

**FMC**  
**NEWSLETTER**

**NOVEMBER 2000 AD**

**S. WRIGLEY (APPRENTICE SUB EDITOR)**

## **Apprentice sub editors note**

Unfortunately this month your newsletter is not up to it's normal high standard. This is due to your Newsletter editor being unavailable for duties ( something about being a student and having to study)

This will be the last Newsletter from this office as a new full time editor will be required for the next season.

If you fancy a go send your CV along to any committee member along with the requisite tenner and who knows **it could be you !**

## **New Members**

A warm welcome to the following new members

### **Intro:**

Carlos Sanz  
Caroline Webb  
Eve Harrison

### **Full:**

Kevin Ebrell  
Terry Robinson

## **General Info**

- Dorset Police advice climbers not to leave anything of value in cars at Swanage.
- The recent Woolf Reforms for insurance claims means it is essential that clubs / individuals insured under the BMC scheme contact the BMC insurers immediately following an accident
- The BMC website now has a database for access agreements. It's called the RAD (regional access database) It can be found on the BMC website [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)
- There might be charges for car parking at Castle Rock in the Lakes. So take some loose change. The BMC Lakes area committee is looking into the legality of this as the Forestry Commission at the time of privatisation had promised no such charging would happen. Anyway be warned as there is talk of putting a lockable barrier up which will be closed at 9pm to discourage overnight parking!

- Access to Goat Crag in Borrowdale will soon be by stepping stones over the river from the Quay Foot Buttress car park. (although Martin Dale reports they weren't there earlier in the year)
- On Sargeant Crags Slabs there has been talk of placing a bolt to give the tree with a sling around it a rest. This suggestion was denounced at the Lakes Area BMC meeting

### AGM Reminder

Do not forget that if you have any motions that you want to be voted on at the AGM send them to the club secretary before the end of the year. This is required so that they can be circulated with the Agenda when it is sent out next year.

### ARTICLES

#### We're from the other side.....

Dawn was breaking as the coach drove off the ferry and into Sogndal. Fjords and farms slipped quietly by as the taxi drove us the final hour up the valley to Tongestolen. With the stars fading and mountains slowly revealing themselves, I slowly awoke with growing anticipation of the day ahead. We would cross a 6,000 feet mountain barrier capped by the Jostedalsbreen, one of the largest, most spectacular, glaciers in Europe. It had been described as the finest single day's walk in Norway.

With the taxi departed and the Jostedalsbreen now before us, the crisp air sharpened our senses and the mountains charged us with adrenalin. Tucked away at the end of the valley, a solitary ridge would provide safe passage past huge icefalls which tumbled down all around. At the base of the ridge, the icefalls merged to form a dry glacier so sheltered that it could survive the summer, even at sea level. We walked easily along its spine, ice crystals crunching beneath our feet.

The bergschrund was a piece of modern sculpture, a crystalline maze in white and blue. The slabs above were grey and smooth, no walls but still a maze. On the fells beyond, undergrowth still dripped from rain the day before, dragging on our boots. As height drained life from our legs, so the sun breathed life into the icefalls. 'Thor's hammer' announced the death of another serac, a small avalanche its funeral cortege. We scrambled past rock steps, sometimes protected with dubious pieces of cable, sometimes not. "A tourist path" as Christian described it.

Brynjulv was reclining on a small grassy plateau when Christian and I caught up with him. Littered around were signs of lunch, a half-eaten sandwich, bananas, a drinking bottle. He'd read our minds exactly. Just yards from the first permanent snow-field and with magnificent views of the icefalls, it was clearly the place to recharge body and soul.

oooOooo

The snow stretched out all around us without flaw or feature. As we walked that final unending slope to the summit, our world appeared devoid of distance, somehow intangible. Behind us, footprints marked our only link back to the world outside.

It was gone four in the afternoon when we could finally climb no further. Around us, a sea of churning cloud welled up from the valleys below while, high above, strong winds carved a perfect wave-cloud in a sky feathered with ice crystals. Amidst a world of ethereal beauty, we stood engulfed by elation.

The rope pulled tight behind me. I turned to see Christian staring into a narrow crevasse, searching for the energy to jump across. There were now so many that we moved like a caterpillar, Christian at the back, then me, then Brynjulv. I stumbled, a bottomless footprint left hanging above the darkness. I'd thought about crevasse rescue while at home. Please, not now.

oooOooo

In the rapidly failing light, descent of the narrow track was becoming treacherous. Rock steps and tree roots hid in the undergrowth. I stopped for another rest. High above us, the Katanaken stood silhouetted against a backdrop of emerging stars. It was now several hours since we'd escaped the final ice-field to gain its summit ridge. On another day we could have rested there, a mile up in the sky, watching the sunlight playing on blue tinged icefalls.

With the light now gone, the river was our only guide. Beside it we followed long-forgotten paths, sometimes flooded, or blocked by fallen trees. A path melted into the night, find a new one, follow it, lose it, do it again.

Ten o'clock. The hotel bar was closing and we were still in the woods (somewhere). "Well that's it then, no beer.....". Heads dropped.

Suddenly we could see lights. It was Briksdal. The track crossed a bridge beneath a huge waterfall, its thunder filling the darkness. We stopped to watch, spray raining down on our faces. Was it the Jostedalsbreen saying goodbye ?

My legs had given their all. I collapsed onto the steps outside the hotel entrance, willing them to swallow me up and release me from exhaustion. The feeling not just of our achievement, but of our good fortune, was immense. To have crossed the Jostedalsbreen - how many Norwegians had ever done that ? To have pushed ourselves to the very limits amid such majestic surroundings - and succeeded.

Christian joined me on the steps. He was silent for a minute, then turned and spoke with pride, "Hey, if anyone asks, we're from the other side....".

**Dave Cundy**

## OFFA'S DYKE

Decide on a Long Distance Walk - 545 are listed in the "Long Distance walk Handbook" for the British Isles!

Buy the guidebooks and maps.

Make it known of your intentions, to the world in general. If you are really, really lucky you will get two willing volunteers to accompany you. Sue and John Denmark came with a wonderful CV: orienteers, good walkers, organised campers, a like-minded attitude to alcohol consumption, and a CAR!

The Offa's Dyke path is 177 miles long and goes from Chepstow on the River Severn to Prestatyn on the North Wales Coast. You could do it in reverse but it would mean reading the guidebooks in the same way. (And walking backwards is more difficult! - JD) Don't assume that because the path does not rise to mountainous heights that it is an easy stroll. Some sections are quite strenuous, repeated rises and falls as the dyke traverses the grain of the landscape means that on an average day you climb the equivalent of a very considerable mountain. We completed the equivalent of nine and a bit Munros during the walk. How do I know that? Well, John owns an altimeter and is adept at working out the ascents and descents. In addition, with the map ever handy, he can also tell you exactly where you are at any moment. There are also 700 stiles to slow progress - more than any other national trail. [Thoughts on this: if it takes four people 30 seconds to negotiate each stile, we spent almost six hours climbing stiles!! - JD).

We averaged about 15 miles per day - not much? Don't forget that it's accumulative and makes for tired feet and knees, apart from walking off the previous evening's relaxation time (or bingeing). It's a twelve day walk but because the prescribed days vary we adjusted some days by biting off some off some of the next day, to keep up our average. To save moving camp each night we stayed in one spot for two or three nights and left cars at each end. This meant that, for some of the sections we walked south instead of north. It's more difficult to read the guidebook in reverse and also confuses other walkers. We met a delightful ex-pat Scot with a Finnish wife who hailed from British Columbia five times like this and in the end we became firm friends!

For almost half its length, the path keeps company with the dyke. Sometimes the bank is up to 25 feet high with a deep ditch to the west of it, or it could be no more than a ridge across a field. The scenery was varied and not one day was dull. Land forms varied from grassy hills, spectacular limestone crags, peaty moorland, pastures, woods, castles and aqueducts. The most impressive section included the Black Mountain.

The guys did their "man thing" and organised the transport. The girls perfected the art of sandwich making (women are not stupid). If a beer front was located (most notably Bishops Castle) then it was the usual "wives drive home from the pub touch" (women also know when it's better not to push their luck!)



We had spectacular weather. The vain men managed to walk for nine and a half days bare-chested to get a tan, though John was left with superb strap marks from carrying his rucsac. (Rumour has it he's on a sunbed every day to frantically get rid of them - vain or what!) We had BBQ's plus the odd glass of wine (not to mention bottles of gin, whisky, cider and carry-outs of ale from hostelryes! - JD) whilst sitting around the tents in the evening, adding perhaps a sweater to the usual clothing of shorts and T shirts. We had one and a half days of rain - well we were in Wales!

The Historical Bit - Why is it there?

King Offa (8<sup>th</sup> Century) ordered a great dyke to be built between Wales and Mercia, stretching from sea to sea. Some people think it was a boundary marker, others that it was built for defensive purposes to keep the Welsh out of England (didn't work did it Rae?) There are many fortifications suggesting permanent manning and it goes up and down too much to be a trackway. It is unlikely that the dyke was built from end to end by a construction team - more likely that local gangs did individual stretches, as odd anomalies such as right-angled bends could have been where two teams failed to meet! (Plagiarised)

Looking at a map of The British Isles, it's wonderful to be able to trace an obvious and complete section and think, "we did that!"

What a great team.

**Jennie, Sue, Mike and John**

Snippets:

Highest Point - The Black Mountain 705m  
Total climb - 8662m  
Tea stops found - 3  
Pubs on route open for lunchtime refreshment - 1

## **BORN TOO LATE**

The day began conventionally enough, with nothing to indicate that we would later be thrust into a situation evoking memories of a bygone age of mountaineering. Terry and I, taking advantage of a brilliant forecast, rapidly rearranged our working commitments (ie took a sickie) and went climbing. We met in Preston, drove to the ODG, got the last parking place available and sweated up The Band in glorious sunshine. The walk was frequently punctuated by my phone ringing – and since I was supposed to be working I felt obliged, with some embarrassment, being a declared technophobe, to answer it. Colleagues and clients alike wondered why a guy they imagined to be at a desk or the wheel of a car should sound so out of

breath! In fact it relieved the tedium of the walk so we seemed to be at the top in no time.

We arrived below Neckband Crag and decided I'd have the first lead. I chose a nice three star HVS to warm up on – Glorfindel. (Zinfandel, Terry called it, revealing at once his ignorance of Tolkienian legend AND his affection for the finer things in life, particularly those packaged in bottles!) This being still what I have referred to as the conventional part of the day the ascent was made in good style and the qualities of the route savoured. The descent was even more stylish and rapid as we found a fixed abseil sling situated precisely at our point of arrival at the top of the crag. Traditionalists (and I should know, having once been one) would decry such conveniences and, eschewing the ghastly aberration, walk, scramble, slip and slide down some nasty worn descent gully with pinching toes, wearing away the carefully crafted sticky rubber of their expensive shoes. To repeat myself we were still in the conventional (modern) stages of the day. We swooped down the ab with glee and I ate my sarnies while Terry studiously compared guide book and crag with deep scrutiny, deciding which route was to be privileged by the passage of our size nines.

Truth to tell, he'd decided before we got there that Adam's Apple (HVS) was to be his route. From a distance, out of sight of the crag, this was a perfectly reasonable decision. But up close it revealed itself as his first mistake. He'd seen the two stars and, forgetting that this was the new Langdale guide book where stars are dished out like confetti at a nuptial feast, assumed he was in for a treat. Never mind that the first 20 feet comprised a damp green approach to shattered overhanging flaky cracks.. Don't worry that the continuation was only slightly less steep and that it's crack sprouted greenery of every hue. The die had been cast in his imagination the night before. Ignoring the evidence of all his senses he made his second mistake in choosing to persist with his plan. This was the objective of the day and he would, like a jousting knight of old, have at it.

Thus we slipped inexorably from the conventional sector of our day into the past. Fifteen minutes grappling with the first difficulties, described above, was enough. He knew he wasn't going to get up it. One look at me told him there was nothing to be gained by offering the lead to me, happily convinced we'd now change the plan and return to the dry, non vegetated end of the crag. But no, now he made his third mistake. He opted to start up the even greener adjacent route, The Gizzard, and move into Adam's Apple above the overhanging start. Twenty minutes of thrutching, slipping, ripping out vegetation and throwing it over his shoulder and he'd made the height needed to traverse left into his chosen folly. And did.

He was faced with a sixty foot crack. Clean, it may well be HVS 5a and may even be worth, in Langdale currency, a star or two. That afternoon it provided a minor epic. It was as bad as the start of The Gizzard had been but harder. Following it I wondered at Terry's tenacity (foolhardiness? pigheadedness? insanity?) in continuing the fight. Every move, each gear placement, was hard won in the face of grass, fern, heather and a general sogginess. Each time a foot went in the crack you worried that it's sole emerged wet or worse. Would it stick to the rock outside the crack? Never mind your sole, it was certain that your soul was dampened by the experience!

At last Terry reached easier slabby rock and ascended for twenty feet with no problem, or protection, to the top overhang. A runner went in. The bold moves round the overhang were committed to. The runner fell out. Terry kept keeping on..... And made the stance. Just as well – I had been working out which direction to run in if he fell to shorten what could have been a fifty foot lob!

After that my pitch to the top of the crag, supposedly 4c and part of The Gizzard, but in reality worth HVS 5a, seemed like an anticlimax even though it was the nicest climbing on the best rock on the route.

And so our day out, conventionally begun, had turned into a memorable one of character and of character building! For a pioneering experience redolent of a bygone age seek out a character called Terry Robinson. He gets my vote for determination. Watching his ascent put me in mind of the numerous tales we've all read about the the epics of vegetation heaving, socks over yer boots, gritty not pretty Rock and Ice Club climbers of the fifties and sixties. Maybe Terry was born too late? Now all he gets is to climb with FMC members IN their fifties and sixties, as opposed to OF the fifties and sixties!

Note to club sec – In future please take more care in recruiting intro members – too much of this type of thing would be exhausting!

**Martin Bennett**

## **BUM STARTS OR STAND UP FARTS?**

Lets get this straight from the start, I'm a bum start man. I love to get down in the dirt and experience the thrill of the "pull-on", get the full length of the beast, so to speak. So when I got wind of a brand spanking new bouldering area absolutely littered with the buggers, I had to get my bad ass up there and check it out. Crookstones lies hidden in a little valley between Crookrise and Rylstone above Skipton. The description says approach discreetly. Its a bit difficult to be discreet whilst carrying an oversized bright red suitcase, however off I skipped through the fields heading for the valley. After crossing and re-crossing the stream a few times and staggering up the hillside up a well trodden path through the bracken I arrived at the first boulders in about 30 minutes from the road. I scanned the first problems of the circuit, a V5 6A traverse called DOG FIGHT and a 5C wall and V1 5C arete. Not much good for a warm up! After a few go's though the arete went, and the wall followed but the traverse would have to wait. The next boulder contained the first classic of the tour, a thing called "HANG THE BOSS" at V4 6B. Hang it, I could not. It would have to wait for a drop in temperature, maybe, any how it didn't really have a bum start. However, round the back was the first beauty that I could scrape my ass on. A lovely overhanging arete at V2 6A. A bit of a back breaker boulder under it but that's why I'd lugged my red suitcase along with me. After a few unsuccessful sorties, I grabbed the top and my feet shot off. I held the swing, moved slightly right



and mantled to success. I stood on the top and looked up the slope. I couldn't believe what I saw. It was a wonderland! Perfect height boulders strewn across the slope as far as the eye could see. I ran around like a child in a new playground picking off problems here and there. Some were a bit green but most were pristine with no tell tale chalk, all on excellent grit.

I soon arrived at Roys Mantle V6 6C short but tough, time to get my bum down again. The grade of this one should have been beyond me but I was either having a good day or maybe I was lucky. I stuck the hold first go, rocked up hard and slapped an undercut, pushing at the same time with my other hand. I'd got it and with style, I thought. Next to it was a bum scrapping left to right traverse of V3 6A. I was in heaven! Just to prove a point though the V1 6A mantle just behind proved frustrating, no matter how hard I strained. The next "classic" was Deer Snare Scab V3 6A, a superb pebble problem. Stand Up Fart though, but still highly enjoyable and despatched first go. Just beyond a blunt rib on smears and slopes at V6 6C proved to be only three moves, or well rehearsed slaps, to the top and then a nose grinding mantle to finish. It was at this stage as I hit my mat again that I realised that I'd better be careful. I was completely on my own, not a soul in sight- no mobile phone. I finally stuck the three slaps and topped out only to be confronted by yet more rocks!! How this place had remained undetected until now remains a mystery to me it was boulder Nirvana! I had only just scratched the turtles head.

I passed by the next area called Areteland ( and although it looked really good it was a bit high and the landings slopped). I needed to return with spotters. Some of the problems got e grades they are that high. Moving along to the right hand group I was back in the late afternoon sun. Another "classic" beckoned "The Stone Brush" V3 6A. It involved an unusual move to get established on a slab then a slap up for an undercut before teetering off up to the right to finish. Absolutely Superb! Just beyond it was the next derriere delight.. A V3 6B arete described as powerful. This was the epitome of the bumstart. Powerful pull on followed by two slaps, then the crux. I couldn't do it, so just stepped back and I was stood up on the ground. I couldn't do it from a Standing Fart. Better move on! Greg's wall looked excellent at V3 6B but I couldn't fathom that either. A spotter was also required as the landing was dodgy. It was getting late and the sun had disappeared over the Bowland fells. One more beauty, the "overhanging crack" at V4 6A. Get bum down again and pull into awful flared jams with toes poked in lower down. Up the crack a couple of moves then a respite at a good pocket. Undercut the top of the pocket with the other hand and reach for a..... Oh No! I hit the deck with a nasty thump. My foot zipped from the poor toe jam and I'd lacerated my ankle which was now bleeding profusely. Not to be outdone I have another go. This time I stick the good jam and slap the top. You then have to palm up rightwards up a slopping arete and grind to the top. Arms now well spelched I belly flopped over. A couple more traverses, one a Bum Scraper and the other "Jerry's" which has a span too far for me and at V7 the hardest thing on the crag, but it did seem that with a little more oomph I would get it next visit.

I then chanced upon an overhanging wall marked as a project on the diagram. Pulling from pocket to pocket I reached the top and suddenly realised why this was a project. Looking down my mat was the size of a postage stamp and a little to the left. I had to think quick and pushed off landing with one foot off and one foot on, cracking my elbow on a rock.

That was it, time to go now. With my elbow throbbing and my ankle bleeding, that was one lucky escape too many. As I ran off towards my sack my other leg went down an enormous hole up to my thigh. I raked my thigh across one boulder and nearly bust my Achilles tendon on my good leg. MM I thought I could now see the sense in having a phone with you in these isolated spots.

I staggered off down the slope like a wounded soldier returning from battle. Eventually as I hit the dead bracken I broke into a run desperate to get to the paths before dark. Back at the car battered and bruised I dreamt of the preferred tippie of the Bumstarter...Jennings Cross Buttock ale. Yes I'd had a bummer of a day.

Summary: The bouldering circuit at Crookstones GR 985566. Topo in OTE 100 includes all you need to know about how to get there etc. The V grade thing, well, try to think of them like E grades giving an indication of the overall difficulty of a problem. I feel they have got a lot of settling down to do before they are anything like accurate. The grades at Crookstones felt to me to be a bit on the soft side, so get up there for your big ticks before they get down graded.

**Martin Dale**

## **PEMBROKE MEET, AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY 2000**

This camping meet, planned for a time of year when access is permitted to all climbing areas, was not well attended. Eight was the most we could muster. This is by way of imparting a flavour of what you missed to the rest of you.

Mike Tolley and myself managed to fit in an extra day by setting off on Thursday evening amid forecasts of a poor weekends' weather. We camped at Buttylands and got up early to fit in a route before the monsoon arrived. By noon on Friday we were leaving Mowing Word having picked off the first three star route of the trip – "Chimes of Freedom".

As we enjoyed the excellent tea and cakes on offer at Stackpole Quay the weekend's bad weather went by – half an hour of gentle summer rain. By the time we arrived at Stennis Head for the next phase of the plan the rock was bone dry and beckoning. I wanted to do "Manzoku" or "Cool for Cats" but having done 'em Mike persuaded me to try "Anyone for Stennis". Admiring the name and being full of confidence from the morning's success I had a go. Six attempts (and six runners!) later I got over the initial overhang. Like Geoffrey Boycott at the wicket I'd made 10 (feet not runs) in an hour! I could find no rest. I hastily fixed a runner and moved up. I could find no rest. I hastily fixed a runner and moved up. I could find no rest. I hastily fixed a runner and moved up. I could find no -----ad inf for fifty feet! Here I had a rest. A very good one hanging off a runner! Another move was followed by a legitimate rest, the technical crux and easy climbing to the top, as pumped as I can ever remember being.

After that we went looking for "Riders on the Storm", found it, decided it looked good but too steep for this time of day and Mike led us out by way of "Painted Head". Good beer and food in The St Govan's Inn, more good beer in Pembroke (I know that sounds like an oxy-moron but we did find some, honest) then it was back to poor beer but good company in The Swan Lake where we found, as expected, the rest of the team. Woody, Hal, Martin D, Kevin, Simon and Rae had all travelled together in the Rae-mobile – his firm's big blue Mercedes charabanc.

Saturday everyone went off in various directions to plough their own furrows. In our case the high spot of the day was an ascent of "Ultravixens" to the lay the ghost of a failure here a couple of years ago. We had to queue for it but it seemed worth it. On Sunday Mike and I led the suggestions to look for some slabs, having had two days and seven routes of steep limestone. In the end everyone decided to go to Caerfai Bay which proved to be a great decision. An excellent day was had in a holiday atmosphere whilst the classics of the crag "Orogeny", "Armorican" and "UncertainSmile" took a hammering. On "Curse of The Cragmonsters" Kevin got a hammering – by the waves. He found himself unable to gain enough height to avoid them whilst belaying Martin D. Fortunately he was in full view of the rest of the team as they basked in the sun or went about a pleasant route. I'm sure he was able to take comfort in their manifest expressions of sympathy for his plight.

Later in the pub in St Florence Kevin found himself again at the mercy of a tidal wave. This time it was one of abuse and repartee hurled in his direction by an unforgettably large (in every sense) lady from Seattle Washington, named Kimberley. Kevin tried manfully to keep his end up, intellectually speaking, but was unequal to the task and floundered in the face of her rapier wit, suffering several 'hairy' moments in a lengthy and oft interrupted verbal vendetta. I will elaborate no more. You had to be there. And should have been. Once again we, the onlookers, made evident our sympathy, to such an extent that there wasn't one of us who didn't have to wipe away the tears!

Bank holiday Monday began with one among us being abused if not threatened by a strange shopkeeper who seemed to desire to vet his customers according to their place of residence! But it developed into another day of glorious sunshine which witnessed the nobs on several crags enjoying another great day back on the steep stuff having rested forearms (at the expense of cramped toes and aching calves) on the slabs of Craig Caerfai. Mike and I had a day of isolation in following Simon's recommendation to do "The Rip" and "Swelter". Both are very good climbs, one hard, the other serious (ask Rae), which don't get the publicity they deserve.

We headed for home at 6.30 and caught up with the Rae-mobile at Beulah for the best bangers and mash in Wales, a final pint, strong coffee for the drivers and home for midnight. You all missed a cracker. So there.

**M. Bennet**



## The Enchanted Mountains

South of Luchon at the end of the Val D'Aran, two erring shepherds were tuned to stone, the Encantats. Situated entirely on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees the Agulles Tortes and Lac Sant Maurici National Park surrounds the Grand and Petit Encantats Mountains Giving a wonderland of woods, lakes, beautiful and rugged valleys and granite mountains

The compact and attractive area provides a worthwhile venue for at least a couple of weeks worth of walking at all grades as well as rock climbing and ski mountaineering in the appropriate season. The Hamlet of Espot provides the logical tourist centre but from here access is only by foot, bicycle or National park jeep. It is a bit like having a gate across the road at Elterwater and a minibus to the O.D.G.

Any inconvenience is made up for by the peace & tranquillity of the area as a result, which was found to be clean and well maintained. Spanish and Catalan are spoken by the locals but it is usually possible to find someone who can speak a bit of French. English is rarely understood. There are Hotels and food shops and two good camp sites. Shopping otherwise is of the 3 dead rat type so it is a good place to go if you are a reforming shopperholic. There are some water sports not far down the valley but essentially Espot is a place from which to go mountaineering.

To the south of the main E-W valley system the Petit Encantat is solely the preserve of the climber but the Gran Encantat has a serious scrambling route to its summit. The Valleta Secca nearby provides a rugged approach to several tops and a route to the J. M. Blanc hut situated amongst a number of lakes and a number of accessible peaks.

The Monestero valley west of Secca is divine and leads to a further group of accessible peaks including the Pic de Peguera the highest in the area reached by a serious scramble over the last few feet.

The Subenvix valley is wild and rugged and leads to its eponymous peak. Scree ascent can usually be avoided by sticking to the gully walls. Returning WSW from Subenvix the Piexerani valley is worth a whole afternoon in itself, alternately rugged and sublime.

To the west the Tuc de Bergus is easily ascended as is the Pic de Ratera, Pic d' Amitges and Pics de Basserio to the north. A chain of beautiful lakes enhance the approaches.

The area has it's own Bob Graham round visiting all the huts in 24 hrs. but for those wishing to enjoy the area the same route can be spread over several days. A recent visit here enjoyed eleven consecutive days of warm sunshine and cool breezes on the tops whilst Scarborough was apparently 25 deg C colder.

I know where I would prefer to be

**Dave Earl**

## **Nether Wasdale**

A small team made the effort to go up to the Screens on Friday night and were rewarded with a lock in till 12.30 and we could have stayed longer!

Chris Thistlethwaite arrived Sat morning to swell the numbers to five. We took a brave decision considering the time of the year and decided to go to Esk buttress. Kevin Ebrell went for a walk, sensible fellow. It took us longer than it should have to get to the crag. It was cold but dry. Chris and Clive Bell donned their warm clothes and attacked Bridges Route , Hard severe whilst me and Mike Sissons went for Perseus E3 because we liked the photo on the front cover of the guide. It was only just warm enough and after we had completed our routes we had only just enough time to walk out in daylight, We spent the evening in both pubs and had to endure another lock in at the screens until at least 1am. That really tested us.

Sunday was disappointing . Kevin and Clive went off for a walk, Chris went home. Me and Mike headed towards St Bees hoping to escape the incessant drizzle. We ended up after some tough shopping , in the Kendal Wall.

**Martin Dale**

## **Chester Swap 16/17 Sept**

I ended up leading this meet for some reason. It happened to occur right in the middle of the petrol crisis, so on Friday night no one was going anywhere.

The phone went early Sat morning, Dave Hicks had fuel. All systems go. One car load of us made it down to Llanberis where all the garages had plenty of fuel! The weather was decidedly dodgy so we went on to the Slate. A kind of greatest hits day followed with stuff like Solstice, Fools Gold and Gnat Attack being done in Bus Stop Quarry. Dave led Gnat Attack after an interesting fall a good effort. Elaine Scarles followed everything gracefully. We did a greasy California Arete and finished off with Seams the Same. Food in Petes eats and then beer in the Heights and a good chin wag with ex FMC – er Simon Panton.

Sunday was dull but hey!. Dave and Elaine didn't have hangovers!! More slate again after some shopping only this time we weren't going to be lucky. After trekking down to the Rainbow only to find a coach load of students top roping my chosen route, it then proceeded to rain. I did get my harness on and tied it to the ropes, but I didn't set a foot on the rock. We retreated to Pen y Trwyn were we managed a couple of routes before again being overtaken by the weather. Not a bad weekend considering all the things against us.

**Martin Dale**



## Mountain Biking

This meet was only for tough guys! And what do tough guys do when the weather craps out? Go shopping, that's what.

Only the truly mad would have gone out on Sat and as I was with the truly mad Phil Lee and Blair Rogers I was somewhat surprised when they wanted to go shopping. Some excuse about wanting some new trousers Bullshit! They just wanted to fondle some new ice tools then some beer in the Golden Rule.

Later that evening we returned with mad buggers Glenn Brookes and Duncan Hogg for more beer and a lock in the rule.

It was still shite on Sunday but we decided we had better go out. Phil rented what was supposed to be a bike for the mountains and we set off around the back of Tarn Hows and up into Grisedale. After a brew in the visitors centre we went up and down the fox then retraced our steps round the back of Tarn Hows and back to the hut. Not a beer passed our lips all day. It had been an exhilarating ride in every sort of weather that the sky could throw at us, particularly for the meet leader whose brakes packed up coming down to the Coniston road and had to bale out to avoid causing a major pile up not to mention serious injury.

Phil took his roadster back to the hire shop and we all went home via the Water Mill at Ings for more beer.

**Martin Dale**

## More Summer Fun

July saw probably the best attendance of the summer at Huttton Roof. There were bids for mug of the year by some members who could not find the way to the crag and an appearance by Rebecca. Walkers and climbers turned up in their droves to enjoy a sunny evening. Beer was had in the Kings Arms, Burton in Kendal.

Next weeks meet to Bridestones was not as well attended, however new member Anthony did come along. He thought we were all mad for not taking ropes and climbing very high above our bouldering mats. Despite conditions being a bit greasy due to the heat I actually managed to do a new problem (new to me). A rare occasion for me at Bridestones. Smarter also goes at 6B. Only with the help of a local though who showed me the sequence. I also managed Big Bash 6B with the help of spotters Mike Sissons and Melissa. The pads looked an awful long way down from the slopy top moves. Beers in that old favourite the Staff of Life finishing the evening.

The meet leader failed to find Jack Scout cove despite scouring the coast. Some folks did though and enjoyed another fine evening. The following week another fine evening allowed us to climb at Witches. Another good turn out saw Mark Harding out again. As the nights began to draw in crags nearer home were visited. Denham

proved popular with a good turn out. Flick of the wrist E2 proved stiff for the grade but a very fine route indeed. More beer at the Cavendish Arms in Brindle. The last climbing meet of the summer was supposed to take place at Longridge, however the action took place at Cardwell up the road. Another fine evening brought folks out in their droves and a party atmosphere ensued with Barbecues burning, kind of saying goodbye to the summer.

See you next year at Houghton!

**Martin Dale**

### **Obscure crags**

Sorry, the weather was too good to go obscure. Saturday was very hot. Most folks visited Dow whilst the meet leader went slightly obscure taking in the Band on the way to Bowfell.

A crag usually associated with the classic Bowfell Buttress it also is home to some very good E2 / E3 routes up the white wall to the right of the Buttress. Melissa and myself did one of these the absolutely classic three star Air on a Bow String E3. This lands you nearly at the summit. From here we abbed to attempt Riboletto E4. This is also stunning if a little dirty, as a sheep had been living on a small triangle of grass just below the top before reversing the route to the screens below. This route was the hardest thing Melissa had done in her two years in the UK. She was very glad that we didn't have time for any more.

We had to rush on down for her farewell Barbecue. Aussie's should be good at Barbie's and Melissa was no exception. After a great pile of tucker we retired to the Shires for some ice cold Four X or was it Fosters?

Sunday was another beautiful day and another obscure crag was visited. – Pavey Ark. Melissa wanted a pleasant day so we did a couple of E1's. It was good to see the old Preston chaps out on the crag, Frank Pearson, Harry Salisbury and also the big ugly Mick Lovatt working Impact Day.

We were supposed to have a swim in the tarn but it was too cold

**Martin Dale**

## FMC FELL RACE 2000

A very good field of 15 runners turned out for this year's race. The winner of the handicap race was Mike Tolley who finished in a personal best of 50.54 just ahead of Dave Earle and Martin Dale. Chris Thistlethwaite won the scratch race for the fifth successive time, he was slightly slower this year at 33.37 but ground conditions were not conducive to fast times. First lady on handicap was Joanna Goorney who ran 49.21 on her first attempt at the race, despite slipping and injuring her knee near the top of Cat Bells. Fastest lady was the unfeasibly fit Clare Kenny who was second overall in the scratch race in 37.41. The race organiser was able to avoid running having succumbed to a serious sports injury, (Golf ball damage to left ankle) -no really, it did hurt a lot! Les ward turned up 5 minutes before he was due to start, got changed into his running kit at a frantic pace and finished tying his laces 5 seconds before setting off. (Not the best race preparation Les!) Kevin Stephens had a bright idea and used the race to break in a new pair of plastic winter boots.

We enjoyed a superb curry on Saturday night prepared by Andy and Christine and consequently couldn't drink much at the Swinside afterwards, good job we had plenty on Friday night then.

Congratulations to all competitors hope to see you again for next years race.

For those who fancy having a go next year and want to get some training in, the race route is outlined below. It's generally best if you don't train when the handicapper is about!

### Fell race route

Starting from the hut go up the road to Skelgill farm then take the rising traverse track North East to join the main path up Cat Bells. The ridge is followed south to the summit of Cat Bells and on to Hause Gate. Descend West for a couple of hundred metres then North on a descending traverse track to join the wide path above the fields. This leads back to Skelgill farm where the road is followed back to the hut. The total distance is about 6k with a climb of around 345m.

Position		Time	Scratch position
1	Mike Tolley	50.54	5
2	Dave Earle	54.10	9
3	Martin Dale	51.23	6
4	Chris Thistlethwaite	33.37	1
5	Joanna Goorney	49.21	4
6	Clare Kenny	37.41	2
7	Vivienne Broughton	51.41	7
8	Les Ward	52.00	8
9	John Denmark	47.32	3
10	Christine Barbier	62.35	11
11	Jenny Tolley	73.24	12=
12	Mike Penn	59.43	10
13	Kevin Stephens	75.45	15
14	Sue Denmark	73.24	12=
15	Karen Bock	73.24	12=

Mark (Bad leg) Broughton