



FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

NEWSLETTER JULY 1999

HUT AVAILABILITY 1999

24/25 July	Stair
31/1 July/Aug	Langdale
7/8 August	Stair
14/15 August	Langdale
21/22 August	Stair
28/29 August	Langdale
4/5 Sept	Stair
11/12 Sept	Langdale
18/19 Sept	Stair
25/26 Sept	Langdale
2/3 October	Stair
9/10 October	Langdale
16/17 October	Stair
23/24 October	Langdale
30/31 October	Stair
6/7 Nov	Langdale
13/14 Nov	Stair
20/21 Nov	Langdale
27/28 Nov	Stair

Nether Wasdale

by John Hickman

The weather forecast for the weekend was uniformly dire and I took the precaution of checking that space was available at Little Langdale should retreat become necessary. On ringing those members already booked on the meet enthusiasm seemed to be unabated and unfortunately this meant that the meet leader felt obliged to go as well. We eventually set off on Saturday, thus avoiding camping in the heavy rain that fell on Friday night and enjoyed a pleasant walk up Mitterdale from Eskdale Green and back across the top of the Wasdale Screes. The rest of the meet enjoyed a walk down to the coast followed by a train ride back and by late evening the entire meet was assembled in the Screes at Nether Wasdale. Sunday started out damp and cloudy but improved later in the day. Claire and I walked up Eskdale while Seatallan and the Screas (hill not pub) were ascended by other teams.

Peak District Meet

by Joanna Goorney

Saturday started off with a trip to Stanage and various routes being done around the High Neb area. In the evening, we had an excellent barbecue at the campsite whilst those staying in Sheffield at Phil Lee's abode, managed to gatecrash a wedding!

Sunday saw another baking hot day, this time on Curbar and Froggatt. So in between hiding under trees and in my case hitting my head against them, ascents were made of some of the easier less slimy lines.

Thank you to those who attended and made it an enjoyable weekend.

Hut to Hut

by Jon Trevorrow

(sorry he is a man of few words...Ed)

NOTICE BOARD

FMC T-shirts and sweatshirts are available from Mike Sissons, 01253 857929.

WINTER SOCIALS

The first winter social will be on 8th September at the Queens Hotel. Showing MEMBERS SLIDES. 7.30 for 8.00 pm.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

To Mike and Jenny Tolley who completed the South West Coastal Path, Great Britain's Longest Trail - over 600 miles.

Many congratulatory telegrams have been received from all over the world.

"My husband and I think you have done very well"
Liz & Phil.

"Well done nobs" J.P. (The Vatican)

"It blows me away" Clinton.

"It makes me proud to be British" Bonnington.

Places left for Lundy in August, if you are interested call Martin Dale on 01253 772073.

FULL MEMBERSHIP

Julie Sumner
Melissa Bock

HUT BOOKINGS

From 10/7/99, for 6 weeks Martin Dale will be taking the bookings for both huts. Tel. 01253 772073

WANTED!!

Adventurous people wanted to trek the Sirimon Trail of Mount Kenya.

The Terrence Higgins Trust and ChildHope have joined forces to organise a sponsored climb of Mount Kenya to welcome the New Millenium.

By raising the minimum amount of sponsorship you can take part for free whilst helping these two charities to further their work.

For an information pack with all you need to take part in this event, call 0171 8339549

KENDAL MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

15-17 OCTOBER 1999

Films & Videos, films from around the world in 5 categories, including Jim Curran's Tibetan Sepu Kangri Odyssey

Lectures, Leo Dickinson on his films and climbs, Alex Huber on big wall free climbing and some more including Paul Pritchard's life story. Discussion and debate by the BMC on key issues.

Art & Photography, exhibition by Andy Parkin, collection of the climbing photos of Ray Wood.

Trade shows and shops, manufacturers and distributors of the latest outdoor clothing and equipment will be present at the trade show to give help and advice. There is also a choice of retail shops selling the latest gear and a Festival shop offering a variety of mountain art and craft, Festival T-shirts, posters and videos.

Other Activities: open bouldering competition at the Kendal Wall, Kendal quiz, late bars, live bands and a Saturday Night Party.

For tickets, accommodation and further information contact:

Kendal Mountain Film Festival

Tourist Information Centre, Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4DL

Telephone 01539 725758, fax 01539 734457

Web site www.mountainfilm.co.uk

E-mail info@mountainfilm.co.uk

There is an offer for mountaineering clubs if the tickets are purchased directly through Phil Hopkinson. 10 tickets for the price of 9 or 5 tickets for the price of 4 1/2. Normal price £40 for a full weekend pass.

Email: philh@hopkinson32.freemove.co.uk

Tel. 01943 462 755

Contact Steve Wrigley or Marian Solera if interested so we can all book together.

MEMBERS ARTICLES

ZERO TOLERANCE

by Chris Thistlethwaite

SCOTTISH WINTER 1999 Part 2

The nobs laughed at our planned 4.30am getting up time but we did it. We weren't going to be caught out like last time, oh no. Again we were first away from the Alex McIntyre memorial hut at 5.30am and were walking towards the Ben from Torlundy car park shortly after 6.00am.

A number of teams were already marching ahead and we were overtaken by about 4 teams but it was a glorious morning and we didn't see the point of racing the ski pole assisted competition. Not surprisingly all the teams stopped at the CIC hut for a rest and brew but Adrian beckoned me on towards our planned route. Two teams were ahead of us but as two teams were also ahead of us on our contingency plan, Point Five Gully, we queued behind the team already doing battle with the left hand side of the start of Zero Gully. The team to the right made quick progress as did the Polish team, (who had driven over just for the weekend) and took a line in between us. Even a following team were well established on the right hand side when Adrian was eventually able to set off.

As with the last route spindrift and lumps of ice continually rained down upon us and it damn well hurts when the larger lumps make contact with you. Adrian confidently reached a belay of sorts which proved good enough to hold my only fall of the route. By the time I reached him we were again the last team on the route, the following teams having by now backed off. We made steady but slow progress up the 400 ft. or so of sustained ice pitches, slow because I had problems removing 'snargs' used as runners but mainly because my calves were pumping from very early on in the climb. I have to admit to resting on the rope a couple of times but we eventually reached the end of the hard bit and the start of the easier snow slope. This was still very steep but I was reluctantly persuaded that we could climb together rather than pitching it. Communication between us had been impossible on the last pitch because of a helicopter below us which we realised was on a rescue mission and not on a jolly as we first thought.

We climbed together for a few hundred feet until we stopped to don headtorches as darkness set in. I was only a little concerned as I was assured that the steep snow slope we were on would eventually see us on top of the Ben. My calves were pumping even more now as we followed the easiest line upwards.

Finding ourselves on mixed ground was quite a shock for us as we scanned the area with our torch beams. We could see lights on Tower Ridge and commented on a potential benightment for them if not for us. We couldn't understand how we had managed to get off route but we obviously were. We started again to pitch the climb, Adrian boldly leading off into the night leaving me precariously belaying him attached only to my two axes. At one point when the rope came tight I found myself climbing some very steep and tricky ice and in an extremely knackered state arrived at Adrian's stance, a near hanging belay from his axes on a near vertical slope. Falling off or even resting on the rope just didn't bear thinking about. I was feeling definitely out of my depth now. The next belay was a sling around a large boulder. Luxury! something to hang from as again Adrian disappeared.

By this time my screw gates were beginning to freeze up, I had a frozen sling around my neck like a lasso, a deadman, loads of clutter and now my helmet. My headtorch had all but fallen off and in an attempt to sort it I managed to remove my helmet but couldn't get it back on as the strap had also frozen up.

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After two more pitches we reached the top. Relief at last! My calves felt like they were going to explode and my left arm felt like jelly from the hours of smashing my hammer into the snow and ice. The next play was to get off the hill and out of the gusting wind. A guestemate bearing of 250 and 200 paces saw us 5 paces short of the trig point. Visibility was so poor that we didn't see the shelter but we now knew where we were and our suspicions reinforced that we had finished up Observatory Ridge. We paced out the required bearing to miss Gardyloo Gully and descended towards the Lochan stopping occasionally for rests; the first food and drink since breakfast and the removal of ropes and harness etc.

We actually found the track that led to the CIC hut but kept loosing it and anyway we aimed to cut north from it to cross the Allt a' Mhuillinn to pick up the track back down to Torlundy. We reached the car at about 5.00am after far too many rest stops. Teams were already on their way up to start Sunday's routes. Back at the hut we had food and after route drinks ie Guinness and whiskey just as the nobs were emerging from their pits.

And guess what? We're planning a trip to the Alps, my first, this summer. Still, I'll be in good hands. The experience of Adrian's past benightments after completing the Yellow Edge in the Dolomites and the Dulfer Route in the Kaisergebirge will see us through if our luck continues.

Hope to hear about your
trip to the Alps!

SECRET SPAIN

by Martin Dale

SUMMARY: An ascent of 'La Secreta Vida' (Secret Live) 6 C +, 6 A +, 6 A +, 6 A, 6 A at Portes region, Spain at Easter 1999 by Martin Dale and Melissa Bock.

We did heaps of routes in Spain this Easter, all memorable but also instantly forgettable. After a while sport routes merge into one. However one particular route stood out and the ascent of it will long remain in my memory. It was different from the other routes in that whilst still being essentially a sport route, protected throughout by bolts, it was five pitches long, also on conglomerate and it actually reached the summit. We had been to Monserrat where there were also multi-pitch routes on conglomerate which reach summits, however, this particular route was in a remote setting and may well have never had an ascent from anyone other than a Spaniard. Probably not many of those at that.

The drive south through impressive scenery had taken nearly 2 hrs or more and when we finally reached the parking spot it was approaching 3 pm. A typical FMC early start! A large vulture circled overhead as we scanned the amazing scenery. The rochers de Benet rose like a loaf of bread to our left and all around there were cliffs. We made the best of the guide books description of the approach, written in Spanish and set off. 20 minutes easy hike round into a valley. No sign of the route yet. We followed a marked trail of red dots on rocks for a good 10 minutes but then realised that the track was beginning to strike uphill and not round into the valley as we thought. I could see what looked like a track down below which seemed to head in the right direction. We said goodbye to Dave Cundy and Sue Levandowski who were hiking and returned to the valley. We passed by a farm yard and were chased by rabid dogs. Melissa picked up a stick just in case and we soon left them yelping behind us.

The time was marching on and I could see us making a retreat in darkness so I was making mental notes of where the track went for our return. We followed a stream up the valley then, through the trees, the pillar came into view. It was steep, awesomely so. It took my breadth away. We wandered up the front of the route, up easy slopes. I knew that the first pitch was the hardest being 6c+ (about E4) but must admit that I had my doubts about my ability to climb it, not to mention Melissa's ability to follow it. It did really overhang, about 30 or 40 feet, in a huge arching barrel shape. There were a good

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few bolts though and I wasn't going to hurt myself falling off into space, so I declared that I'd give it a try.

It was 4pm, very very windy, but the sun was still high in the sky when I set off. A shelf led out rightwards to the first bolts. The pitch then took off rightwards and up into a cave like depression before blasting straight up the ever overhanging wall above. I didn't fancy my chances but decided to give it my best shot at a clean lead. For those of you who haven't come across conglomerate, imagine loads of lumps of rock of all sizes ranging from pebbles to boulders the size of minis stuck together by what looks like cement. The holds are usually of two varieties. Either a pocket where one of the pebbles has fallen out, or an edge or hold actually on a lump of rock that sticks out. The bolts are drilled into the actual lumps so you can imagine what might happen if you were to fall off with any great force. Not only would you have to cope with the usual hazards of a fall but also the distinct possibility of your quickdraw still attached to its bolt still attached to its TV sized rock following you down the crag! On the first traverse right the rock resembled glued up mud. Not very inspiring. I advised Melissa to hide under the lip of the shelf. Some very temporary looking holds later I was pulling into the cave like depression past a thread actually drilled through a boulder. You definitely needed a devil may care attitude with this stuff. Throwing caution to the wind, I launched out leftwards onto the steepening wall swinging a crafty heel look in to keep me from swinging wildly out. The first holds were of the missing pebble pocket variety and were satisfyingly big. The bolts were also close together. The pockets/buckets kept coming. The position can only be described as wild. Very pumpy moves led up to another threaded boulder and a technical cross through move rightwards led to what looked like the crux. A bit of quick thinking, a high rock up and an actual bit of concrete for a hold then a sloping pebble and another welcome bucket and I'd cracked it. However, I still had 20 metres or so of very steep cranking to do. Eventually, as my arms were about to explode, the angle eased to vertical, the holds got smaller and just by the skin of my teeth, I reached the ledge at the top of the pitch.

The ledge was another cave like feature and the crag bulged on above my head. The belay was not very inspiring being only one bolt. I glanced left, however, and there were the chains, right on the edge of everything. I felt better. I took in the slack and shouted against the wind for Melissa to climb. I prayed that she'd be able to get up the pitch as a worrying thought crossed my mind. The pitch was 40 metres long and we only had a 60 metre single rope! Retreat would be interesting to say the least. Essentially, we were pretty committed as the next pitches were all long and the third was actually given as 65 metres – too long for the rope!

Melissa did brilliantly. I don't know how much she climbed because of the overhanging nature of the rock I could only see her climb the last few feet to the ledge. She swore continuously so I knew she was having fun. She joined me on the belay and I stressed out the need to crack on if we were going to get up the route before night fall. She congratulated me on my efforts on the pitch. The wind was now very fierce. The first few moves off the belay were steep and still required some thinking about, however the angle soon eased to a slab, but, the bolts disappeared. I craned my neck upward but no bolts were to be seen. The grade of this pitch was 6 A +, E1 or easy E2. I moved up and up. 20 feet out from the last bolt, I said to myself, if there's no more bolts soon I'm going back down! Then, hidden from below one appeared, actually in the back of one of those bucket holds. Relief! I pressed on and two more bolts later I reached the belay. Wow, run out! I thought to myself that if this continues we will be here all night because you cannot climb slabby conglomerate quickly. The holds are not obvious and you begin to not trust what you are pulling on when the bolts become spaced. I brought Melissa up and glanced at the next pitch. Yes! An excellent line of bolts streaked skywards. The rock was steep again and the grade 6 A + and 65 metres long. We may have to climb together to reach the belay! Melissa followed effortlessly.

The third pitch was an absolute joy to climb, steep, balanced, technical moves on just off vertical rock with excellent bolt protection. Again, though you could not rush. I reached the belay after being buffeted by the wind. This time there was a big ledge, comfy belay and the rope reached without Melissa having to start climbing. She followed, pulling a hold off. The first of two more she was to jetison before we reached the summit. The sun was now getting low and we were chasing its shadow up the climb. Two more pitches to go, both 6 A + (E1) and 40 and 50 metres respectively. It was a race against time.

I climbed as quickly as possible, again though not easy given the nature of the rock. Melissa followed

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again dispensing with a hold and taking a little fall. The climb was now in the shade and it was getting cold. The wind continued to blow relentlessly. The last pitch involved some very precarious looking boulders and you had to take it easy, making sure you didn't dislodge anything. The final steepening was amazing and some of the bolts were actually in these lumps of rock that you didn't want to pull or step on. It seemed to take forever. The last bolt was in the final handhold of the route! I reached the top just in time to see the sun go down. A truly wonderful sight. Soon Melissa was at the top also. It was 9pm and would be dark very shortly. We were up! All we had to do now was find the way down. Often easier said than done off a big hill. We coiled the rope and literally ran along the ridge. In the gathering gloom, I spotted them – the red blob guide marks had joined the yellow ones to lead us down to safety. The gully was easy so we sped downwards. Just as it went really dark it ran out into rock and the coloured blobs disappeared. "MMmm deep shit", I thought. We back tracked and just noticed a little cairn over to the left. We were soon back at our sacks and a head torch.

I felt safely confident that we could find our way back to the car without further problems. I thought of those wonderful pools we'd passed on our way in, then, of Dave and Sue sat in some bar worrying where we'd got to, getting slowly drunk! We found the yellow dotted path and the big cairn and headed back uphill towards the farmhouse. Then I remembered! We still had to negotiate the 'Hounds from Hell'. I opted for a route round the other side of the farm and all seemed to be going well when the track seemed to veer left straight into the farm yard. I could just see their eyes twinkling in the head torch beam as they sped towards us barking ferociously, saliva dripping from their fangs. I picked up a stick, passed it to Melissa and ran off in the opposite direction into the darkness. Melissa shone a torch at them and they backed off. "I don't believe that" she shouted, "fancy giving me the stick"! I was scared! It was my survival instinct kicking in. We left the dogs behind and thankfully picked up the red blobs again which lead back to the car.

We sped back to the village. It was now 10.30pm. All we had to do was find Sue and Dave who we knew would be ensconced in a Bar somewhere in town. But could we find a Bar? We drove round and round the winding narrow streets but no Bar. Surely there could not be such a thing as a Spanish town without a Bar! We entered a Hostel that looked like a Bar. The landlady said she would phone the other Bar as she had seen our amigos there. To say we were relieved when Dave and Sue arrived was an understatement. Turned out they had been watching Chelsea on the box so Dave was happy. We ordered a final beer and shared our stories thankful that another epic had been avoided!

JORDAN SPAIN - Easter 99

by Andy Dunhill

Worries over a renewed Gulf War put paid to Jordan so the safe bet of Spain was chosen. A total of approximately 20 of us went to the Sierra de Prades some 60 miles south of Barcelona and 15 miles inland from Tarragona.

Some of us had been the previous Easter and had mixed weather. This time it was near perfect with wall to wall sunshine for the entire two weeks. Inevitably people came and went at different times, which made organising things difficult.

We hired a villa, where most people stayed, and a selection of cars. The villa owner was in the Basil Fawty category - his natural vocation was definitely not renting property and leaving people in peace. Someone should lock him up.

We visited all the main cliffs in the area. The climbing is almost all single pitch bolted limestone and so good for shaking of the winter cob webs (with a rude awakening). It is a varied area consisting of a 1,000-metre plateau with some very scenic valley gorges. The cliffs tend to be found at the outer edges

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of the plateau.

The more popular cliffs are Suirana, La Musarra and Villa Nova de Padres. Many climbs were done each day by various teams. Grades ranged from Spanish 5, 6a-6c and a few 7s. Most were done in good style but bolts do lend themselves to cheating!

Some walking was also done which was good but perhaps limited.

Towards the end of the fortnight we visited a new area - The Ports -, which is conglomerate (like Riglos) i.e. very high towers of boulders held together with, dried mud! Again most is bolted and takes a bit of getting used to. The Rochers de Benet is the most impressive sector.

This is an excellent area offering extensive and varied climbing together with lots of potential for good quality walking. It's definitely worth another visit. Keep your eyes on the syllabus.

As ever with such trips some tourist things were done e.g. Barcelona and Montserrat. Most evenings saw copious amounts of beer and wine drunk.

Thanks should go to Mari Angeles and Steve for sorting out the villa, Sue Lewandowski for dealing with the kitty and Dave Cundy for providing the drama by chopping off part of his finger and needing stitches (mug?).

For Easter 2000 we will make another attempt at Jordan. Are you interested?

ISLE OF LEWIS - OUTER HEBRIDES

by Andy Dunhill

Whit 99

It's so easy to cancel a Scottish trip at the last minute because of the weather. The only sure way is to book accommodation and ferries etc. in advance. So 15 members committed themselves 6 months in advance (this must be a record?). Three houses were booked and ferry tickets bought by Xmas.

If you've never been, go. It is a windswept, treeless bog on the edge of civilisation where there are very few pubs, none open on Sundays, a high rain fall and villages that have a permanent lingering smell of pungent burning peat (Tom Knowles thought they were burning old sofas!).

In its favour are beautiful beaches, spectacular, deserted mountains, peace and quiet and a place where you do not need to lock your front door. All you need is some good weather, which we did - 2 glorious days and the rest a mixture.

The Altguish Inn provided a good overnight stop on the way (friendly, cheap and good beer). The ferry from Ullapool is fast and efficient. Stock up in one of the supermarkets in Stornaway and drive the 30 miles to Uig Sands on the west coast.

Lots of walking was done. Probably the best was the ridge of Mealaisbhal to Griomabhal in glorious hot sun and nobody else. At the same time others were sampling the excellent Lewis sea cliffs. Many other walks were done both in the mountains and along the coast and beaches. Unfortunately all the climbing was on the sea cliffs because the weather was not good for long enough to allow the mountain cliffs to come into condition. Some mountain biking was also done.

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Mick Tolley displayed a new expertise in doing Jigsaws. John Wiseman made an attempt at mug of the year by forgetting directions to the houses and had to make a desperate last minute call from South Uist - lucky we were in!

A mystery arose which came to be known as The Scandal at Uig Sands. Melisa had the shits, then Martin, then John Denmark - what naughty deeds were happening? Mick Tolley complained that whatever was happening he was not getting any. Jenny remained silent. Will we ever know the truth?

It was a truly international meet with Marie Angeles's brother and French girlfriend joining us. They seemed to adapt well to the climate and thoroughly enjoyed the walking, eating and drinking.

Overall an excellent peaceful place and not a midge in sight.

RHYD-DDU MEET

by Martin Dale

All best laid plans run into trouble it seems. An early start on Friday afternoon was planned and a route in the Pass.

Rae Hughes phoned at 4.30pm but Melissa was not home yet so I told him and Bill Sharp to make tracks to Tolleys abode slowly and we'd follow shortly. Melissa rolled in at 5 pm so our early start was slowly slipping away. We left Mike Tolleys at 6pm in brilliant sunshine in convey. Surely we would get something done on the limestone, or maybe on the slate. We sped south, however, as we approached Wales near Chester an ominous line of thick dark cloud stretched across the horizon and as we entered Wales, the sun disappeared and the prospect of rain grew even greater.

By Llandudno, a decision was made. Bus Stop Quarry above Llanberis. We pulled up outside the Vaynol at Pentir and I enquired of Rae and Bill if they still wanted to do a route. They said yes! I don't know, the youth of today! So, turning our backs on a pint we arrived at the quarry in the gathering gloom. I made a B-line for the rippled slab. Mike said he hadn't done Scarlet Runner so I roped up below it. Rae and Bill decided to tackle a route down on the Needles. I just made the belay/lower off as the drizzle intensified. Poor Mike slipped and slid his way up the pitch with the usual assistance from the rope along with the usual associated banter. Rae and Bill never got started and made a break for 'the boozier'. Melissa however had other ideas. She tied on and the drizzle stopped! She flowed up the route in good style and before you could say "Deineolen" we were speeding down to Rhydd Ddu in increasingly wet drizzle.

In the pub were John and June Wiseman and Rae and Bill already complaining about the beer and the price, which is quite extortionate. However, there's 6 beers to choose from and the bar didn't shut until 12, so one cannot complain. Andy Dunhill and Christine, Dave and Hal arrived to make up the team.

The hut was its usual immaculate self which is more than we could say about the weather. Incessant drizzle continued to fall only briefly clearing. It had got brighter by the time Martin Bennett and Mike Sissons arrived. Christine and Andy and the Wisemans set off to traverse Y GARN, and the climbers decided to throw caution to the wind and go for CWMSILYN which was out of the now lifting cloud and even in the sun. No sooner had we got there, however, we were engulfed in cloud swirling about in a strong wind. To make matters worse, a climber on 'Crucible' pulled off a loose block and took a massive lob just above our heads. Loads of rock crashed down narrowly missing us, not to mention half of his rack which followed the rock after he's turned upside down. His 'ron hills' were a bit of a mess, but apart from a few lacerations and being a bit shaken up he was okay. This was enough to deter Martin and Mick who disappeared around the corner rapidly to do 'Kirkus Direct'. Hal and Woody decided to follow them and Ray (in cricket whites) and Bill opted for 'Outside Edge' route. Myself, Mike and Melissa, not being put off easily, decided to try 'Jabberwocky' just to the right of 'Crucible'. Mike led off, whinging and moaning as usual, loose rock, vegetation, wet holds, you name it, Mike found it! After a while he'd had enough and reversed down and belayed and I led through reaching the first stance qui-

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ckly but with very numb hands. I tied in and brought up Mike who continued to whinge. I noticed, however, that everything was getting wet, the rope, the gear, my clothes, etc. The cloud that had engulfed us was very moisture laden. Melissa came up, her specs misted over. That was the deciding factor, along with the droplets of moisture dripping and glistening on the insitu nuts on the next 5c pitch. It was time to bail out. Just as I started my abseil the first really big drops of rain began to fall. Yes, we'd made a wise decision! It soon turned very nasty as we headed back out to the cars. We could hear Woody and Hal calling through the mist so we knew they had also got down okay. I knew Mike and Martin would be okay and hoped they bumped into Rae and Bill on top.

Back at the cars we decided to wait for everyone to get down before heading off to the pub. First Woody and Hal, then after a good half hour Bill and Mick then Imran Khan (Rae, as Martin had nicknamed him) and Martin. The rain had now well and truly set in. We decided a little pub crawl was in order. First off was the Newsborough Arms at Bonynewydd, which can be well recommended for beer and food. Next was the Snowdonia Park Hotel at Waunfawr (they brew their own ale) – we actually gate crashed a party to celebrate the victory in the local elections of their new Euro MP so it was a bit noisy and packed and their beer was not great. So off we sped to the local in Rhydd Ddu. It was really pissing it down so most of us ate in the Pub, the rest turning up later. The bar shut a bit early but the beer was so expensive most of us were broke anyway!

Sunday dawned disappointingly damp with a steady drizzle. A leisurely breakfast followed by the usual decision making process saw us still sat there prevaricating until after one pm. The walkers set off to walk from Beddlegert. Dave and Hal opted for Tremadoc whilst the rest of us headed north to the shops in Llanberis. Two hours later, we narrowly avoided another brew in Petes Eats, deciding to head for the slate instead. Rae had injured himself so he and Bill set off home. The remainder of the team went to the 'Rainbow' level in rapidly improving weather. Mike Sissons and Martin Bennett went to try 'German Schoolgirls' whilst me, Melissa and Mike Tolley warmed up on 'Bela Lugosi is Dead'. Mike and Martin became embroiled in a queue and then did some rescue work when another climber cut open his foot whilst slipping on a slate slope in bare feet. The rest of us did 'Pull my daisy' including Martin who tied on at the end. It was now 8 pm and time to head towards Frodsham for more beer and food. The weather had now cleared and the sun was out. Typical!

A MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND IN YOSEMITE

by Joanna Goorney

On the 22nd May, Mum and I flew out to Los Angeles. Mum had dreamed of California since the age of 10 and it was like going on holiday with an overexcited child at times. After a few days spent with relatives getting over jetlag in LA, we travelled by Greyhound up to San Francisco. Alcatraz was fascinating, Chinatown full of character and the Golden Gate Bridge was impressive. We then hired a car and headed for the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

After camping one night at Lake Tahoe, we drove over many mountain passes towards Mono Lake. A 13 mile detour along unpaved road led to Bodie, a genuine ghost town before arriving at Lee Vining, a small town at the foot of the eastern entrance to Yosemite National Park. The next day after a visit to the Tufa formations that Mono Lake is famous for, we headed for the Yosemite National Park. It was now the Sunday of a Bank Holiday weekend and fortunately all the high passes in the area had been opened the previous day. This meant we could enter Yosemite via the Tioga Pass (which has a highest point of just under 10 000 feet). As we drove up the pass, the scenery grew more spectacular, the snow around us got deeper and Mum remarked 'If there was this much snow in Scotland, they would say the skiing conditions were excellent!'. We then passed a sign saying 71 miles to Yosemite Valley. It certainly hadn't looked that far on the map and having not taken into account the height we had to lose, we arrived early afternoon into a heaving Yosemite Valley strangely reminiscent of the Peak District on a Bank Holiday! Unable to find anywhere to camp, we were advised to drive out of the Park and believing we had no choice joined an endless queue of traffic. After an hour of crawling going barely half a mile in the car I felt very much like Michael Douglas in 'Falling Down' and feeling extremely frustrated turned round and managed to park the car near the Visitors Centre. Whilst wandering aimlessly around, we happened upon the Wilderness Centre where we were soon spilling out our accommodation

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problems to the duty ranger. Within minutes, he had mapped out plans for the next two days and found us somewhere to pitch the tent for the next three nights.

Our first night was spent at the Backpackers Campground, a remarkably quiet site hidden away at the back of another packed campsite. The following day, we planned to head up Half Dome, a 16 mile round trip making an ascent of 4900 feet. We would be pitching our tent half way up at the Little Yosemite Campground and had been issued with a Wilderness Pass allowing us to camp there. It was the first time that my 55 year old mother had carried a full sack on her back since she was 19 but then she does seem to be going through her second childhood. The route up initially follows two amazing waterfalls, the Vernal Falls and the Nevada Falls. Going up, we followed the Mist Path, with the added bonus of a soaking from the falls. Apparently at the time of year we were there, the waterfalls are at the most powerful from all the melted snow whereas later on in the summer they almost dry up. (During winter, they freeze up). By lunch time, we had reached the campsite where we pitched the tent and emptied the rucksacks. After some much needed sustenance, we headed on up to the top of Half Dome, still another 4 miles away. The weather was very warm and after a hard slog and the consuming of much water, we finally reached the start of the rock at the bottom of Half Dome. The last 900ft of trail is a very steep climb up the east side. Airy steps have been cut into the rock for the first part of the ascent. We next encountered a pile of worn gardening gloves. These were used to assist in the climbing of cables which had been erected up an intimidating 400ft slab leading to the summit of Half Dome. They consist of two steel ropes about three feet apart and suspended at arm's height from pipes set in the rock. I was amazed at the number of people chickening out of the final steep ascent. I worked on the principle that no reference had been made to anyone killing themselves on this climb before. We finally reached our summit about 5:00pm and were rewarded with the most amazing and awesome views over the Yosemite National Park. Unfortunately, we soon had to make our descent back down to the campsite before dark.

Dusk was already well upon us when we reached the campsite and I ended up having to cook in fast diminishing light. Attempting to boil some flavoured rice, tiredness led me to upset half of it. Any liquid in it was quickly absorbed into the parched soil. I was left putting a mixture of rice and soil in a bag to remove any smell for hungry bears during the night. Since whatever you carry into the wilderness must be carried out, I had to transport the bag of soggy soil in my rucksack back down the following day! Descending past the waterfalls we followed the John Muir Path (part of the John Muir Trail). Eventually after reaching the Valley again and repitching the tent in the Backpackers Campground, we became tourists again for the afternoon.

The following day, we left Yosemite and headed for the coast and a long drive back along it to LA.

NEW LANCASHIRE GUIDEBOOK

letter from Les A. to Club Secretary

The New Lancashire Guidebook went on sale in May. The Editors Dave Cronshaw and Les Ainsworth would like to thank all those Club Members who may have assisted with the guidebook or with improving Lancashire climbing in any way.

Also Les A. would like to ask all climbers to bear in mind the following points:

- Together we can do a lot to improve the climbs and crags in our area, but this will not happen if we all leave it to someone else.
- Provided that enough climbers help with crag cleaning, the effort that will be required from each of us will be minimal.
- Whilst crag cleanups are clearly not as good as actually doing the climbing, a short cleanup spell can be both rewarding and enjoyable.
- Much of the need to abseil down routes to remove dirt etc, or to undertake litter cleanups, can be avoided if you take litter home (even if you did not create it) and if you remove recently accumulated dirt from the holds.
- If you notice places where there is a need for a belay stake, or where a protection peg is deteriorating, think about replacing it yourself. If others had not inserted such protection in the past, many of the climbs that you currently enjoy, would take much longer to ascend.

NEW ROUTES

by Martin Dale

Some new route activity has been occurring already this year involving club members.

The Isle of Lewis was visited at Whitsun by a large group of international FMC members and their friends. The mountain crags were generally out of condition so the sea cliffs saw some action. Here, new route possibilities abound at all grades; not only new lines but new undiscovered cliffs lurk around every corner.

At the Flannan area, , on the Cioch wall, Martin Dale and Melissa Bock climbed a new route right of *Chicken Run* by accident. Martin thought he was repeating a new route reported in one of the magazines, however on checking, that route goes up left of *Chicken Run*. The slim ramp/ crack line leading out rightwards from the bottom of *Chicken Run* gave *Poultry in Motion* E1/2 5b. Very pleasant climbing, a bit run out on the upper section which bulges a bit. The cliffs are bombarded by the sea all winter so the rock is clean and free from most loose rock and lichen so an onsight ground up ascent is possible.

In the Arid Uig area, at Geodha Caol, Steve Wrigley and Martin Dale climbed *Sueños De Piedra Y Mar* (*Dreams of rock and sea*) HVS 5a which starts up the corner on the left avoided by Into the Sea then traverses trickily left to the arete under the overhang before climbing the slab and arete above and on the right. From the belay at the top of this route, Martin and Steve accessed the Geo to the west via an airy gangway. This led down to ledges above the sea in an amphitheatre of very impressive rock littered with new route possibilities, most of which looked to be in the higher grades. To the right, below the gangway, a wall overhung directly into the sea at an alarming angle, again possibly giving more extreme possibilities. Unfortunately, it was raining and time was ticking on so it was not possible to try any of the impressive lines. The lads were, however, able to solo out up some steep stepped corners and then traverse a long black ramp/slab back right with an awkward step half way to reach the top again. Steve agreed that this route in itself would give a V.Diff person a good day out so we decided to claim it as *Blackslipway* V.Diff.

When you read the guide, it suggests that Mick Tighe has climbed everything not recorded and E2 or under in this area before, so ours may not be first ascents, however, we will write them up and pass them to the powers that be to decide.

Back in England, in the Lakes, Martin Dale has also been active on Pavey Ark, climbing the oft looked at right hand variation to *Aardvark* above *Jacks Rake*. This took surprisingly little effort in the way of brushing but still contains the odd suspect hold as the *Rake* was particularly busy that afternoon. The route climbs *Aardvark* to the peg and then launches rightwards up the wall to an awkward landing onto the slab above. The hard moves are quite powerful and reachy but are very well protected. The rest of the route climbs the slab and then moves back left onto the arete under a sloping roof to join *Aardvark* for its top airy arete. Melissa, who was not feeling too well that day, unfortunately failed to make the hard moves right from the peg, so a grade of E2 5 c / 6 a was given as she can usually manage 5c. The name is *Haardvark*, or just plain *Aardvark Right Hand*, the FRCC can decide. Not a classic, but definitely worthwhile.

If the weather stays fine, you can expect some more new route news in your next newsletter.

