

Fylde Mountaineering Club

Founded in 1950

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2003



Although from a high altitude, the view from the summit of the Fylde is a beautiful one and a sight to behold. The Fylde is a beautiful area and a sight to behold. The Fylde is a beautiful area and a sight to behold.

IN THIS ISSUE

- A New Bell for the club
- Gerry Senior
- COGNE 2003-Martin Bennett
- Those Old AGM Poetry Blues -Mike Penn
- The Willins Young Valley Circuit -Jenny and Mike Tolley
- Climbing in Kalymnos - Easter 2003-Dave Wood
- Not The Arran or Mull Trip -John Denmark
- Multi-Andy Dunhill
- Hut to hut-Clive Bell
- Intro Meet-Clive Bell
- Pembroke May Day meet -Martin Dale
- There's a World Going on Underground-Simon Fenna
- Chester Swap Llanberis x 2 -Martin Dale
- A New Route!!-Martin Dale
- Yorkshire Dales Camping Meet updated information

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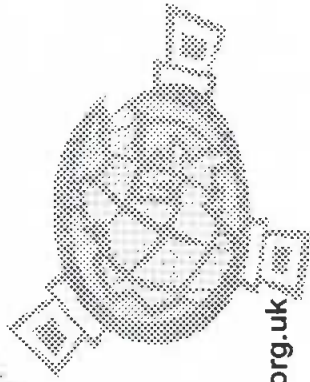
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Editors Bit

Here we go again with the second newsletter of 2003. I thought it was going to be a bit sparse and wondered if it was worth the effort. I even penned a bit myself about my trip to Scotland as the Mull trip wasn't happening and I couldn't get to Arran. IDIOT!! There are loads of goodies to keep you reading well into the night, EVEN one about the Mull trip which should be renamed the Phoenix as it seems to have risen from the ashes of Andy and Christine's waste bin!

Mike and Jennies' account of some of their jaunts in New Zealand get pride of place, not because it's the best but because poor Jen thought she had emailed it too me from down under but it got lost in the ether and she has had to re-type it.

Mike Penn has sent in a amusing ditty about the AGM. I've already apologised to Mike for omitting it from the last newsletter and it almost got in before the NZ trip.

Read through and enjoy the accounts. The ones I went on (or tried to) were top fun.

Our Chairman has been at it again - no, not that, he's been blazing new routes, this time in Langdale. What a man!

CLUB SYLLABUS

John Wiseman writes:

This year it was a rush to get the Syllabus compiled and out to members and

we (the committee) were conscious that we were filling gaps at the last minute. For next year we would like to plan out these meets taking place away from our own huts in early autumn. We can then add in the meets taking place in our huts later.

If you have any suggestion for meets, at home or away, or would like to lead one, let Mike, the secretary know. We could do with some new blood and ideas. We would also like to know what the membership want.

At the moment most meets are led by committee members, largely because they are at the meeting in January or February deciding the syllabus and time is tight. By planning ahead we will have more time, so come on, if any member would like to run a meet (just one a year will do—no big deal) that would be great. Let the secretary know.

The next syllabus runs from 1st May 2004 to the end of April 2005.

Let us know what YOU want, float your ideas, get thinking!

NEXT NEWSLETTER

I would like to get the next newsletter out by the 27th of September. I shall be cycling across the Alps until the 20th, so could I have all contributions by that latter date.

There is a lively discussion going on in the committee regarding club membership policy and development. Why not write to the editor if you have any views on the subject, or not as the case may be?

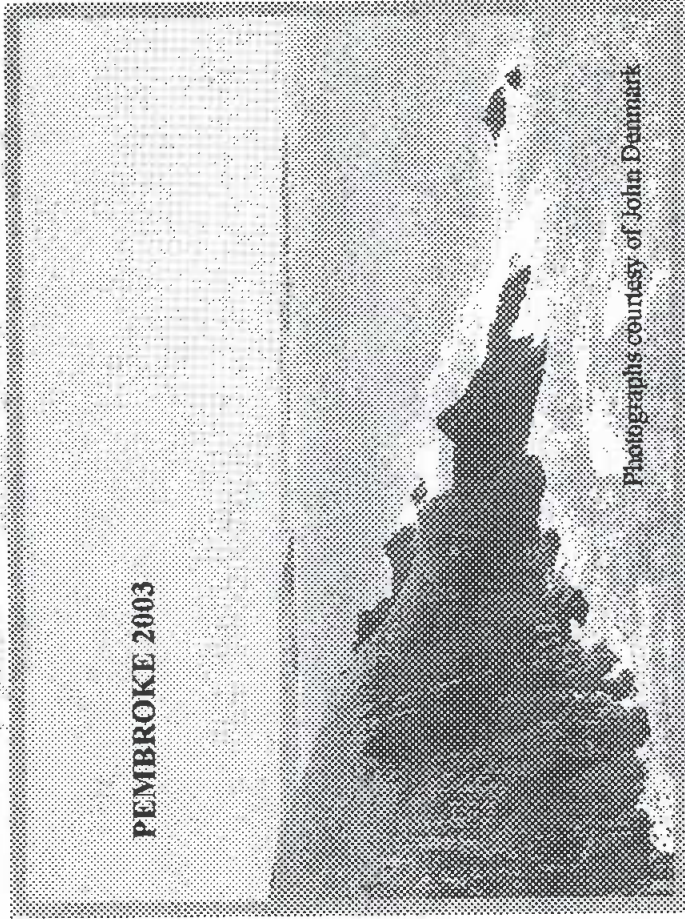
A £100 donation from the Club to the Ambleside and Langdale Mountain Rescue Service in memory of Gerry was approved by the committee at the meeting on the 29th April 2003

a bit late in starting and our boots didn't hit the trail until midday. The car park at Incheril was pretty full so we expected to see some other walkers on the hill. In fact there were quite a few but we had passed all of them by the time we had our butties by the second of the little lochans on the west ridge. The views from the top, especially over the wilderness of Torriddon, T and F don't hang around so it was off to the east along the ridge to Sgurr an Tuill Bhain and then steeply down to rejoin the path near Meall Each. We got back just before the

John Denmark

rain came in down Loch Marce and the car park was still full. 5 hrs 47 minute was the time and the guide book said 6-9 hours. Total ascent was 1246 metres and it makes for a good brisk walk on a fine day, the total distance being about 12 miles or so. Nice timing for a pint in the rather grand hotel at Achnasheen and a meal and pint in the Priory Hotel in Beauly.

FEMBROKE 2003



Photographs courtesy of John Denmark

YORKSHIRE DALES CAMPING MEET

Clive Bell has firmed-up the details for the camping meet in the Yorkshire Dales:

The meet will be at Malham, GR SD 899 633 on the weekend of 12/13 July.

Two pubs to go at, so it shouldn't be difficult to meet up. Clive suggests The Buck on the Friday night.

A new route!!

On Saturday 31st of May, myself accompanied by Mr David Wood pioneered a new route on Shelter Crags, Crinkle Crags, Great Langdale. I'd spotted this line last year when I visited the crag for the first time with Martin Bennett, so it had been playing on my mind for a while. The route climbs the obvious parallel cracks in the bulging wall between "Pleasure Zone" and "Island of Dreams"

"Gimme Shelter" 46metres E3 6a **

1. Start up either "Pleasure Zone" or "Island of Dreams". The latter probably gives a better start.

From the sloping ledge in the middle of the wall follow "Pleasure Zone" to the roof, step right then make committing and precarious moves back left on the lip of the roof to reach a finger jug (good wire). More taxing moves lead to a good spike and a rest.

Continue slightly rightwards up the scoop above to the top. Delay on the fixed thread in the corner. Absell off from here on-

2. Finish up pitch 2 of "Pleasure Zone"

The fierce moves directly over the roof were beyond me on the day. They involve a monster reach off a finger jam for a three finger sloper. A dead-point move then leads to a pinch and finally the finger jug. The protection's good though!

In case you're wondering where the crag is in the guide, it lurks at the very back of the new Langdale guide. Nearly all the routes get stars and the place is good for the HVS/F1 climber.

Martin Dale

Not The Arran or Mull Trip

Spring Bank Holiday weekend is always the weekend of the Scottish Orienteering Championships so I thought I'd enter. Then I could go for a week on Mull with Andy Dunhill or Arran with Drew Hird. Pear-shaped things began to happen, no-one wanted to go to Mull, I found out Drew was coming back from Arran on the Monday so it wasn't worth taking the van on the ferry at 50 notes for one night and Sue got colared for Jury service. I was almost on my own in Scotland with no plans. Some friends from Chorley came to the rescue. They had booked accommodation in some lodges near Beaulieu owned by a Swedish orienteering friend and had a spare bedroom.

So, off I went on the Sunday having blown my attempt at becoming Scottish Orienteering Champion and decided to take the scenic route to Beaulieu via Drumadrochit and Carnatech. It doesn't take long to get to Drumadrochit from Newtonmore (via Tesco's in Aviemore for some supplies) and I'd left a wet A9 for summertime in the Great Glen. Just the job for a nice cup of coffee and a chat with old friends, so I called in on ex-FMC stalwarts John and Diane Sealy. They're both in fine form surrounded by lots of land and lots of chickens. They send their regards to anyone who wants regards sending to.

Now, I know you are all thinking that this will be a detailed account of my failure at the orienteering event and my exploits on a bicycle in the highlands. Wrong, although I did have two bikes with me and my host, Tim, helped me explore the Black Isle one day. The main reason for Tim and Frances' visit to Scotland was Munro bagging and I tagged along with them on a new one to me, Slioch by Loch Maree.

The weather forecast was good but we were

Gerry L Senior

Following the sad news that Gerry had passed away, an invitation in the "Gazette" asked all who had known him to attend "A celebration of his life at Stoney Stratford." The response was immense.

A packed congregation, including many from the FMC, took part in a unique occasion. Swing-time music, ballads and tunes which were dear to Gerry and Barbara were interspersed with memories from family friends and neighbours from Blackpool and Stoney. A truly emotional outpouring of affection, respect and affection for a life of activity and effort.

I first met Gerry through a mutual interest in cycling some fifty years ago when he was an active member of Blackpool Road Club. An interest in the Lake District was forged in those early days on day trips to Windermere and beyond.

His bike was to be regularly seen outside the Donna Rose School of Dancing, where his ballroom skills earned him a Gold medal and the meeting with Barbara which led to their marriage and eventually David and Jane.

Gerry was "called up" in 1958 to undertake National Service, and a two year spell in the Army which involved a great amount of time spent in armoured vehicles whilst posted to Hong Kong. On his return to England the requirements of a growing family and a strong desire to develop his skills led to his taking a course in building design. Income was supplemented by taxi driving and a move to Coburn's, the architects, where he was soon recognised as a reliable and valuable member of the firm.

Frequent sorties to the crags and mountains of the Lakes, Scotland and the continent with family and friends developed into a life-long attraction to the outdoors. A small

group from the club showed an interest in kayaking and with an abundance of water around we were soon into the epics which developed. An extremely complicated rescue turned from drama into farce when we found that it would be quicker to walk ashore in the shallow water!

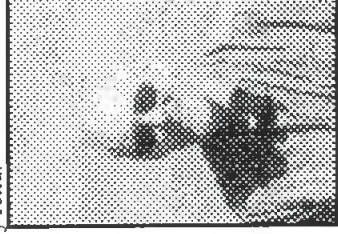
His support for early visits to Glencoe, the C1C hut, Corris and Cluanie with Barbara, and his efforts on working weekends at the huts will be remembered by all those who took part. The club has benefited greatly from his unstinting work.

Gerry recently fulfilled a long-time ambition when he successfully completed a Grand Tour of Scotland by motorbike. Sadly he was shortly to be diagnosed with a tumour on the spine which needed the strong treatment which so easily saps ones strength. Stoically, Gerry suffered without complaint and, in spite of attentive nursing by Barbara, the doctors and the hospital, succumbed and left us all the richer for having known him.

I express the Club's profound sadness at his passing; all those who knew him will extend their thoughts and wishes to Barbara, Jane, David and Peter.

Gerry's ashes and a floral tribute were placed at Slaters' Bridge, a tranquil spot of which Gerry was very fond.

P H Roscoe



THE WILKINS YOUNG VALLEY CIRCUIT

New Zealand has a list of walks under the heading "great walks"- 2 in North Island and 7 in South Island which includes The Milford Track which most people have heard of. Andy Dunhill, Christine Barbier and Mark Planner (who was associated with the FMC a couple of decades ago and now lives in NZ) and Mike and I met up at a climbing area in South Island and spent the next 8 days together. Mark suggested a three day trek which was not under the Great Walks list but turned out to be exceedingly great. It was based in the Wanaka region and organised from the tiny settlement of Makarora. It would go over the Gillespie pass via the Sibiria and Young rivers. The first river, The Wilkin, was too deep to wade and had no bridges, this problem would be solved by flying into the Sibiria valley in a fixed wing Cessna plane. This had a maximum load of three passengers so it made two trips and landed on a strip of "gravelly" grass. This was also to be a real back packing trip as there were rumours of bed bugs in the huts and suddenly tenting seemed a good idea. We then headed up river and after several river crossings (very wet boots) we pitched the tent and headed up to Crispible Lake, an added extra which is highly recommended. This was opposite to the direction we were going and involved a steep path up through Beech trees which eventually arrived at a frozen moraine lake with a spectacular backdrop of mountains and numerous noisy avalanches. The evening was mainly spent escaping the pesky sand flies.

"campsite" up the Gillespie stream and then up the Gillespie Pass passing through the bush line and up snow to reach the ridge. It was steep and 1000m of ascent which meant hard work. Over the col and steeply down into the Young Valley. During this section Mt Awful was on our left-it is a Matterhorn look-alike and far from awful out of sight we were informed was Mt Dreadful. Who names these hills! We camped on a "gravelly" river bank about an hour below the Young Hut, ate our quick cook meal and sat around a fire we made to keep the sand flies at bay.

The day after we followed the Young river for 20k to Courtney Flat where there was a radio telephone and Mark organised for a jet boat to come and take us across the Wilkins river which was still too deep to wade. The jet boat has a 3 inch draft and can spin on the spot, a "Hamilton" turn. The driver indulged in 4 or 5 of these without warning-lots of water spray and tumbling rucksacks-really good fun and appreciated after 3 days of hard work, no washes and multiple layers of sand fly repellent. Finally-hot showers with ecstatic noises, coffee, food and we left to go our separate ways. Thanks Mark for an exceptional few days.

We went off to Queenstown for New Year and when we went to climb in The Remarkable as a few days later we spotted Andy and Christine's names in the intentions book who had done the route 2 days earlier!

MIKE & JENNIE TOLLEY

The following day we set off from our

Pembroke Mayday meet

Come Friday afternoon the meet leader was in danger of missing this meet as he had not secured a lift, most folks being the retired types who had already gone down early at their leisure. I was saved at the bell by the Tolleys, who agreed to come back on Monday night instead of their intended Tuesday. I am eternally grateful.

The throng assembled in the New Inn, St Florence. The Denmark, the Wisemans, the Stocktons, the Tolleys and Melissa and myself. Nick Harrison and Arthur had decided to get an early night as the forecast for Saturday was not good. They were right. Most folks walked from Stack Rocks to Stackpole along the coast in the rain. Nick and Arthur tried in vain to find dry rock. Melissa and I went castle storming and then shopping in Tenby.

Sunday was better, at least it wasn't raining. Mick and Jenny tried Flimston Bay-however there was a heavy sea running and it

was impossible to get to the bottom of anything. They ended up at Saddle Head with Nick and Arthur. We went to St.Govans where we found Ted Rogers and his RAF mates. They had found the only dry rock in Pembroke (according to Ted) so we joined them. The heavy swell was like climbing in a fight rain. We had to abandon one HVS as I couldn't even hang on to jugs they were that greasy. We did manage to do a few routes despite the conditions. The emptiness of the St. Govans Inn told the story. Most folks had stayed at home.

Monday proved to be the best day, however a lot of stuff was still a tad damp. We did a couple of routes at a very quiet Stennis Head before heading home. So, not a classic Pembroke meet but those who went had a good time, if only in the pub.

Martin Dale

Pembroke Mayday Meet 2

To add to Martin's reflections, those of us who suffer from vertigo and prefer horizontal routes and hate defying gravity got in three good walks along the Pembrokeshire coastal path. We continued our trek westward from Stackpole to Manorbier on the Sunday and on the Monday decided to walk round the peninsula from Broomhill Burrows. Wonderful weather and views, with an ice cream and tea at West Angle Bay

John Denmark

The following day we set off from our

which were very good, & an E1 that was excellent. The latter climb has an exciting approach along a narrow ledge with a steep drop below giving immediate exposure. It required good bridging technique with an entertaining off width chimney at the top (ask Dave Ward!). It's a good crag but a bit dirty mainly because it is north facing. Amazingly there were few midges but I am sure it will be a very bad place later in June - be warned.

The island of Iona is a major tourist attraction but, as ever, you only need to walk a few hundred yards to get away from the horde. We visited two crags. Tolkien crag is directly above a superb beach of broken shells. We did one VS in the wet which was ok. At the south end of the island are 2, more substantial, areas. We visited Raven crag which is impressively steep & not that easy to find. It was a bit damp so we did one VS which followed an impressive line. There are some very hard & steep climbs here. Iona is a good venue but the rock is not as solid as the other areas visited.

In addition to climbing we did some walking

Several members attended this mid winter meet to North Wales from far flung corners of the UK. Saturday saw most head for the coast, whilst myself, Melissa and Phil Lee headed up Snowdon in appalling conditions to test out new Gore-Tex gear. We must have been mad. We did reach the summit and to Phil's disgust the cafe was shut.

Sunday was better and we headed off up Carnedd Dafydd but soon found ourselves in

& mountain biking. The coastal walk from Carsaig to the Carsaig Arches is very good & the arches are impressive. If you go make sure you walk over the top of the first one to the second. There are various other coastal walks in the area which is well worth visiting. Christine & I walked up Ben More in the cloud on the last Saturday. It the highest mountain on Mull & the only island Munro outside Skye. At the same time Dave decided to do the route of a fell race from Craignure to Dhiseig where you walk up Ben More from but he got lost in the mist. In the end he did over half the route.

Ulva & Gometra are two smallish islands off the west coast of Mull. We cycled from east to west & back across both. The views are very good & it's a peaceful island with no roads.

We also visited the island of Staffa & Finlag's Cave which is obligatory & fascinating.

Andy Dunhill

Chester swap, Llanberis February.

The mist with our compasses out. Phil nearly had us lost but fortunately my rusty compass skills saved the day. Due to our typical FMC start (après lunch) we failed to finish our intended march but never the less had a good day. The Wisemans fared better on Moel Siabod and managed to stay out of the clouds all day.

Martin Dale

Chester Swap, Llanberis May.

No bugger went, not even I. The weather was that appalling.

Martin Dale



Those Old AGM Poetry Blues

I'm the last man left on the committee
Since the apathy season began
So I'm now the club chairman
And also the boot cleaning man.

I meet up with myself at Langdale
To discuss who should be barred
Then I've a working weekend at Stair
Which will be especially hard.

I've to submit my own docket
It requires my signature see
And I must authorize those expenses
Which are still outstanding to me.

On Monday I'm off to Manchester
to design a better BMC
Then I have to look in on home
To see if there's faxes for me.

When in London I'll visit the Palace
(Sports Award from the Queen)
Then its off to the sports field at Twick-
enham
'cos I'm also the club rugby 15.

I feel lonely in Wales and Scotland
And sadly I have no resource
To meet leaders, seconds or partners
Because I'm the only human resource

Of course I pay money to the BMC
With docket and reports in excess
Then I'll put their finances in order
(Be glad to be rid of that mess.)
I'm the last one left on the committee
We're a lean and mean outfit all right
And I'll resign 'en masse' tomorrow
(must remember to turn out the
light.....)

Mike Penn

THE ATTENDANCE AT THE
LAST AGM WAS VERY LOW.
NO WONDER MIKE HAD THE
BLUES.

YOUR CLUB NEEDS MORE
VOICES TO BE PRESENT AT
THE AGM

IT'S A GIRL!!

Chris Bell is now a
dad. Rachel gave
birth to a baby girl
at 5.15 pm on the
17th of June. The
contestant weighed
in at 8lb 3oz and
they have given her
the handle of "Isia
Grace"

I'm sure that I echo
the sentiments of
the club in convey-
ing our best wishes
to the proud parents
and their new
daughter.

COGNIE 2003

Keeping up what is rapidly becoming a regular, if unofficial, ice climbing meet at the end of January each year a trip to Cogne, near Aosta, was organised again this year. Whilst not qualifying for the title "international" the meet was certainly "inter-club". FMC members Bennett, Brookes, Emma and Wrigley were joined by Cec Rhodes, Bill Deakin and Spuz Spurril of the Rucksack Club and Robin Andrews of the Climbers Club, all through connections with Martin at various times in his climbing career.

In 2001 we had found ideal temperatures of below minus 10 degrees C but fairly lean conditions so some routes were not in nick due to warm conditions earlier in the season (ask Kevin - he was there the week before). In 2002 it was a similar story but without the low temperatures so some routes were in danger of melting away/falling down! Mind you in both those years we still climbed every day in conditions far better than most Scottish days offer! This year conditions could hardly have been better. Nearly all the routes in the guide book (and there are many) were climbable so we were spoiled for choice. All grades too, from II upwards.

Regarding grades there seems to be agreement that grades out here are harsh compared with what we are used to in Scotland. Having said that the walks are shorter (much shorter in most cases), the ice is more consistent, and the protection (from ice screws) and belays (usually bolts) are rock solid and afford the luxury of easy and safe retreat. Mostly - see later!

The teams for climbing seemed to fall naturally into three. Robin and I climbed together for three days completing two long grade III climbs on two of them. We fared not so well on the middle one when, on a glorious sunny day we picked a route on a South facing gully wall and arrived to find it

As the holiday draws to a close we push ourselves a little. Martin gets a 7B after a fashion, and Melissa finds the 6A+ Joy in the Garden to her liking. I overcome the boulder problem start of My Long Holiday (6C) which proves a fitting end to proceedings.

Sadly it's soon time to pack our bags and head for the ferry. A chance conversation with the Rock Fax boys leads us to think that our flight arrangements have been put back. We find this to be so and get an extended afternoon on the island.

We depart on the 7pm ferry and as we leave port the town of Pothia is surrounded by dramatic evening sunlight. Loud explosions are heard as the local lads practice their

throwing dynamite routine on the surrounding hills; a pale foretaste of what will follow on Easter Sunday. As we arrive an hour later on Kos island we can still hear their mischievous

All in all another brilliant trip. Despite some dodgy weather (which is what might be expected given the uncertainty of Easter in Europe) my guess is that most of us will be back.

David Wood

Isle of Mull Whit Week 2003

Despite the promise of empty crags in a wonderful setting only 3 of us braved the elements & the midges - Dave Ward, Christine & I. We rented a caravan in the village of Bunnessan on the south west peninsula of Mull which was central for some small crags developed in recent years.

The majority of rock on Mull is of no interest to climbers being loose & unstable which is clearly obvious driving around the island. There are some gems, however, which are well worth the visit. The first place we climbed at was a small cliff called Fidden, close to Fionnphort, which is a short but bogy walk. Unfortunately there was a ravens nest affecting the 2 main climbs so Christine & I just did a short VS which was ok.

Scoor is situated on the south coast above a superb sandy bay, faces west and is easily accessible. I did two climbs here in the sun, both VSs one with Christine & the other with Dave, which although short were on good quality schist which is reminiscent of the sandstone at Baggie Point. The main area is Scoor Slab and there are a few other sections in dif-

ferent parts of the bay. This is an excellent spot.

Dave & I then visited various crags whilst Christine went for a bike ride or a walk.

The Island of Erraid, also on the south coast & closer to Iona, is an excellent quality granite crag. It is a tidal island so a walk across the beach is followed by a trek over boggy moorland (we even took a compass bearing!). The lower tier of the crag is a south facing bowl accessed through a curious arch. We did 8 excellent climbs here ranging from VS to HVS. Then on the upper tier we did another 2 climbs - HVS & E.I. This was more open to the wind & so a bit colder. All of the climbs were good value for the grade.

Ardtun is a very different group of crags. These are on the north coast & face north. They are basalt & similar to but smaller than Kilt Rock on Skye. The cliffs are about 100 feet above the sea, easily accessible & have a fantastic view over to the Ardmearach Peninsula. We did 2 VSs,

Climbing in Kalymnos – Easter 2003

It is Easter and another big FMC outing. The advance party of Martin, Melissa, Phil, Tom, Hal and I head out second week of April for a fortnight. Mike, Jenny, Martin, Maggie, Steve, Mari Angeles, Andy and Chris are set to join us a week later.

Not all is plain sailing as we encounter delay and an enforced stay (fortunately at AirTours expense) in Kos. Also the weather is iffy, but it's good to be back on this dramatic and aromatic island.

We climb most days of the first week and the fingertips take a hammering on the sharp stuff. Martin is soon cruising 6Cs and Melissa and Hal both put in some good leads. I do unsuccessful battle with some overhanging tuffa stuff and vow to re-visit later.

We are not alone. The Rock Fax boys are out with their laptops and Aris Theopodolis (big Greek rock jock) is here with his school. Also are several Germans, French and Swiss.

We are now getting use to razzing around on our Vespa scooters. However, a trip to the main town, Pothia, usually results in being left in a plume of exhaust as the elderly or families fly past us with casual disregard.

Days on the crag are followed by nights at Maria's. Her cooking is superb and though we vow to visit the fish restaurant by the harbour, we can seldom tear ourselves away from her bean soup, big beans, slovakis and stifliados.

Days settle into a routine. FMC wake-up calls somewhere around 10.30 are followed by breakfast on the balcony on good days. Views across to Telendos, half a mile away and separated from the main island by an earthquake 1500 years ago, are compelling. The relaxed nature of island soon casts its

dark there would be only a pitch or so of difficult climbing left then they'd be on relatively easy ground for 300m or so to the ridge above the climb and a "walk off" descent. It seems the pitches just kept coming. And they were well beyond the equipped abseils so felt more and more committed to their plan. In the end they were forced to abandon it however and then the fun began! The descent must have been scary to say the least. The details are best left for a first hand description – maybe one of the boys will grace these pages with the full story?

On our last day Rob went skiing so I climbed with Glenn on a classic long grade IV called Lillaz Gully. A very long (for here) approach leads to many good ice pitches with snow fields between and a final pitch on ice, rock and tree routes which is the nearest thing to the British ice climbing experience. I've encountered in these parts. It had been snowing steadily for the last three pitches and now got worse, and continued all evening. Our descent was a very long 2000 feet or so down snow slopes followed by iced up paths through woodland. The ice was hidden under the fresh snow. If we fell once we did it a dozen times – the bruises lasted for weeks!

So that was it. Except for worrying whether we'd be able to drive out of the valley in the morning – over a foot of snow by now and still coming. Someone had the forethought to suggest putting the chains on the cars there and then in the comfort of the garage. That and the efficient ploughing regime they always have meant we had no problems and were at Liverpool airport by noon next day, and in my case back at work by 2.00pm.

So another good trip was had. Many routes were climbed. Some skiing both downhill and langlauf was had. Simon and Steve and Bill and Cec went on to grade V's. Spuz did the first real ice climbing he's done in a 30 year climbing career – the jury's out on whether he'll be back for more! But the rest

of us know we will. Same time, same place. Why don't you join us?

Martin Bennett

Footnote:

The exception that proves the rule regarding the Scottish climbing experience came to me and Mike Tolley about a month later. We went on Chris Bell's Kingussie meet and found ourselves on Creag Meagharidh by 11.00am on a beautiful Saturday. We'd heard tales from both Les Ward and Phil Lee of a grade 5 climb adorned by weird formations variously described as umbrellas and mushrooms. Intrigued, we had a look. And since it looked very intimidating decided to do "Diadem", the grade IV next to it!

It shared the same first, easy 300 feet. On reaching the place where the two routes part we couldn't resist the lure of the umbrellas and I set off up the at first straight-forward 1* pitch. To my surprise the ice was good, and thick enough to take ice screw runners. In half a rope length I'd passed an in situ rock peg and chosen instead a stance under the first umbrella which leaned out some 6 or 8 feet from 6 feet above me. The first two thirds of the climb was a sequence of these. They have to be traversed under and sneaked round at one side or the other (or in one case climbed through via a "window") on very steep but generally good, if sometimes thin, ice. In the conditions we found that the final pitch up a short wall at the top was the crux. No mushrooms here but technical difficulties on thin ice and the rock between the streaks.

By 3.00 pm we were on the top, relaxing in clear calm conditions eating our lunch and contemplating a long but leisurely descent, rather than the more usual hurried scramble in a blizzard in the dark. Who needs Italy? Well . . . We do – how often is it like this in Scotland?

By the way the route is "The Wand".

Hut To Hut And All Points West-June 03

Wow! 18 people turned up, sleepers overflowed into the car park and the cars overflowed into the rest of the world. Fortunately the rest of the world did not complain (including next door's vehicle there were ten cars and Chris's bike with a fish van parked at the top of the lane). After a moderate session in the Shirres we all retired to the cottage for the serious event of the night. The snoring competition, various names were suggested for the champion but the truth is we all contributed to the nocturne. Little Langdale - Big Snoring.

Seven pilgrims set out on the northward journey, in three teams. The A team of Chris This and Mike Penn setting off for the Crinkles, Bow Fell, Scafell Pike, Great Gable etc. Dave Walker and I, the B team, going via Jacks Rake and Watendlath. The C team (C for cakes) taking the ODG, Stake Pass, tea and cakes route comprised Angela and Alan Lovell and Jenny Tolley. The day started with cloud down on the tops and on our A team. Things brightened up later to become sunny and hot, to hot at times. We all arrived at Stair in various states of fatigue with Mike P. looking decidedly cream-cracked. I had to abandon Dave at Watendlath to make sure of my dinner at the Swinney (they stop serving at 8-45pm, Dave was cooking his own).

Christine B. travelled to Stair on her velocipede. Andy B. and Martin D. Went climbing and then spent the night at Stair. The Wisemans, Broughtons and Denmark, walked, biked and orienteered and then overnighted at Langdale. My hero, Mr Mike Tolley, ferried all the goods and chattels from hut to hut and back again, allowing me to do the walk.

have a good stock of kit which is very difficult to own individually. After each trip where we use FMC gear, I collect £1 from each person. Inevitably some kit gets worn out, so several of the frequent cavers will also be giving around £15 each as a one off gesture of goodwill for the extra facility we gain. All this money will go with future club support to replace some very tired ropes.

Finally, I think it is important to note that has been no messing about, shouting, swearing, laughing, playing tricks or getting cold. wet and muddy. And most certainly no beer has been consumed. I'll report immediately if any of that occurs.

Simon Fenna Le Chef de Speliology



Photo of Honourable Club Membership Secretary (posing) at the first round of the British Indoor Climbing Championships at the Welsh International Climbing Centre last February. She was fifth overall in the BICC.

There's a World Going on Underground

Here's an update on a very busy year in the FMC caving world. We've been doing lots both at weekends and weekday evenings - with a core bunch of Martin Bennett, Steve Wrigley, Glenn Brookes, Paul Reid, me, a little bit of Tolley (when he's not been off gallivanting) and guest appearances from many others - including that van Gulk man!

Things started off with the huge trip with the Dream Team - including Frank Pearson and Joe Giblin - finally getting down the awesome Grade 5 Pen Ghent Pot. A committing, exhausting 8 hour plus trip into serious country under Pep-y-Ghent. Probably most of us are pleased that we have done it and don't have to go down there again - especially that hideous 14 mile crawl in and out.

That trip concluded with the ritual handover of the FMC caving kit from Tolley to me - due to my proximity to caving country. Thanks from all of us to Mike for looking after it all for yonks, and to Jen for all that smelly muddy stuff under her bed for so long - and the caving gear too.

Here's a non-exhaustive list of the kind of places we've variously graced with our presence:

Sell Ghyll
Aygill Caverns (swimming across a black lake full of monsters)
Marble Steps
Juniper Gulf (whoa! - it's dark, scary and lonely down the bottom of there)
Flood Entrance
Illusion Pot
Flood / Henslers passages
Disappointment / a bit of the Far Country
Heron Pot (discovered by FMC in August 1742)

Jingling Pot (with Mr Bennett lunging into hidden holes before even going underground)
Rowtten Pot
Short Drop (with a remarkable rock bridge or 3 - and sodding cold too)

before he left Stair. Whilst we were all awake and worried, his nibs was having tea and sympathy from the farmer's wife at Brotherilkeld in darkest Eskdale. By 4am it was all over and we have persuaded the MRT that we were not just getting our money's worth from the donation of £100 the club made only weeks ago. Joking apart, we have all been there, disorientated in fog, fortunately it all turned out OK in the end. The MRT's efforts were impressive and certainly to be applauded.

Epic 3

Nothing compared with epic 2 but it took about 30 minutes to drive out of Little

Langdale on Monday morning with a monster traffic jam of lorries, buses, transit vans, 4x4s and cars - unbelievable.

Clive Bell

PS. I think I have a candidate for mug of the year. In fact I think he might volunteer for it!

PPS. Apparently the farmer's wife at Brotherilkeld has a 'visitors' book in which Dave's sojourn is now recorded.

Intro. Meet at Stair - 10&11 May

The meet was originally to be hosted by Les W. but as things turned out he could not be there, so I was given plenipotentiary powers (the only other big word I know is Incontinence but that didn't seem appropriate) I therefore became M.C. for the weekend. The meet was a great success with 17 punters making an appearance including 4 introductory members. John, Geoff and Tony making their first visit to Stair and Diane completing her fourth meet.

The weather was kind for the whole weekend, contrary to the forecast. Climbs were climbed, walks were walked, bikes were biked and beer sipped. The Swinney served all our thirsts 'till well after it should have done. This prompted our representative from across the pond to oblige that in the U.S. there are drinkers

with a mountain problem but we have mountaineers with a drink problem (who? us ???).

The contingent I wandered with walked from Buttermere over Red Pike, Haystacks, etc. looking forward to an ice cream from the van at Gatsgarth Cottage (M Ref. 195149) but he wasn't there and the café at Buttermere was closed thus we consoled ourselves with alcohol (who? us ???). On Sunday we walked Barf et al. and watched the Osprey family in their tree top abode.

Don't know what other folk got up to.

Clive Bell

FMC Lunch on the Pembroke Coastal Path

Where did I leave
the butties.
Mike'll go mad!

