

FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



SPRING 2006

www.fyldemc.org.uk

Notes From Ed.

Ok. I know I didn't put my hand up, it was wrapped around a pint glass, no one took a step backwards and left me floundering. So why on earth, on a Saturday evening, am I sitting at work, trying to write an editorial and listening to Richard Burton narrate War of the Worlds, while the local dance school, mill about on stage. Still it beats working for a living. Is it legally binding or morally right to accept a volunteer while they're under the influence, as I don't have any recollection of volunteering?

Ah well it looks like your stuck with me for a wee while so I will start by thanking John for his help in getting settled in and for passing on the mystic knowledge of a HP laser printer. He has left very big shoes to fill as editor for the past five years and there's little chance of that happening soon from these parts.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for everything I miss and my appalling spelling and grammar. I can see you all reaching for your red pens as I type but I will sulk if I get any sent back marked "see me".

I intend to knockout (sorry publish) four copies a year so the summer instalment should be rolling off the printer sometime in July but as I'm away with the Dolomite contingent for the middle chunk of the month it may well be towards the back end (or to be honest the beginning of August). The deadline for this is going to be the 10th July.

My thanks go out to all of you who sent in copy for this issue. I know that it is an age old rant but this is your news letter and without your news there's going to be a lot more ramblings from me and no one wants that.

Tony

Summer evening walks (the first few at least)

3rd May Wednesday **Hazel Hurst Fell**
546 455 Meet at 19:00 at Delph Lane
Quarry TBA Clive Bell 01772 635306

9th May Tuesday **Hurst Green**
684 382 Meet, 19:00 at Bayley Arms
Bayley Arms
John & Claire 01253 899282

30th May Tuesday **Fairhaven - Old Ribble Channel & North Blinker Light**
336 274 Meet at 18:45 in car park at Fairhaven Lake, St Annes end. Please bring wellies or suitable footwear as this walk ventures out across the sands in to the Ribble Estuary. Trawl Boat Inn Avril & Jon 01253 739116

Addresses & other information

If your reading this over someone's shoulder or it's a copy you've had to borrow then it can mean one of two things. One your not a member or are an ex-member in which case don't be a skin flint and contact Martin are venerable membership secretary who's contact details are on the back page or two, I haven't got your details in which case just let me know and I can put it right for the next issue.

If any contact details are wrong for those people lucky enough to get their own copy of this fine publication then please let me know.

Tony

Working Weekend Stair 25/26 February 2006

This was another real success. The weather was good & lots of work was done mainly outside. This enabled us to complete the jobs started over the last 18 months

Lots of frenzied activity on Saturday resulted in the following:

The new parking space was tidied up & a supporting wall made. It now needs to consolidate before it can be used.

The new galvanized steel fire exit steps, commissioned by Mike Penn, were put in place from the small dorm & a new step was built down from the large dorm

One of the fence posts was replaced next to the main entrance.

The boundary wall & fencing was made more secure in several places especially in the north east corner to keep the sheep out.

A fixed enclosure was made for the new Compost bin so please use it



Now then what are the words Ah. Yes " Hi HO"



The emersion heater hot water tank was enclosed in a sterling job by Chris Campbell, a man on a mission (Chris Bell should take note for any joinery jobs at Little Langdale)

Most of the door frames inside were re-painted

Carole Penn, Sue Denmark & Dave Earle did a fine job cleaning & painting most of the kitchen

We cooked a 4 course meal for everybody on Saturday which went down well

The main job still outstanding is to repair the damaged rendering under the new windows but this is a summer job. The outside walls will then need re-painting & the inside walls need a coat of emulsion so there is still work to do for those that missed this weekend

The flat roof is ok at the moment but will need replacing in the short/medium term as it has a limited life span. We need to start planning for a new roof now as it will be a major cost. This will give us the opportunity to put a pitched roof on which is far better, both functionally & aesthetically, & they have a greater life span. The roof area would be useable & would allow some reconfiguration downstairs. We could provide more & smaller sleeping areas allowing some privacy with snoring & non-snoring rooms!

Thanks to all those mentioned above & to: Mike Penn, Dave Ball, Kevin Ebrell, John Denmark, Geof Bellingham, Caroline Web, Phil Caley & Tom Knowles

Summer Evening Climbing Meets			
Date	Venue	Grid Ref	Apres Booza
Thurs May 4 th	Denham Quarry	592228	Top Lock, Heapey
Thurs May 11 th	Trowbarrow	481755	The Woods, Silverdale
Tues May 16 th	Anglezarke	619164	Dressers Arms, Wheelton
Wed May 24 th	Wilton	697135	Black Dog, Belmont

Boozy Bike Rides			
Date	Meeting place	Time	Ride Agenda
Wed June 14 th	Thatched House	6.30pm	Gt Eccleston/Carlford
Wed July 26 th	Thatched House	6.30pm	Over Wyre
Wed Aug 16 th	Thatched House	6.30pm	Wrea Green and be-

Contacts:- Darren Hartley 01253 811485 Climbing meets
Martin Dale 01253 772073 Boozy bike rides, climbing meets

ICE MEET 2006

This was the 6th year of the "traditional" (can a tradition be established in 6 years?) ice climbing meet to somewhere sure to have some. Ice, that is. For the 5th out of 6 trips we again chose the Italian Alps as the venue. For a change, and (we hoped) to better suit those who'd ski rather than climb, we went to Gressoney, a small ski resort with a link to a larger circuit, off the Val d'Aosta. Val di Gressoney nestles beneath the two Alpine giants of Lyskamm and Monte Rosa and it's the cold air descending from their glaciers that creates the conditions for good icefall climbing.

Flights were arranged as usual very cheaply, (1p each way!) this time via Milan, and the travel arrangements went smoothly but for a slight run in with a road works bollard! Due to the timing of the Liverpool flight it seemed likely we'd arrive too late for a celebratory drink – but we'd thought of that – we had an advance party in the shape of Andy Hird and Neil Fraser who flew from Scotland, got there in good time and occupied the bar to prevent it closing before our arrival. Getting there at 1.00am we set about trying to catch up with Andy and Neil in the beer stakes – no chance – they had a long head start and stayed the lead until close of play at 3.00 am!

Our accommodation was very comfortable and especially friendly for those who (by accident or design?) were sharing the double sofa beds to be found in each apartment. Nonetheless most were up and about on the first morning to discover the potential of the area. We stayed in La Trinite, the higher of two villages in the valley, and reckon it to be the better of the two as a climbing centre although St Jean may offer a little more choice of restaurants and bars. La Trinite had limitations in this respect though redeems itself through the very friendly and helpful people especially the ones we made friends with at our bar of choice, the proprietor Simon and chief cook and bottle washer GianFranco.

As well as the area and the people we found the climbing to be friendlier than Val di Cogne where 4 previous such trips had been based. There are at least half a dozen good ice falls of various lengths and grades which can be approached on foot from the apartments in minutes. The first route me, Robin and Alan did was less than 1 minute from a car park. The climbing as well as it's proximity seemed less serious and generally routes as well as approaches were shorter, descents were often easy and on foot, more time was spent in the sun, and the bar was generally retired to earlier in the day. In short, I can't recommend the place highly enough!

Routes done, for anyone fortunate enough to catch sight of the elusive guide book to the region, included Cascata di Alpenzu (III), Cascata a Y (IV), Cascata di Punta Jolande (IV), a variety of 3 pitch climbs of grade III apparently not in the guide, Bonne Annee (V), Big Ice Fall (IV+V). One of the

most popular, Jolande, can be seen from the bar where you can sit and have coffee whilst watching the progress of teams ahead and thus assess the right time to begin the 20 minute approach!

Various partnerships were adopted and one rarely climbed with the same team 2 days running. A notable exception to this was the team of Wrigley and Roberts. This was John's first experience of the Fylde Ice Trip so we used his naïveté to team him up with Wriggers thus relieving us of the tension associated with following the hardest routes the valley has to offer. To be fair to him John seemed to enjoy it all and never put a foot wrong. Sadly for him he did put a foot wrong whilst climbing in Cogne two weeks later and said foot, I understand, is still in plaster. Best wishes for a speedy recovery John.



(Continued on page 6)

The Musings of a Trainee Coffin Dodger

It was a very long time ago; to be a bit more precise it was the autumn of 1968. It was towards the end of a long hot summer spent mostly climbing with a friend called Mark. We were both superbly fit, and with the arrogance of youth, were climbing just about everything in sight.

One day in the Llanberis pass we decided to do a route called Black Wall. In the guidebook it was graded as Hard Very Severe, then the penultimate grade of rock climb in terms of difficulty. This may have sounded a tough proposition, but we had been climbing at this grade and above all summer, and we were confident that we could all but run up it. Events however proved otherwise. It should also be realised that this was in the days before sticky boots, friends and all the other cheating sticks employed by the modern rock climber.

We had taken with us a friend called Tom who was going to sit at the bottom and take photos. Mark and myself climbed at much the same standard and we used to alternate the lead each pitch. Since it was my turn to start, I lead up the first pitch. This was relatively easy and quite short, and in no time at all I was sat on top of it. Bringing Mark up was straightforward, and he then set of up the next pitch.

The route followed on up the chimney and then round a corner off to the left. Mark climbed to the top of the chimney and came to a halt. For the next twenty minutes it was up a bit, followed by down a bit. Eventually, out of breath and needing a rest he climbed back down to me. We changed over the lead and off I went.

At the top of the chimney I too came to a standstill. However by leaning round the corner at full stretch I could just get my fingers onto a small ledge. By dint of a certain amount of shuffling I managed to get to the point where I could see round the corner. The holds that my fingers were so tenaciously hanging onto were above a blank overhanging wall. Unfortunately, in getting myself into this position I had also ensured that I couldn't get back. Faced with the prospect of either chancing it and swinging wildly round the corner, or staying where I was until my strength ran out and I fell off, I went for the former.

It was only after I had swung round the corner that my problems really started. I was hanging off tiny finger holds on an overhanging wall, with nothing for my feet. The only solution was to get myself standing on the holds that my fingers were currently occupying. This as you can probably appreciate is easier to say than to do. If you don't believe me then try it sometime. What followed was a desperate struggle, which only ended when first I managed to get one foot alongside my hands, and then stood up in balance with both feet on the ledge. It seemed to have taken about five minutes, but it must have been less.

Whilst this pantomime was in progress two pairs of eyes had been watching my every move. Mark who was expecting me at any moment to fall off, and to pull him off the mountain as well had been frantically trying to improve his belays. Tom, the number three man with the camera was so convinced that I was about to die in front of his eyes, that he never took any photos!

Back on the rock face my problems were still continuing. I was stood up in balance, but I was going to fall a very long way if anything went wrong. Looking around me I saw a piton about twenty feet above me, and gently, very gently, just one careful move at a time, I inched my way up to it and clipped in. Feeling safe for the first time in quite a while, I just hung there and opened up the floodgates of relief. Above the piton there were only a few feet of hard moves, and then it was easy ground to the top. But try as I might, I couldn't make the next move. I was exhausted, my arms felt like lead, and my fingers wouldn't grip at all.

In the end I abandoned the equipment attached to the piton and Mark lowered me off. By leaving some more gear at the belay point, I then protected Mark back to the ground. If my memory serves me correct, we then 'bought' the gear back from Alan Harris the following weekend.

Back on terra firma we had another look at the guidebook, and there in the back we made a horrifying discovery. Under first ascent was the awesome name of Whillans D. The last time that I looked, Black Wall has been upgraded to E2.

And as for Mark and myself, well we left showing the due humility expected from those mere mortals who have rashly attempted to follow a master.

Michael Penn

(Continued from page 4)

Paul Reid was coaxed along on the trip against his better judgement – hadn't wielded an ice axe in earnest for nigh on twenty years he reckoned. All who teamed up with him agreed what he lacked in experience he made up for in enthusiasm and effort – Paul reckons if you have an ice axe with a seven inch pick then that's how far it should be buried in the ice before committing your weight to it!

The non ice climbing team, which was most days augmented by climbers having a rest day, consisted of Dale and Sissons and was to be slightly disappointed with the local conditions since lower than normal snow fall had meant the link to Champoluc was closed and that the ski-ing in Val di Gressoney was limited. A bit of driving however gave them good days in, for instance, Cervinia and Pila, only an hour or so away.



All in all, the biggest attendance yet at one of these meets (13 members and 3 guests) had a really good time in what seemed a non serious venture to a new place, another corner of the Alps explored. Even before arriving back in Blighty the talk was of next year's trip and where we would go. Suggestions so far include Cogne (again), La Grave/Briancon area or Chamonix. Any preferences? Let me know and we'll see if we can beat 16 attendees next year.

Those present : Brookes, Wrigley, Reid, Bennett, Andrews (g) Hird, Fraser (g) Fenna, Van Gulik (g) Sissons, Dale, Roberts, Hepburn, Gaston (g), Blackburn, Roberts. Gascoyne also ran! (out of time on what was to have been his last day – missed his flight and returned to the valley pending another try next day)

Footnote: Norway 2005

I have to apologise for not reporting last year on the January meet which was held in Rjukan in Norway. A bit historical now but for the record we had 12 members and 3 guests (Fenna, Wrigley, Brookes, Bennett, Peel, Gascoyne, Hepburn, Clifford, Stevens, Lee, Hird, Blackburn, Fraser (g), Van Gulik (g), Stout (g)) on the trip, augmented by the splinter group of Ali Welch and a couple of his mates and some pals of Kevin's from Manchester.

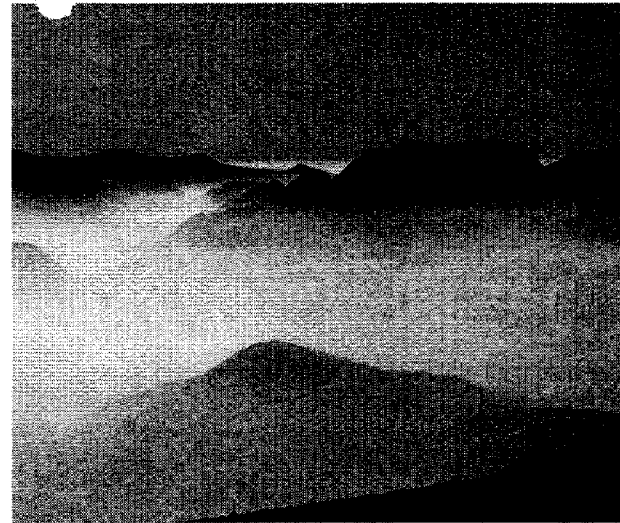
We found the climbing to be fine, the approaches short and the grades friendly compared to Italy, but the ambience of the area suffers in comparison with the Alps, being something of an industrial area. The twin terrors of the legendary prices and driving regulations tend to keep you out of the bars. This was made up for by our excellent choice of accommodation in large cabins in the woods which made for very convivial nights in with the sybaritic delights of wine and whisky brought from home for the purpose and excellent food planned and prepared every night by one Michael Van Gulik ably assisted by his cohort Steve Stout, the rest of us chipping in with the menial tasks and a lot of unsolicited advice.

The memorable bits? Climbing over rusting ironmongery in the scrapyards otherwise known as the route "Nye Vermorkfoss"(V), climbing above derelict factories in what Kevin described as a scene from industrial Russia on "Fabrikfossen"(II), driving around in ancient Ford Granadas from Rent-a-Wreck with poor brakes and no shock absorbers, Gulik's dinners, Peel's answer to the loss of the little prodger for his twee little electronic organiser thing – he used a spoon!, our first venture on to langlauf skis and the laughs and bruises gathered in the process, and "Trapfoss" (V) – the best route of the trip, made even more pleasant by the generosity of Glenn and Simon who drove up to collect me and Nick from the top.

The Big Beautiful Banger Blowout

Stair at the end of January was the venue for the 2nd Bangers & Mash meet. However, Friday night was Kevan E's retirement celebration bash, which meant that your three Chef de Bangers were at the BAE Warton social club imbibing. A bloody good do with an excellent band, beer and nosh. This meant that the aforementioned galley crew did not set off for Stair until Saturday morning. We broke our journey with a pleasant walk up Loughrigg before continuing to Newlands and the important job of the year.

The menu, thoughtfully prepared on a 'you can take it or leave it mate' basis consisted of a prawn cocktail starter, the prawns being topped, tailed and peeled and the sauce lovingly prepared over the previous weeks (I lie, they came in tubs, a Bogof from Morrisons). The main course being the bangers, spuds, beans and onions. To follow was a choice, or for some both, bramble and apple tart with cream or chocolate cake and cream from MAKRO, delicious. It was rather gratifying to note that all were too stuffed to manage the usual stampede to the pub. Only after half an hour or so did we manage to waddle off for attempted inebriation.



As seen on TV

I don't know what the others did the following day, Sunday. We (Kevan E, Geoff B, Dave E. and I) drove to Latrigg and followed the path up Skiddaw. The weather was warm and beautiful with snow covering the tops giving wonderful views across the fells. The return journey was down to the track at the back of Skiddaw, past Skiddaw House and on to the car at Latrigg. Back to Stair the Swiney and more beer.

As we had not arrived until Saturday we decided to stay for Monday (us retired fogies can do that). The morning was bright and sunny but then the mist rolled in. It looked as if it would lift so we planned a trip to Blencathra via Hall's Fell. The car was parked near the 'Sanatorium' and we walked the base of the hill to Hall's Fell

absorbing the almost summer morning feel to the mist around us. As we climbed, the mist receded with the expected magical views. As we approached the summit the world about us changed, the mist rolled back in beneath us. We were treated to a mystical world of deep purple mountains floating in a misty sea, the sun's golden reflection coming off Derwent Water through the mist. It was an almost religious moment! I was almost converted! It was so gob smackingly gob smacking, I have never seen anything so awe inspiring. We bathed in the sun and the beauty of it all until reluctantly we had to descend. It didn't stop there with more treats of sun and mist and trees on the way to the car park.

I gained fame but not fortune, the next evening when Dianne Oxberry showed one of my Photographs on Look North! The pictures here are only in black and white, you should see them in colour!

Clive

Mountain Biking Meet 18 & 19 March 2006 Little Langdale

Another couple of photos by Clive taken during the Sausage meat (meet)

The two pilgrims



Dave Earle & Kevan Ebberel on Skiddaw



Two Birds on a Fence

In Memoriam – Bob Travis

The club was sorry to hear of the sad death of Bob Travis after a long period of illness, which kept him off the hills for some time.

As well as visiting the huts, often with his son, he was an enthusiast for Wales and Scotland and was a regular attendee at the Vagabond and Chester huts and on several Scottish meets over the years, where he proved to be a strong walker. As an all round mountaineer he liked his beer but did occasionally require assistance climbing out of the odd passing ditch returning to the hut, especially that of the Chester MC.

Although he never became Prime Minister, he did have two things in common with Sir Edward Heath. He lived in Salisbury and was very musical, making his own bagpipes. I have a photo of him playing them outside Stair, fortunately a neighbour free zone!

The club sends its heartfelt sympathy to Betty, his wife, and the rest of his family and friends.

D A Earle.

What a fantastic weekend – more snow than the Lakes has seen for many years in what is proving to be the coldest March for a long time. To add to this the weather was excellent, most of us getting sun burnt.

Chris Thistlethwaite, Chris Campbell, Dave Ball & me had a unique bike ride on Saturday. We got a flavour of what was to come when we failed to ride the short track from the cottage to the ford due to ice & snow – it was going to be a hard day! The plan was to ride to Coniston via Tilberthwaite then over the Walna Scar Road to the Duddon valley & the return was left flexible depending on conditions.

The ride down the tracks to Tilberthwaite was a bit on & off then it was ok to Coniston. We followed the road past the Sun Inn which was clear of snow. It's so steep that we all pushed the bikes up & continued to the end of the tarmac from where it was snow covered all the way. A few idiots had driven up & one was struggling to turn his car round. We helped whilst his passengers stood at the side & watched!

The ride(?) from here to the top of the Walna Scar Road was really one big push & carry because the snow was 1 – 2 feet deep. It was glorious weather but there was a very strong wind for the last few hundred yards to the col. We passed two teams retreating, one in crampons, having failed to get over the col but we pressed on despite not having winter tyres. It was a bit icy but the main problem was the wind & we nearly got blown away. Dave sat on his bike at the top & sailed past us with no effort at all.

The descent was exciting to say the least. I've never skied downhill on a mountain bike before. We all fell off several times & went at our own pace depending on how brave we felt. It was snow most of the way to the road & then a short whiz down to the Newfield Inn for a drink.

We found out that road was open to Cockley Beck & then for at least part of the way up Wrynose so we decided to press on. We followed the road to Birks Bridge & then up into the forests below Harter Fell, again on snow. The initial idea was to follow a bridleway by the river but this was not practical so we ended up at the top of the forest at which point there was a mutiny. Chris T (him who keeps winning the fell race) moaned he was exhausted & his legs felt like jelly. Chris C offered to keep him company so they descended to the road.

Dave & I continued to the top of Hardknott pass carrying all the way. After a picnic we set off down the pass in more deep snow. Rather than ride we just sat on the saddle & kept the brakes on all the way down. The ride along Wrynose Bottom was very hard into a very strong & cold wind but the top of the Pass arrived. The descent was the same as Hardknott but with even more snow.

Meanwhile the mutineers bravely fought their way back over Wrynose (Chris T had to walk part of the flat bit as he was so exhausted) & on to the cottage.

What a fantastic day 21 & a half miles & 4,500 foot of ascent & descent according to Dave Ball's multi map programme

Christine went for a walk over Lingfell, round Blea Tarn & then did the old fell race route back to the cottage mostly in deep snow. She was joined by John & Sue Denmark for the last bit. John was testing his latest



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gadget – a heart rate monitor to make sure he was not doing too much. He survived fine & it was good to see him out again following an angina scare.

Tom Knowles arrived in the afternoon & went for a ride to Coniston then returned via Tarn Hows & a couple of pints. He managed to fall off his bike just before the cottage so he arrived swearing & cursing (disgraceful).

Martin arrived in the evening after a brave visit to the pub

The evening was spent in Lakeland's most miserable pub the Three Shires – enough said.

On Sunday Tom went for another bike ride, Chris Campbell was talking about a run but went home with a sore big toe & John & Sue set off for a push chair walk at Skelwith Bridge. The rest of us went up Wetherlam from Tilberthwaite, then onto Swirl How & descended down Great Carrs. The weather was again good with lots of snow but it became grey by the end of the day.

A stunning & highly memorable weekend.

Andy Dunhill



Lagangarbh Meet 11-12 March

The forecast for the weekend was poor with the synoptics looking something like a spiders web, despite this the meet was well attended with nine members three of which opted to endure more suffering by stopping up an extra two nights. The usual banter in the Kinghouse followed by a noggin back at the hut soon had us in the mood, plans for any climbing had been shelved and a big walk out was planned for Saturday. The weather on Saturday was kinder than forecasted and six of us set off in two cars for Ballachulish and South Ballachulish respectively. The walk started in Ballachulish and ascended the North East ridge of Sgorr Bhan a pleasant scramble especially under snow, the top was reached quickly from where a sweeping ridge connects to the main summit of Sgorr Dhearg. The weather of course by now was typically Scottish and we decided to edge our bets and descend the North ridge and pick up one of the forestry paths back to South Ballachulish. The other party headed up Kinlochleven and picked off one the tops round there. We all met up in the Clachaig for pre dinner drinks, after a



feed we returned for the usual Clachaig offerings of band and beer. The poor weather that was forecasted had now arrived and outside it was snowing hard. On Sunday we woke to a good covering of the white stuff and heavy drifting, the usual fun was had digging the cars out and laughing at Andy trying in vein to put his snow chains on, some of us parked on the main road! We sat it out in the hut drinking brews finding entertaining reading with a 'Bizarre' mag, (very strange people in there, why do folk put clothes pegs on their nipples) and waited for the snow patrol. The drive home was a long slog. Prey to the weather Gods for next years meet.

Da'ren Hartley.

Fair Head 23rd to 26th June 2006

The meets list is just out but I'm canvassing for this meet now for two reasons ;

- 1) We'll be flying and the flight prices will only get dearer the longer we delay booking.
- 2) The best place to stay is a hostel where I'm told there are only about 8 or 10 beds left for our weekend.

The Details are:

Trip to N Ireland to climb at the legendary Fair Head cliffs - if you climb between VS/HVS and say E3/E4 I'm told it's a contender for the best crag in the UK!

Flights are Blackpool to Belfast flying out at 18.30 Friday and back at 19.45 on Monday. Staying in a hostel which I believe is in a street full of pubs and cafes!

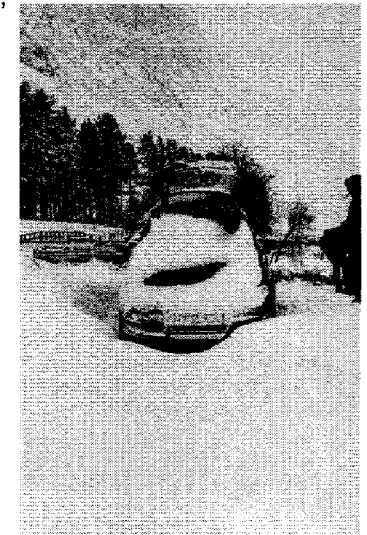
Likely costs are (at the moment) £40.00 flights inc all charges: £9.00 per night hostel (includes bed linen and as much tea or coffee as you can drink) Car hire might be say £20 - £25 per person. So about £90 to £100 plus food and drink.

Please reply as soon as possible if your interested so we can commit to the flights and hostel while they're (respectively) cheap and available.

Martin Bennet



A visit from a local



Time for serious shovel action

Yorkshire Grit meet

I awoke to my alarm at 9.30 with a terrible hangover. Too bloody early to be getting up to go bouldering on a winters day. Unfortunately, the sun was shining and I had two very keen youths to pick up, oh and one Mike Sissons.

The venue remained in doubt until Skipton was reached, when we plumped for Crookrise. The two young lads, Adam and James, had not read the script and turned up in pristine white trainers. The muddy walk fortunately for them was not too bad. It was uphill though, something I don't think they were ready for.

The crag was dry, clean and generally in great shape. The sun shone and everything was wonderful. We warmed up at End Slab then moved on round to the Sole area. Our numbers were swelled here by the presence of Bill Clarke, Elaine Scarles and James Smith, who were doing things with a rope! My chosen problem had a person asleep under it who turned out to be in a worse state than me! We moved on to the Hovis area, where we laid seige to Crease Direct, V3 6A. I was successful, but hey I've done it that many times I can do it in my sleep. The others weren't. Next door the other hungover boulderer had recovered sufficiently to giving The Fly a serious attempt. We heaved our battered bodies over to the Sadcocks wall to finish off. We were not very prolific here, so we headed down to the Elm Tree Inn in Embsay to be awesome in there instead.

Sunday, no hangover, we set off earlier for Brimham Rocks via a stop at the legendary Dick Turpins roadside cafe. At least he wears a mask! Another good day weatherwise saw us warm up at the Pommel area, near The Cubic Block. I couldn't quite do Pommel. Last time I did it, Mick Tolley was my trusty spotter. This time Mike Sissons did the job. Check out the picture on the website to see why you definitely need one for this leg/ankle breaking classic. The same team as the day before minus the rope team were in attendance. We were joined by Dave Ball and Sarah. Bouldering along with us was one Miles Gibson, the days spot, and also Andy Tilney from Kendal (I've got your hat Andy, if you read this!). We then moved round to the Cubic Block for a Martin Dale jamming masterclass on the brutal Minions Way. For the first time ever on this route/problem I taped up my hand, due mainly to the mess I made of it the day before on the Sadcocks wall. It certainly made a difference. Despite some excellent coaching, I was the only one who was successful. We ended up below Birch Tree Wall via Cleft Buttress and the Trackside (Kangeroo) boulder. Dave's ropes came out and I managed to get a harness on over my snowboard injuries to lead the classic VS. Everybody followed as the sun went down.

We retired to the Tempest Inn for some Copper Dragon. A top way to end a great weekend.

Martin Dale

Happy Birthday Little Langdale

This year marks the 50th anniversary of acquiring our hut in Little Langdale and to celebrate this auspicious event Alan Bell is organising a bash on Sunday 18th June. All the arrangements are yet to be finalised but it seems likely that the day will be based at the hut and that this being Fylde Mountaineering Club beer will be involved (but as it's a birthday jelly and ice cream may also be on the menu). At time of press Alan is sliding down hills on planks of wood so check your emails and the web site for more information in the near future.
Tony.

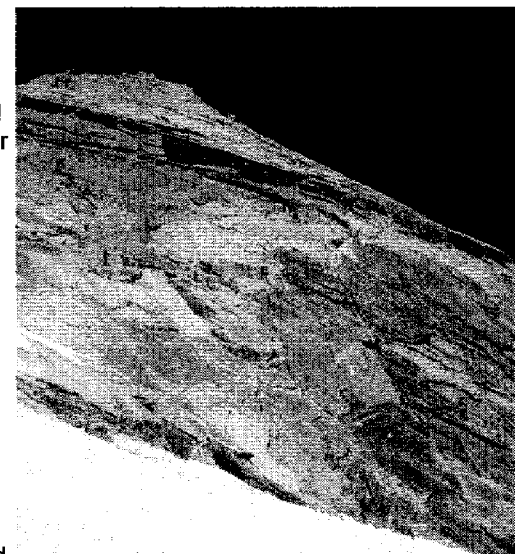
Cliffords 2005 Climbing Year

2005 started pretty well with the excellent ice climbing trip to Rjukan that Martin Bennett arranged and some terrific ice was climbed without the bloody dramas of last year in Cogne. A bright spark brought some walkie-talkies and many colourful exchanges were heard between knob one and knob two as you can well imagine! The accommodation was interesting, having turf for roofing material, the locals were friendly and the beer wasn't even outrageous. However one pub happily served a small beer on request, which was just as dear as a large glass, and this didn't nearly cause a small riot (as Martin was restrained). We went to another pub, which was not due to open for a while, and the owner was just leaving the premises. However he opened up especially for us, let us watch some climbing videos, sold us beer and happily agreed to his daughter doing some Norwegian folk dances for us! Several excellent easy access icefalls were climbed and the final day was spent langlauffing due to a rise in temperatures. The rest of the winter wasn't great due to knee surgery though Chris This and I managed a route on the Buchaille despite a foul forecast when everyone else went walking. The visibility was so bad that we missed our main target of Crowberry ridge and I Eastern Grooves instead, though we didn't know it at the time.

A decision to concentrate on e points again led to ten in total for the summer, the best one being for GimmerString or possibly Dedication on lower Falcon. Chris then went off on his pan European bike/climb tour but we met up again in September for our annual Chamonix week. We did the excellent Rebuffat route on the Eperon des Cosmiques, 200m HVS 5b if you do the crux free, but had to wallow around in a foot of fresh snow in rock shoes on the summit block to find the first abseil point. Two friendly English lads who we met while on route had abseiled further over and were quite close to the power lines from the Midi but we went down the line of the 7b route and ended up right beside our sacs. Though the abseil points did seem to be a bit close together and we could have missed a few the prospect of going down semi blind in expectation of a good bolt didn't appeal greatly. We were all set up to do the Midi South Face the following day but the altitude (3600 metres) caused serious nocturnal vomiting for me and a bad night for Chris too so we had to bale out of the Cosmiques hut and go down to Chamonix. We had recovered fully by mid afternoon so climbed at Vallorcine for the rest of the day, this being an excellent bolted crag about 20mins by car north of Argentere. The forecast was still good so we headed off to The Mirroir D'Argentine to to a 450 m E1 5b route called Remix, having had a brilliant time the previous year on the Directe. Clear blue skies fantastic climbing up slabs, corners walls and the odd overhang made for a fantastic route which we had to ourselves, possibly as a lot of natural protection was needed compared to routes nearby despite the 80 or so bolts on the route. We came down just as the sun was starting to set and were passed en route by a herd of agile chamois, not that we stopped to watch as we had an Alpine beer in mind down in Solalex. On our last day we walked up the track which eventually leads to Lac Blanc but stopped at les Cheserys for an excellent slab route called Voie Blanche which Chris led.

Our final bit of rock in 2005 was in Mid December on Gillercombe buttress in the Lakes, the character full Diff Grey Notts Face which has an excellent letterbox section. It was a cold but sunny day and being sheltered from the wind we weren't at all cold on the route though we did climbed with gloves. A great end to the year.

Adrian.



IN MEMORIAM

MIKE TOLLEY

It was with a sense of deep loss that club members learned that Mike had passed away in January, a few weeks after his 64th birthday. The Fylde has lost one of its most loyal and accomplished members. His presence and impact on the club over so many years meant it was no surprise that his funeral met with an enormous response. A congregation of hundreds, many of them club members, filled Preston crematorium, its lobby and much of the grounds and witnessed a uniquely moving and memorable ceremony, followed by an afternoon in the pub very much in keeping with club traditions which he was ever keen to foster. There was a further celebration of his life, and opportunity to say farewell in March when, at his own request, his ashes were taken to Upper Eskdale in the heart of his beloved Lake District and a wake took place at The Coledale Inn.

Mike was born in 1941 in Redditch, the younger son of Jack and Grace. The family moved to Blackpool very soon afterwards so Mike became a Lancastrian. He attended King Edwards School, leaving at 16 to take a post in a Blackpool architects office. At 17 he and a cousin began to visit the Lake District by n^o bike and with the aid of a washing line, and very little else by all accounts, they took up rock climbing.

Having survived those early experiences Mike "graduated" to the FMC where he developed his enthusiasm and skills in climbing as well as his love of the mountains through the early sixties in the company of numerous climbers of all abilities. One of the aspects of FMC life he most enjoyed was the opportunity to share climbing (and caving, walking, motor biking and drinking) experiences with a wide range of individuals from all walks of life, each of whom, Mike would say, brought something different to the way in which days on the hill would be enjoyed.

In 1965 he met and married Jenny who became not only his life partner but also a climbing partner. They enjoyed many mountain experiences together ranging from days in the Lakes or Derbyshire to big walks in Scotland and routes such as the Charnoz-Grepon Traverse and The Hornli Ridge of the Matterhorn in The Alps. Later their horizons widened and they climbed together throughout their 40 year marriage in places such as Corsica, Sardinia, Jordan, Greece, Spain, Dolomites and USA. Since their retirement they enjoyed longer trips in Europe and New Zealand.

In 1969/70 the family came along and Lisa and Danny were immediately assimilated into the outdoor lifestyle Mike and Jenny were committed to. In 1973 Mike decided on a career change, re-trained and became a lecturer at Preston College. He continued in that employment until his retirement in 2001, distinguishing himself by his commitment to his students which went far beyond the imparting of surveying skills, and meant that they were inevitably introduced to mountain activities through days and weeks away with Mike, in the mountains or underground. The college became a recruitment centre for the FMC and some of its sons, Mike's protégés, are still with us and following in his footsteps as officers of the club.

Mike always had time for others and would be willing to lend a hand or offer advice. Many of us have benefited from his assistance with building or alteration projects in our homes – you just had to mention some problem and soon Mike would be there with his rule and notepad and a solution would be found.

It was in the early seventies that Mike first became a committee member and remained so for thirty years, serving in every office, many of them more than once, and accepted the role of hut booking secretary for many years. In forty years many generations of climbers have joined the club, some for keeps, some not, and throughout that time Mike has provided continuity and become a favourite partner for succeeding generations of climbers who appreciated his reliability and soundness as a mountaineer who, particularly when seconding, had a way of giving his leader support, encouragement and strength.

He almost single-handedly kept alive an early club tradition by ensuring that caving meets stayed on the agenda, organising and leading meets as well as selecting and maintaining the club's inventory of equipment. As meet leader Mike would sympathetically choose underground itineraries to suit the abilities of the members, often compromising his own ambitions to accommodate inexperienced companions who he himself had encouraged along. The club has Mike to thank for the fact that it now has a thriving caving sub sector, the activities of which are enjoyed by a growing band.

In the nineties Mike and Jenny became grandparents and here was another outlet for Mike's irrepressible but understated enthusiasm for every aspect of life. Latterly his complement of "grandkids" as he called them was increased threefold – as was his pleasure in them.

It was this irrepressible quality which helped Mike bounce back so remarkably after three bouts of surgery following the diagnosis of cancer. On each occasion he amazed and delighted all who knew him by being back out walking or climbing within weeks. This positive approach was typical of the man, as was his stoical acceptance, in the end, of what had become inevitable. When I now think of Mike the memories are of the events we shared, yes; but also of the effortlessness and ease to be found in his companionship, whether up a hill, on a crag, underground or in the car driving long distances to enjoy them. He has left us far richer for having been his friends but poorer for his untimely loss, none more so than Grace, Jenny, Lisa and Danny and their families, to whom we extend our heartfelt condolences.

Martin Bennett, March 2006

Mick Tolley

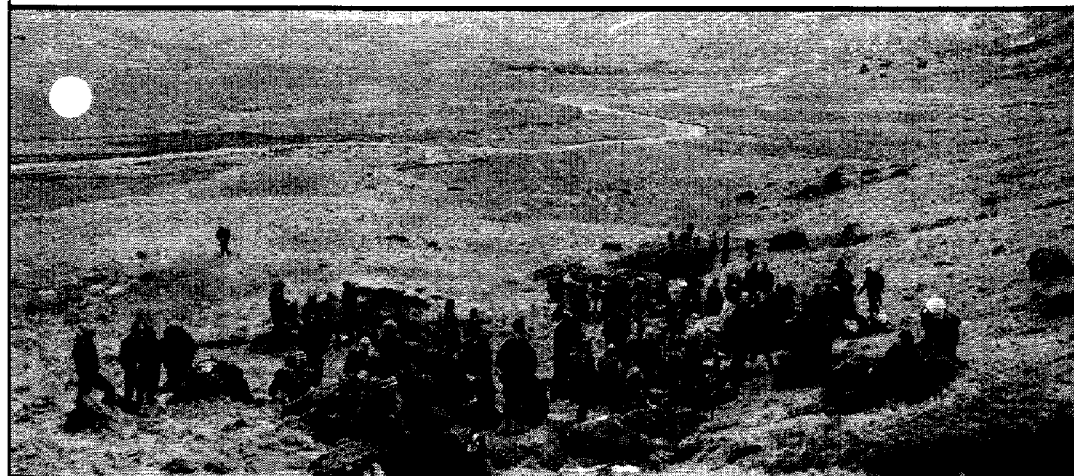
I have known Mick for over 25 years and think back to the first time he arrived to sleep on the floor of the student flat that I shared with Andy Dunhill. To me he will always be Mick in spite of Jenny's valiant attempts to get me and a number of others to call him Mike. It never seem to bother Mick but he probably figured that if that was the limit of the abuse directed at him he had got off light.

Living around the Peak I didn't see as much of Mick as the local Fylde lads but to me he was not just a friend he was an inspiration. Similarly challenged in the girth department I knew that if Tolley was involved in a project that with a fair wind I had a chance of surviving. So the first question for me when considering any trip, even before knowing what, when and where was: "Is Mick going?"

I am not going to over-eulogise with regard to Mick's infectious enthusiasm because I don't want to write anything here that I would not say to his face. On the other hand there plenty of things I would say to his face that I can't write here. But, one thought did strike me the other day, as I was with some friends at the climbing wall, was that we were all ex-climbers re-living past glories and who were now occasionally playing at climbing. This was in spite of the fact that one of my climbing friends is the president of the BMC.

I have never thought of Mick Tolley as an ex-climber.

Stuart Gascoyne



The gang gather in Upper Eskdale

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