperatures, is as stated in the objective or should that read 'mission statement,' to be self sufficient. In fact rule six states, "a team may not receive outside assistance.... This includes buying food/drink from shops/pubs, etc." So no baked sea bass at a local hostelry on Saturday night. As all the specialist equipment is of the ultra light weight variety, one plastic spoon between a team and a shared cooking pot come plate that in a former life was used to transport home a No 14 Special, all that can be looked forward to on the culinary front is likely to be something designed with 'know how' and freeze dried - although the odd luxury is allowed. The location of the event is a closely guarded secret (more so than half the goings on at a government dept in Cheltenham) and not released until two weeks before, and then only the location of the race headquarters. Official maps showing the numerous check points are released after the Friday night signing on and kit check which has a minimum requirement to include first aid, tent, food and the aforementioned cooking gear. Real boys can get all this down to as little as nine or ten pounds.

But that is not all, as the grid reference of the controls to be visited by each category is kept under lock and key until the event is underway and teams are crossing the start line. Route planning and navigational skills are as important as fitness; errors are both time consuming and dangerous. It may be one thing to locate a piece of designer Gore-Tex, and all the macho 'man of the Arctic in atrocious conditions' that goes with it, in the high street but having the genuine ability under testing outdoor circumstances is another.

So what would happen when to two old mountaineering friends whose lives had moved on, decided to team up having last competed in 'the Karrimor' five years ago. Nigel is no longer driving a battered, but much loved sky blue Ford Fiesta, that went under the name of 'Trigger', nor is he living on the bread line. No, he can now call himself mountain instructor 'out of' Estes Park, Colorado. And me, well, out of college and considered one of Britain's better cyclists or

time trialists to be precise, I spend precious little time on the fells and even less running. Cycling to an extreme and running go together like, well take my word for it they don't.

Galloway Forest Park & Hills were the location of 1996's KIMM, so somewhat behind schedule (the only time of the weekend we hoped) off we set leaving behind the bright 'lights' of Blackpool for whatever Dumfries could throw at us. It is a beautiful place but with names like: the 'Range of the Awful Hand'; 'Murder Hole' and the 'Dungeon Hills,' anything could happen.

Dumfries itself was some way from Newton Stuart venue for registration and even further from Glen Trool and Caldons Campsite the event centre, but as it was getting dark and this was the last civilisation; or is that too strong a word; we decided to stop for the last supper.

Local knowledge is always a handy thing so pulling up in town we asked a local youth, complete with Technics bomber jacket and Jordan's, the directions to a local pizzeria. Bless him but his words resulted in us consulting the owner of a local paper shop; he'd know best.

"Benvenuto is the place lads, and they have a happy hour!" he exclaimed as only a fat bloke behind a pile of Dumfries and Galloway News can.

Well there it was, 'Benvenuto Pizzeria - Trattoria', situated in a housing estate and full of locals on birthday treats soaking up some genuine Italian atmosphere. Served up, it has to be said, by an excitable Scottish lady who spoke Italian and promoted, at every opportunity, an Irish evening to be held at the end of November to include:- "Two singers, one from Cork the other from Dublin, cockles, mussels, Irish most and all that." The result of the cast included two "genuine Italian chefs cooking the traditional way" and a French waitress. Oh and yes, a piece of sea bass to add that 'extra little something'.

Two pizzas were ordered at the happy hour rate along with some pasta and a side salad (athlete type food), to be washed down with a glass of the house red - good for the digestion by all accounts.

"Do ya want the pasta and salad as a starter? There should be time."

In Dumfries happy hour means - you've got an hour boys leave when you want, which was a shame as the Italian sit com. on the corner TV was most entertaining. So fully carbo loaded off we set giving the meal time to digest before bed.

The next navigational feat was to locate the registration at Douglas Ewart High School, Newton Stewart. A certain Mr Colin Stewart assisted the organizers in arranging this venue and was so pleased to see the event that a spectacular natural light show was arranged accompanied by claps of thunder and the pitter patter of rain. None of the car park attendants appeared to be wearing the sponsors weather proofs which was a mistake if the expression etched over their faces were anything to go by. Would the sun put his hat on tomorrow or opt for Gore-tex?

Now equipped with map, registration card and complimentary event T-shirt, this double act got back on the road entering the KIMM mentality - are these people in our category? Should we be following the car in front?

Saturday started somewhat ominously when the alarm failed to go off (the house red ?), and it was raining. The result of all this being that several pieces of 'hill' food' were left behind and a somewhat rushed breakfast was taken, courtesy of 'Wilf's' mobile catering, on the hoof.

Forty minutes later and with indigestion we arrived at the start line. If it had been thirty-nine minutes then sixty seconds would have been spent standing around in the rain and forty-one minutes could have resulted in the indignity of going in the late lane. But spot on it was and away into the yonder.

As a foretaste of what was to come, we ploughed upwards into the rain, everyone running towards the first control 444837, 'loch outlet' then doubled back over a saddle (a more familiar place in recent years), down the other side, around a lake to the 're-entrant' at 446857 which was just past the last fence. A 're-entrant' being not someone who took part last year, enjoyed it so much and came back for more but an incut in the contours. Both being difficult to find!

At this point things became particularly entertaining as I followed N over acres of giant bubble wrap, giant ankle twisting tussocks or a family gathering of the Beeker Clan.

Thankfully it then stopped raining, then started again a blink later - what a tease, but a sound bearing, a lurch to the stile, over that and another bearing through the mist. Meanwhile Huw, a friend of Nigel's, had taken the shocking decision to go the other way, up and down dale, the result being we arrived at the checkpoint first. Yes - well it is a race.

At this point it became particularly bitter with teeth chattering and light weight kit attempting to keep heaving weight weather at an arm's length. A slurp of PSP22 energy drink and on with the thermal gloves before decision time concerning the next long leg of this journey.

Thankfully time didn't stand still, although there was ample opportunity, as the pair of us reminisced over times passed and headed along a ridge behind a pair of 'keenos' in running shorts that closely resembled a G-string. If running around a Scottish hill while extremely scantily clad is your thing then fine. I'd rather wear tights. Running tights that is, they're warmer. 'Path/fence' junction may not mean much to the man in the street, but to C class on day one it signified control five and a down hill canter to the overnight camp at Culsharg Bothy, complete with log fire and roof.

Out of bounds. So up with the tent and on to supper. Saw dust and engine oil could have been consumed such is the appetite generated by all the activity. However, something more rewarding was on offer. Minestrone soup, Torteline, Parkin and custard, all washed down with a can of the very best that Stowels of Chelsea could pack in a can. Like I say, the odd luxury is allowed. In the

past my partner has gone ultra light weight taking dehydrated apple flakes to have with custard, but they're really not the thing to have - it must be parkin and custard.

It soon got dark and the rains fell and the winds blew, sleep. Reveille was at 6 am courtesy of a race marshal and a loud hailer, not a chance of a lie in this morning, intentional or not. As the rains fell and the wind blew.

As the day before we planned our arrival at the start to perfection. In a previous sporting career with the Great Britain Speed Ski Team I was a self-styled cut it fine merchant. Racer ready - go.

Stepping into the start pen as the official puffed into his bright orange whistle and off we went with a certain feeling of de-ja-vous. After the first of many river crossings, we set off behind a trail of other competitors in search of 'Knoll, S E Side', making good time as we overtook several pairs of weary souls accompanied by much slipping and sliding, before going upwardly mobile yet again towards another 're-entrant'. Hunger then took a grip and the full supply of food for the day was consumed - flapjack and ¼ of jungle mix. If only we'd heard the alarm. A long downhill to a bog of truly Gaelic proportions and a river crossing deep and cold enough to result in two lumps in the back of my throat and a worrying reduction of what would have been available to a passing local beauty.

More decisions and some moral fibre took us on the last real big effort of the weekend which involved fighting gravity as well as wrestling the giant Galloway tussock before arriving at 'Lochan, North Edge'.

Nearly there now, more moral fibre, and ankle twisting bouts with the giant bubble wrap before punching the control card at the penultimate orange 'kite'. Four kilometres downhill to the finish following a stream down a gully. Four kilometres of a bob sleigh run of mud, not ice, and without the bob sleigh. Could we arrive at the finish without falling to pieces at the seams or at best breaking an ankle?

Yes. Yes. A handshake, pat on the back and a mug of soup courtesy of Great Harwood Scout Service Team. We'll be back for more so 'Be Prepared'.

Henry Iddon

Ennerdale Revisited

'Time slips away and leaves you nothing mister but boring stories of glory days'.

It was all agreed. The TV weather map said tomorrow in the Lakes would be white clouds and sun. After years of talking about it Michael would do the Ennerdale Horseshoe and I would keep him company. In mid September it goes dark by 8 o'clock, so we'd leave Blackburn at 6 in the morning and be up in Ennerdale Green by eight giving us 12 hours of daylight. A dropped out clevis pin soon put pay to that plan, it happens a lot on Rovers said the AA man, and leaves you stuck in the middle of the road with no warning. With a quick roadside repair we were off by 8. We'd probably end up walking along the lake in the dark but there are such things as head torches and we were all psyched up to go.

Clouds on all the hills as we went past Keswick were not in the plot. However Great Borne was clearing and it was brighter out to the west. You can no longer ascend the ridge direct to the summit as John, June, Dave and I once did - various hostile signs including an absurd 'No Wainwright routes to start from here'. We had to plod almost to Floutern Tarn before being allowed to do for the top.

Starling Dodd was clearing and by the time we reached Red Pike the weather was generally improving with Skiddaw now in full view. After High Stile we're even getting intermittent sunshine and you get a fine view of Burtness Combe and Grey Crag, it's a long time since I went up Suaviter with Alan. Had to get the latin dictionary out to learn what it meant. Eagle Crag looks vertical, I don't suppose I'll get up Eagle Front, but you can live in hope.

Mike commented on how shapely and rocky the hills were round here, better than lots of boring lumps north of the border.

They've had to rebuild the path from High Crag down to Scarth Gap, we were beginning to encounter people now and were described as 'greyhounds'. Why has everybody got to be beautifully dressed nowadays, £200 jackets and telescopic ski sticks seem indispensable to every Lytham Rambler. Even saw a fellow in gaiters, didn't see much need in the current dry spell. When we got to the gap the stream had dried up. Remember being dehydrated at this point with the Wisemans, used my hat as a bucket and poured water over my head. Next that steep pull up Hay Stacks with its little summit tarn.

By Brandreth we were running out of people again. The Scafells were now clear and the North Face of Gable looked impressive, no climbers on

Engineers Slabs. Once upon a time I was taken up there by Jane and Andrew, remember Jane getting up the last chimney using her bottom to great effect.

Mike thought we were probably half way round by now, I had forgotten to tell him that Kirk Fell was more than an insignificant mound. Told him that Peter and Gillian had got round which in Mike's mind raised Gillian to the status of Gladiator.

We reached the top of Gable by 4.30, and everywhere the clouds were now dispersing. The usual suicidal descent down the west screes brought us to Beck Head. I always thought this would be a wild place to camp.

And now the horrors of Kirk Fell. We ground up the eroded path only to discover the real top half a mile away. Mike was beginning to revise the ETA and we would be in the woods in the dark. Some intrepid fell runner arrived on the scene, escorted by two acolytes. Perhaps he was doing the Bob Graham, he looked sufficiently knackered.

We survived the precipitous drops to Black Sail Pass and the unending pull up to Pillar. The sun was shining on us all the time by now and the mood had definitely changed from minor to major. We arrived on the summit by six, not a cloud in the sky. This wonderful experience was shared by a couple of Herdwicks and not another soul. Why do hill walkers always clear off home before the best part of the day?

Gerry and myself once recruited Alan for the FMC on the top of Pillar Rock. Remember George and myself having to run down to Wasdale Head to buy 2 pints each before closing time. Mike photographed a stunning view of Gable and the Scafells and we were off again heading for the sunset over a silvery sea.

A final effort over Scoat Fell and Steeple and then the pleasant descent down to the Ling Mell plantations and the first stream since Scarth Gap. It was dark by this time but we eventually found our way to a bridge over the river. Met two girls on their way to the youth hostel, the first day of their Coast to Coast. It's nice to know that young people still have legs. A final trudge along the road and some excellent navigation by Michael around the byeways of Beckfoot and we were back at the car by 10 o'clock. There are a million times more stars shining over Ennerdale Bridge than in East Lancashire. After the first trip we had time for 4 pints and steak and chips, now only a pint of shandy and a bag of crisps.

Anyway, now the aches and pains are gone I'm looking forward to the next time. Perhaps some of you will join me.

Barrie B Crook

North Wales - Summer 96

On those cold, wet, winter weekends most of us will dream of perfect blue skies, hot sun and long days out in the mountains - a rarity in this country. Well the week that Mick Tolley and I spent in North Wales in July this year was just such a week.

We drove there on Monday morning in brilliant sunshine which stayed for the whole week. We did nothing but sleep, eat, climb 'till dark and squeeze in a pint every day for 5 days. That day, we did 4 routes in Cwm idwal, non classic but all very good. I cooked enough food that night for the rest of the week to save drinking time.

Everyday was spent on a high crag some of which we had not visited before. Tuesday saw us on Cymr Las where we did battle with the Great Buttress E2, a real mountaineering route. The 4th pitch is a classic of its kind! From there we walked straight up to Cloywyn y Ddysgl to do a pleasant 2 star E2 in the evening sun. It turned out to be a highly serious and difficult route which is dangerously undergraded. Technical, sustained 5c/6a climbing with poor protection, two old rusting pegs and some loose rock. It was certainly E3, perhaps E4.

Never mind, we found an excellent pub that evening with real ale and a smiling landlord. He was English! It is called the Veynol at Pentir on the road back to the A5.

The next day we climbed in the sun on superb rock on Craig Yr Ysfa. After leaving our sacks at the top we made a tricky descent to the lower amphitheatre wall. We did four excellent routes, one E1 and three E2's. The best was Aura, a three star E2, a superb steep wall climb. This must be one of the few high mountain crags that stays in the sun until late afternoon. We were looking across at a steady stream of parties on the classic Amphitheatre Buttress Opposite (v.diff). This looks an excellent expedition for an easier day.

No visit to North Wales is complete without a day on Cloggy. So we made the pilgrimage next day. The first route was Daurigol, a classic E3 followed by Pinnacle Arete, a good E2 but with some dubious rock. Watch your rope and gear placements on pitch two. A lack of forethought could result in stripping all of your gear!

This was a good day out or so Mick said. He was thinking of the pub but it was only 6.15 and I had other ideas. Was this when Mick started to show his age? We were sat on a ledge having our butties in the evening sun. There was only one route to do. It was directly above us. It had been on my tick list for years. I thought it had been on Mick's as well, but when I suggested it he was not exactly full of enthusiasm. I can't remember whether he actually said 'no' but he certainly tried several excuses. It was like water of a duck's back to me. Eventually he withered into agreement, seeing sense, and knowing he would regret a refusal. So we did it.

Great Wall E4 is one of the most famous of Welsh climbs. Bags of history, an improbable line and good climbing. The first pitch is well protected and technically the crux. The second pitch is more committing but still safe. Mick still complained about being tired, pumped, wasted, knackered, etc. but he enjoyed it really. He was certainly quick to tell everyone who arrived that evening, for the weekend exchange meet, that we'd done it. Funny, he seemed much more enthusiastic then?

On the Friday we had a real esoteric experience on Llech Ddu. Mick failed on a moderate, I struggled on a VS, but we did manage the classic, but somewhat herbaceous, Great Corner E2. A must for those with a sense of adventure.

The week end was good but ended on a very sad note with Steve Wrigley falling off in the Molwyns and seriously breaking his ankle. This should not have been the result of what was a pretty average fall, the sort that many of us have. It really was extremely bad luck. The rescue team were very efficient. Let's hope we see Steve back out on the hill soon.

Andy Dunhill

AND FINALLY.....

MARTIN DALES DIARYLAST ENTRY.....

'Hello Flower'

