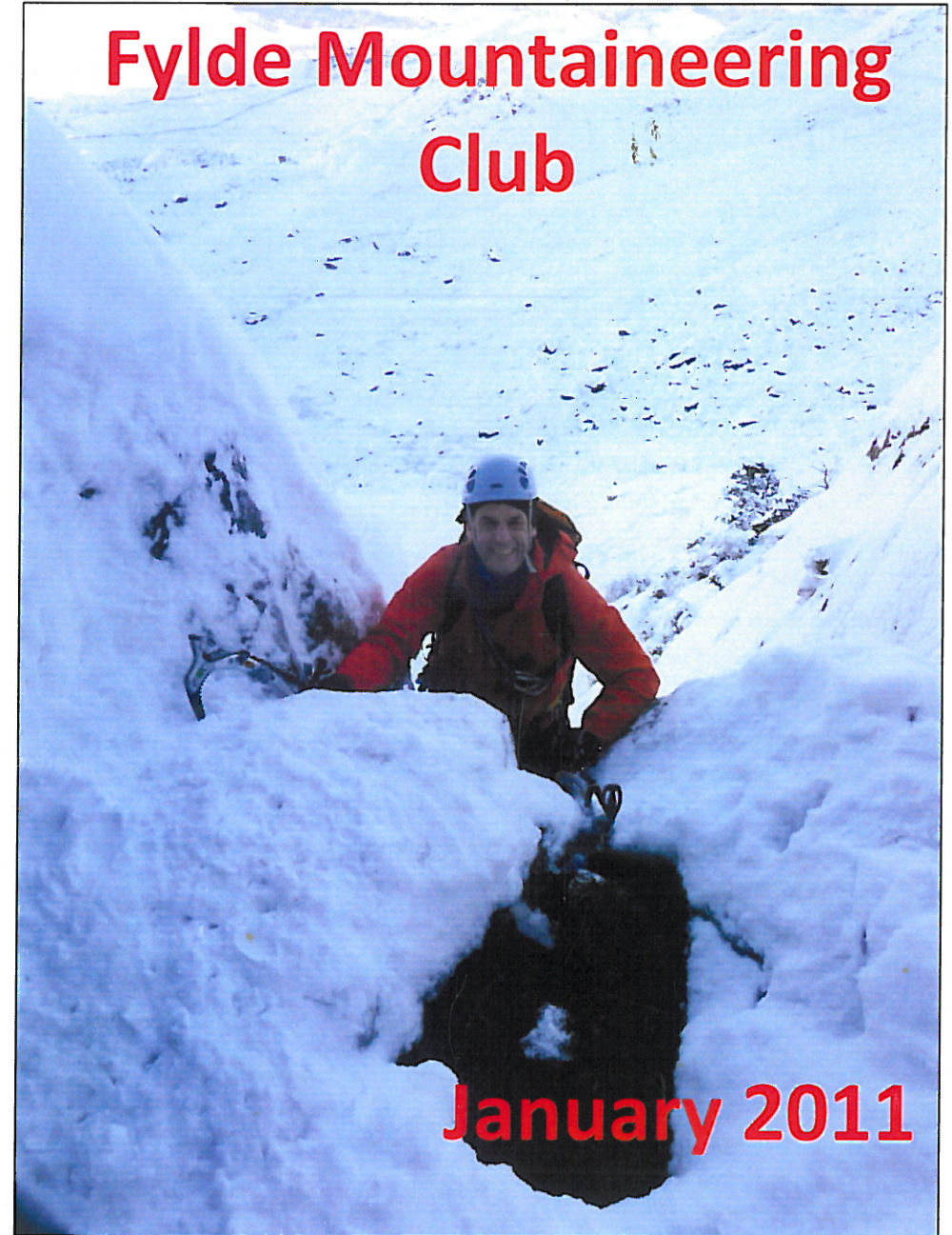


Jan 2011

Fylde Mountaineering Club



January 2011

Cover photo: Martin Bennett on Low Water Beck.

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Editorial

I just don't know where the last 6 months has gone, no sooner have I sent out one magazine then I am compiling the next one!

No 'Acts of God' to report this time, unless you count England winning the Ashes in Australia, but we do have another broad range of articles demonstrating the wide range of activities undertaken by this club – especially by one particularly keen new member.

I'm sure that we all thought that last winter was exceptional and wouldn't happen again for many years – but it did and we've had another spell of great conditions this winter, just look at the pictures in this edition for proof.

The Lush of the Year award has had a very early entry from a nameless Langdale Hut Custodian with his (or her) table dancing routine at the working weekend in January - I'm sure that the 'official' version of events will be hilarious.

Caroline

Just for Fun

Ever wondered how to get from Japan to America? Just open up Google Maps <http://maps.google.co.uk/> and then 'Get directions' from Japan to America...steps 27 and 38 may be a little challenging!

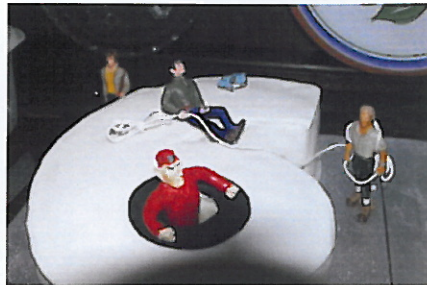
And for music lovers and frequent flyers there's <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YGc4zOqozo>

FMC 60th Anniversary and Annual Dinner

This year the FMC Annual Dinner coincided with the club's 60th anniversary and Jenny Tolley made a very stylish cake to celebrate the event. Several people observed that she had even managed to make the potholing figure look like Steve Wrigley! From all accounts the cake it tasted superb as well, with John Wiseman saving his piece to eat in the snow on the hill the next day.

Following the usual round of speeches Alan Bell entertained us all by recounting some stories from the early days of the club, the best after dinner speech we have had for ages.

Late in the evening a lone siren stalked the dance floor trying to lure in wandering souls. Some survived for one dance; others just managed a few words before slipping back to their doom



Corris, August 2010

I had organised this to be a four day weekend meet so those with some holiday or the retired could have extra time but workers could still come for the weekend. In fact, despite the climbing nearby and the mountain biking trails it was only the retired who came on the meet. The hut was as cosy as usual but the pub up the road, the Slaters Arms, had a new owner and landlord. The pub is now one of two owned by a small brewery and the landlord is a young man who has lived in the valley for many years, it's a great improvement and the beer is good. Though I was confused by what they did to Barrie's Guinness, it was draft but a can was involved.



On the Friday we had a low level walk as the cloud was low and damp, another reason to have a pub half way. Back at the car it had become a fine afternoon so we walked across the bridge to Barmouth, looked around and introduced Barrie to the joys of sitting by the sea eating fish and chips with seagulls eagerly waiting for leftovers.

Saturday dawned warm and sunny so a tour of Cadair Idris was the plan. From Minffordd we

went up to the lake, on the way Tom was at the back so we waited "Here he comes" said someone as round the corner came a buxom girl. "That's a good swap" said someone else.

Tom was oblivious to it all. A break and a snack at the lake, always an enchanting spot, then up the ridge to the south of the lake. Barrie went on autopilot, his GPS phone giving him a plot on the 1:25000 map that he had preloaded and in his earpieces he had Beethoven or was it Mozart, we could only hear faint bass notes. He had to be given a few mid course corrections as he thought we were going directly to the top, no some



extras had been planned. Enjoying the stunning scenery we went over to Cyfrwy and looked down on "the table" and Llyn y Gadair. As a viewpoint it looks along the line of the cliffs and made an obvious lunch spot. After lunch Mike, being mischievous, suggested that Barrie ring up June. "I don't know how to, I use my old phone to make phone calls and that's in the hut" The banter continued.



Our route then took us to the top then Mynydd Moel and down the newly upgraded path to the footpath we had come up on. Barrie's GPS phone failed on the way down as his battery and spare were exhausted – I sense a marketing opportunity – we have wind up torches that charge a battery, why not a wind up phone or wind up GPS? Tom was well pleased that he had been able to do the walk as he was still having knee problems after his accident on a ski trip, so pleased that he

suggested having a pint before we cooked our tea. Back to the hut and into the Slaters the pint

went down our throats without touching our sun drenched lips. Another one was suggested. After cooking we went back to the Slaters. A sense of decorum (and self preservation) prevents me naming who it was who was sitting with his back to the door and said "The landlord's mother would be quite attractive if she was not so fat "just as she came through the door carrying food. Or who said they could keep up with Tom pint for pint.

Sunday dawned very wet, Tom eventually left on his motor bike taking the scenic route to Snowdonia where he was joining relatives for a few days enjoying the steam trains of Wales. In the late morning the weather improved so Mike and I went to the coast and had good walk through the dunes and on the beach, on the way we had stopped at a nature reserve with an Osprey viewing hide. Then time to sample the food on offer at the Slaters.

Monday and the weather proved kind so another good walk, this time from Happy Valley, before packing up. Another enjoyable meet in this very varied part of Mid-Wales, we hope to visit again in 2011, why not come along?

John Wiseman

Northumberland Meet 25/26 Sept 2010

A total of 12 members came up for an excellent weekend. Sun & fine weather was ordered but it wasn't as good as last year. Overall it was fine but very windy & cooler than normal especially on Saturday. We stayed in the same Bunk House as the last couple of years at Annstead Farm which is midway between Seahouses & Beadnell right on the coast & walking distance to the nearest real ale pub, the Ship Inn, where we met on Friday evening.

It was all a bit autumnal on Saturday (late autumn) so most decided not to climb. The elder statesmen, Dave Earle & Tom Rainford, went & parked where they could do so for free somewhere outside Craster & had a great walk along the coast to Dunstanburgh Castle. This is a magnificent English Heritage ruin situated on an imposing headland best visited when there is a bit of weather around so the day was perfect.

The next inline elders (Geoff Brindle, Tom Knowles & Chris This.) accompanied by Caroline went shopping & a walk around the ramparts of Berwick on Tweed. They even visited a museum & paid to do so – what is the club coming to? They seemed to enjoy themselves.

Martin Dale & Nick Hepburn decided to brave the weather & went to Kyoel out of the Wood to climb. This was reasonably sheltered & they did 7 routes from V Diff to E1 – obviously a slow build up. Mind it's not always easy to tell the difference up here.

Dave & Hal had not visited Holy Island before so went for a walk there & surprisingly got off before the tide closed the Causeway. Knowing their normal tardiness on timing I was hoping for Mug of the Year offering but was sadly disappointed. Christine & I went for a walk from the Bunk House south along the coast to Low Newton by Sea & back. The sea was definitely choppy & provided some excellent sport for a few Kite Surfers.

The evening was mainly spent in the Ship Inn again with the delightful company of a boisterous group of well oiled ladies celebrating a 40th birthday – they could have been auditioning for Viz Comic. Some of the team seemed to fancy their chances but didn't get a look in.

Sunday was much better than expected, less windy & a few degrees warmer. Martin & Nick climbed again on Berry Hill & Corbys doing half a dozen good climbs. Dave & Tom headed for St Abbs but got as far as Berwick & decided to go for walk around the city walls. Tom took a wrong turn out of a museum so wandered aimlessly around for a couple of hours before meeting Dave by chance in a pub.

The rest of us had an excellent walk on the secluded Ross Sands. I was disappointed to see a 4 wheel drive vehicle on the beach which I hope was checking on the wild life. We had a very pleasant picnic in warm sun sat in the dunes looking across to Holy Island.

Chris & Geoff who normal get off home late morning on Sunday managed to stay until after the walk mid afternoon so must have enjoyed the day. Dave & Hal set off for a circuitous drive home. Dave was intent on routing out his past. In his youth he did the Pennine Way & was the 250th to do so he claims. He wanted to see if his signed name was still in the log book. Christine, Tom & I went for a very relaxing pot of tea & a cake in the Tea Rooms at Bamburgh – a must for cafe fans.

Those who of you who didn't come missed a great weekend in the centre of the known universe but you'll have the chance again next year as I have already booked the Bunk House at Cragside Rothbury for 25/26 June – bookings being taken now so hurry to avoid disappointment.

Andy Dunhill

How Green Was My Dongle

The Nightmare World of New Technology:

The last major holiday of 2010 was underway with myself and Barry Crook to spend October in the Massif Central and Languedoc. I was firmly told that my CDs were not required on voyage as Barry had an MP3 player, whatever that was, which carried dozens of CDs. Unfortunately

this worked only intermittently and had been recorded by a 24 year old with zero musical taste, thus reducing us to three CDs of violin sonatas by Itzhak Perlman for the month.

As we made our way south I was surprised to be told that as I did not smoke my car would not have a cigar lighter so the power lead for recharging the team mobile phone had been left in Clitheroe. The battery charger for the digital camera was in America and was expected back two weeks after our holiday finished. I had my own 3rd Div South mobile and recharger as back up but of course the cord did not fit our main communicator (*Ed: Reorganise these words into a well known phrase – Organise in a knees brewery up a couldn't*).

In the wrong lane at Montargis I asked for brief guidance back to the bypass. Unfortunately instead of common sense the Satnav was consulted and what I got was a metre by metre set of instructions through a giant housing estate of tower blocks before emerging on to something vaguely resembling a road. How the machine knew I had 4 inches of clearance through several chicanes and right angled bends formed by the close packed towers I will never know – modern technology is clearly astounding.

Struggling to cope with our missing leads, battery charger, specialist batteries, connectors, etc we scoured south west France. In Beziers we failed to find a statue of Simon De Montfort, whose population he massacred, but we did find a computer shop which gave us a little relief from our pain.

On the Toulouse bypass I casually asked which of the routes signed would be best for our intended destination. Before I realised what was happening I had been directed off the bypass into the town centre where we sat in a giant traffic jam alongside the canal giving me time, yet again, to bless modern navigational aids. To escape the nightmare the machine told us to turn right, without telling us that we first needed to move 5 lanes to the left to access a gantry over the canal – so it was human after all. Ignoring subsequent instructions we finally joined the traffic jam on the other side of the canal and shuffled slowly out of town.

It was at this point I began to wonder if our GPS was the same one we took to Madrid. However many times we told it we were on foot it bawled and screamed every time we walked up a one way street the wrong way. I pondered snatching it from Barry and throwing it in the canal – at least if it sank straight away we would know it was a witch, and if it sank slowly it would still not be missed.

Desperate for fuel due to the strikes we finally came across a garage dispensing fuel. It claimed to be automatic and multi lingual and we eagerly inserted our credit card, only to be told in perfect English to clear off. Queuing for petrol became the norm for the rest of the holiday.

But worse was yet to come. Our dongle was wiped out of cash and we could find no MacDonalds with their WiFi routers, or roosters, or even routers. Then suddenly a burst of light lit up both the glorious Rox Fixade castle and the brain of my companion. Like a demented general he ordered me hither and thither until we got a fix on a satellite. Through it we spoke

to a lady in Delhi who removed huge quantities of money from our banks to our dongle – we were again connected to the modern world.

Our dongle first spoke to several quality English papers to give us some idea of the strike, riot and fuel situation. It then sent a request to friends in England for clarification, which proved helpful, and to French friends who sent back the message “Things are becoming more difficult, Bon Chance”. This increased to 174 the number of times I had been let down by the French in my short life (*Ed: Once is a mistake, twice is careless, 174 times means it's time you went somewhere else*). I also questioned the value of my financial investment in the dongle.

But, as you can imagine by now, worse was to come. The next email received crashed my camper van like a Wagnerian storm (*Ed: I just remembered where I put that Egyptian idol from Sicily*). Having inscribed on tablets of stone “Martin Dale has the DIGITAL PROJECTOR” it seemed 3 days away from the first ‘slide’ show that it could not be found. Effigies of Dave Earle were being burnt around the Fylde to appease the Gods, but too little effect (*Ed: You mean I wasted all those voodoo dolls!!*). Cyberspace distress in the middle of my holiday was a new one on me.

Although we mostly used the camper van every four days we parked up on one of the few sites still open to sort our kit out. With leads left at home, specialist battery chargers left in America, sundry connectors, plugs, leads etc, none of which quite fitted anything else, various battery types to keep separate and organised, camping was not the usual relaxed affair.

Eventually some sort of system was organised with the campsite washroom turned in to a sort of Starship Enterprise with all of the sophisticated equipment winking and blinking their way through the night gobbling up the watts (or was it amps). I was particularly pleased to have remembered my continental adapter which really helped Uncle Barry as he rushed about supervising the replenishment of his magical machines.

Re-invigorated with amps but with a depleted dongle we once more had to seek out a MacDonalds to reconnect with the world news. There it was discovered that Dave Earle, unlike his neighbour George Davies, really was innocent – the projector had indeed been found where predicted, in the dark, dismal and gloomy innermost recesses of the Dale household. How such a place can exist in the same time and space continuum as the recently visited Lot valley defies belief!

We learnt that as I had already been burnt at the stake over the missing projector the Pope was to beatify me along with Cardinal Newmann once he realised Heathrow was not in the 3rd world. I have never had such excitement on holiday.

I was intrigued that the email machine timed out after half an hour. How on earth did Mr Penn and myself pass the time over coffee before digital? All I need now is a darkened room for a couple of days to recover some sort of sanity.

Dave Earle



HOW THE INTERNET BRINGS US TOGETHER

CartoonChurch.com

Working Weekend Stair 16/17 Oct 2010

The main job for the weekend was to repair the damage to the dry stone wall between the cottage & the wood. This seems to happen fairly regularly probably by sheep that get in off the road, having escaped from a field, then leave via our wall! Repairs were completed successfully so it looks good now. We took the remaining section of wire fencing out near the shed in the hope that in future the sheep will use it to get into the wood. We may need to "heft" them so they understand – anyone want to volunteer?

We then moved into gardening mode. It was a dry day so we mowed the grass around the cottage & on the new terraces built in the wooded area. The grass & verge areas generally along the outside of the road frontage were cut back also. All the bushes & trees were cut back where necessary & the stream was given a clear out. All in all the grounds are looking very tidy. The area where many groups have had fires was cleared, dug over & grass seed planted. We really should be discouraging those who stay in the cottage from having fires in the grounds. It poses a safety & insurance risk.

Inside the toilets & dorms were given a thorough clean. Some new mirrors were put up in the ladies. Geoff Brindle has kindly loaned the Club a couple of Picassos which have been put on the wall in the main room.

I provided a veggie meal on Saturday evening for everyone as usual. We had the perennial argument about hot or cold pie & hot or cold custard. Hot pie & cold custard won this time.

Thanks to those who helped: Chris Campbell, Chris Peed, Caroline Webb, Alan Blackburn, Mike Howe & Nick Hepburn (several hours later than he told us, he claimed it was a slow journey). Overall it was a very successful weekend & I'm already taking bookings for the next one, in fact I'm always willing to take bookings for working weekends.

Jobs for the future include: Finish fitting out the Porch. Explore the possibility of getting Cavity Wall Insulation. Build some outside seating in the angle created by the kitchen & Porch walls, yet more garden landscaping, Cover the letter box in the gents fire door as someone has removed the nice metal one we had. The electrical appliances need a 5 yearly safety inspection, Re-decorationplus lots more I have not thought of yet!

Andy

The Last All Day Walk of 2010

(Tuesday 23rd November)

As we arrived at Brinscall at about ten to ten, a considerable achievement as June and I had to organise ourselves and Cherry and Mary to be on time at the River Wyre, there were already several people getting boots on in the sunshine. Barrie was organising his mobile phone GPS with extra batteries. Alan arrived "I was not planning to come but when I got up to get Angela off to work it was such a nice day that I thought I would enjoy a walk". Poor Angela.

Joining us for the first time were John and Claire "It must be better than decorating" said John. Decorating is why they had taken time off work. It was nice to have them joining us as most of the regulars are retired, or as Clive calls us "old farts".

Thirteen of us set off uphill through the woods and everything went well until raucous laughter from the back caused us to stop. Claire had asked which pub we were going to for lunch and on hearing that the pub meal was after the walk she confessed that they had no food. They need not have worried as various people contributed a little something. We made the top of Great Hill to admire the views then set off for Anglezarke reservoir. Back down from the moors the woodland still had trees in autumn colours, a few green leaves left, shades of brown and a lot down on the floor, all in the sunshine.

After the next reservoir we headed up what my map calls "Lead Mines Clough" then up to the memorial to those who lost their lives in the wartime crash of a Wellington bomber. There were seats so we enjoyed a break – it did make a nice change to be able to relax, chat and sit in the sun. There have been walks where we have had to keep going to fight the wind and rain but not this one. Our route took us round the hillside and down via a path across fields, better than the shorter way along tarmac. All went well until we came to a small enclosure that the path went through. There was a large placid looking bull on its own in there. Was it bored so keeping still to entice us in so it could have someone to chase? Or was it really just wanting to munch grass? Who would go first? Before we could draw straws someone working in the farmyard came over and penned it up. He was giving some cows a haircut using a much larger version of the trimmer that some of our members use to keep their heads shaven. He did ask if any of us wanted a haircut but there were no takers.

Back at the River Goit we followed it back to White Coppice and arrived back at Brinscall as the sun was setting. Then to the Dressers Arms where we had a table reserved for us. A welcoming pint of beer or cup of tea while we scanned the menu, for most of us, but some had to get home. Clive looked wistful as he and Kev left us. The food was very good, a little different from many pub meals and it made for a convivial end to the day. We must go and eat there again.

Claire must have enjoyed it for she has volunteered to lead a walk in January and added the option of a pub meal at the end of the walk, should be good day out.

John Wiseman

Five Go To the Edges

22-24 Oct 2010 - Heathy Lea Hut Swap



Those who looked at the weather forecast and stayed at home made a mistake. Those trapped by illness or commitments missed out. OK, Saturday was damp, but not wet, not really wet. The small but plucky gang of 5 (Mary Aspin, Delphine & John Stockton and Angela & Alan Lovett) were made of sturdier stuff.

We all arrived OK on the Friday evening, surviving the nasty turn off the A619 above Baslow without mishap, the Preston/Fleetwood contingent arriving via the charms of Chatsworth (cracking Art, Gromit!). We found the hut a change from the luxuries of Stair and Little Langdale. The superior dorm

had a door, and both had en-suite, if you remembered the bucket. Surprisingly, the charms of a real fire (and brought in booze) kept us from the pub that evening.

Come the morning we set off in slight drizzle along the path under Chatsworth Edge, and over to Nelson's monument atop Birchen Edge.



We were surprised to see keen folk on the rock, despite a bit of moisture. Hard, these Derbyshire crews. To continue the monument theme we cut over to Wellington's monument (no, not shaped like a welly!).

To get there we had to be really brave and step past the fiercest cattle seen outside of a bullring – very wide and long, sharp horns. With our composure recovered, the walk across Baslow, Curbar and Froggatt Edges was splendid. We found ourselves unable to walk past the Grouse Inn without sampling its wares. Suitably refreshed, we cut over to White Edge and made our way back, stopping at the Robin Hood Inn to check the map. All in all, an excellent walk with fantastic views, and thankfully not marred by the weather.



Sunday brought clear skies, sunshine and the clank of climbing tackle as the local rock worshippers turned out en masse. After Saturday's organisation, the day was an exercise in serendipity. We parked at the car park by the Grouse, and walked down to the River Derwent and followed it along to Grindleford, whence we set off back up the hill. This took us through Bole Hill Quarry, from where the gritstone used to build the Howden and Derwent Dams was extracted around 1901. The winding engine foundations and tram slope make for interesting industrial archaeology. It's all overgrown with birch woods these days; beautiful in the autumn sunshine yet a tad unsettling as the ground is unnaturally level. A good spot for fairies to enchant. From this point navigation did go a bit awry. We found ourselves practising river crossing skills – an unexpected challenge – a contrast with yesterday's carefully researched route. Still, all survived and we got back to the cars just as a hail storm came in – perfect timing!

Alan Lovett

Radio Fame

The Fylde Mountaineering Club is known to listeners in Nottingham as one of our members was interviewed live on Radio Nottingham by their morning host Frances Finn, who in June this year, 2010, was awarded the Sony Gold Award, the highest achievement in radio, beating Radio 4's Eddie Mair for the top spot. Our member was in Balustrate, in Sicily, trapped on the island, as all flights had been suspended because of the Icelandic dust cloud. Radio Nottingham was exploring the plight of holidaymakers caught up in the general travel mayhem.

Ryanair were not mentioned in complimentary terms.

The Ramblings of an Intro Member

As I await the decision of the committee on my acceptance as a full member of the Club my thoughts take me back over an eventful twelve months as an 'Intro Member'.

The first thing to strike me is how staggeringly fast the time has flown by and glancing through the syllabus how many opportunities to take full advantage of club membership I have missed. Looking back at my early experiences with the club which included a couple of evening walks and a day walk with not a mountain or even a hill in sight on, and in spite of my apprehension I was immediately made to feel welcome and a part of the group. This was followed by an Intro Meet at the Stair hut and my first intrepid visits to the Preston Climbing Wall as a novice climber.

My trip to Stair began on the Friday morning and travelling with Clive and Kevan (nothing like hobnobbing with the club hierarchy on your first meet) we stopped off en route for a walk from the Glencoyne car park after several aborted attempts at finding suitable parking and having changed the planned route several times. Arriving at the hut was to be my first experience of dorm accommodation since a YHA trip to the Isle of Man when I was fourteen. The next day saw me out on Shepherds Craig for an introduction to the world of outdoor climbing with our esteemed chairman Clive and our newsletter editor Caroline (still hobnobbing you'll note) along with several other intro members. On the Sunday we managed to get a short walk in before returning home.

February saw me experiencing the Arctic conditions of a Scottish winter on the Club meet run by Darren to Lagangarbh. With Danny along for company on the journey we headed north to arrive at the hut around 21.00hrs and had to slog in on foot, sometimes in waist deep snow.

During the long weekend we managed an easy winter ascent of the Zig Zags up Gear Aonach on our way over Stob Coire Nan Lochan, my first time on a Scottish mountain. This was followed by another first for me, an introduction to the delights of Ice Climbing with Darren (hobnobbing yet again), Al and Danny for company. Or should that be an introduction to Ice Climbing with the delights of Darren (that should be cash in the bank when it comes to my acceptance), Al and Danny for company? The final day saw me on a solo ascent of Aonach Moor, from the Ski Lift, I hasten to add, and onto Aonach Beag. All this in perfect winter conditions with magnificent views of the Ben and surrounding mountains. This took place whilst Darren, Al and Danny, the only remaining members on the meet, strapped on some wooden planks to their feet and, even with the help of a couple of sticks apiece, fell about a lot on Aonach Moor. My next outing was the annual Pembroke climbing meet that was organised by Dave. Setting out with Dave and Hal along for company on the long journey south I confess to feeling very much out of my depth. This was to be a full on baptism of fire with abseils and serious, committing sea cliff climbing on the menu. The forecast wasn't brilliant and there was some doubt as to whether much climbing would be possible, however in the end we climbed every day and were blessed with sunny but windy weather throughout the weekend. Arriving in time to get some climbing in and keen to crack the weekend off Dave lead me first up an HVS 5a called Rear Wind (no comment) before soloing Highland Fling HS 4b and placing the protection to enable me to do my first lead climb. The final climb of the day was Quickstep VS 4b. I was totally blown away by the magnificent surrounds and the awesome atmosphere of the place. The whole weekend proved to be a fantastic success for all those that made the effort, the accommodation was superb, a real 'gentleman's' residence set in its' own grounds on a hillside with views over the castle and across the bay. The weather, whilst not quite idyllic, wasn't far off, with awesome climbing every day and the company didn't turn out to be too bad either. Sadly, since then I haven't managed much more than an occasional evening climbing meet, a couple of evening walks and a one night flying visit on a weekend meet at Stair that proved to be a damp squib. Over the summer months we (that's Sheila and I) have been enjoying the delights of the English countryside with numerous excursions with our caravan. As the summer season came to an end I did manage a solo trip West to East through the Dolomites from Ortisei to Auronzo.

So, after a year of firsts for me I would like to express my gratitude to the many members that have made me feel so welcome, that have offered help and encouragement and taken the time to ensure I have gained maximum benefit from my club membership. Specific thanks must go to Darren and Dave for their help and encouragement. Both have done more than they realise in influencing the improvements in my climbing ability and my enjoyment of the sport.

As I sit here with the rain steadily falling, the daylight fast retreating and looking through the syllabus I can't believe how many opportunities to enjoy club activities I have missed. However my year as an Intro Member has opened up new horizons and I have enjoyed many challenging and memorable experiences. It is also apparent that subject to my acceptance, I should, with a

little more forethought and planning, be able to squeeze so much more into my life's great outdoor experience.

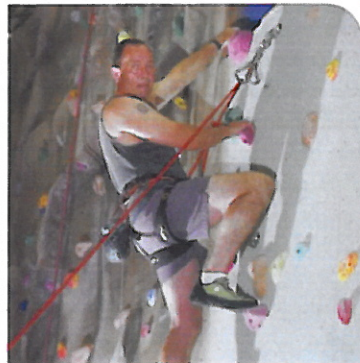
So here's to my acceptance as a full member of the Fylde Mountaineering Club (I hope all that hobnobbing pays off!!!).

Steve Longworth

Mystery Surrounds FMC in the Press

As we went to press news reached us that one of our members was going to star in the local press – the Durham County News no less.

He looks very familiar....but just who is Chris Candle??



Try something different – whatever your age

Chris Candle, 62, pictured above, is a regular user of Teesdale Leisure Centre's indoor climbing wall at Barnard Castle.

Solo Through the Dolomites

It's surreal, my brain is in overdrive but the clutch is slipping!!! Seconds ago I was about to lift the latch on what looked like an abandoned mountain hut. The outdoor tables are deserted and there is no sign of life. I am at 2528m in the Italian Dolomites, light rain is falling and visibility is down to 20m. The icy wind is



moulding wet clothing to my body and I've been looking forward to the respite from the elements in this, my last Refugio in a six day solo trek through the Dolomites from Ortisei to Auronzo. The door latch responds to some heavy pressure, the door creaks open and I'm hit by a warm front that is instantly comforting, but it is the sight that greets me as the door swings open that has my brain playing catch up. Three young people are huddled around a laptop watching Clint Eastwood in The Eiger Sanction, to my left someone else is also sat staring at a laptop, struggling to make sense of something on the internet. A mobile 'phone begins to ring

and one of the three leap to answer it, it seems this is the official phone line to the hut, another rises and stands behind the compact bar with a questioning look directed at me. 'Do you have room for me to stay here tonight' I ask in faltering Italian. 'Si certo' is the response, 'let me show you around.'

So I am assured of somewhere to stay for the final night of what has been a spectacular high level walk through an amazing part of the Dolomites that was hatched as a plan to give me a new and exciting challenge. Just some of the questions I had to ask of myself were: Could I walk for several days alone? Could I resolve the logistics necessary for a multi day trek? Did I have the stamina? What if I went abroad? Could I sort out the travel arrangements, flights, rail and bus? What about a suitable route, the overnight stays, manage the language etc?

The answer to all these questions was a resounding yes!! My solo trek took me through an amazing, ever changing landscape that was as varied as any I have ever encountered. At one stage I could have been in the Yorkshire Dales, other times I felt I could have been exploring the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Arid, stony landscapes had me feeling I could be on the moon yet these were tempered with lush alpine meadows, magnificent forests or areas of dwarf Pine trees with their heady aroma and always the ever present magical mountain air. Exposed and airy paths made for several challenging sections whilst for the most part I



was following well marked and well defined trails. My accommodation was also as varied with the Refugio being a mix of new and hotel like to the more rustic charm of my final stay in Refugio Pian di Cengia, the one mentioned earlier and the weather? Well I experienced weather typical of the region ranging from glorious sunshine to low cloud and light rain and icy cold wind. Overall the experience can be summed up in just one word ... Fantastico!!

Steve Longworth

A Mad Moment – Ibiza

Iggi Moore and John Hughes

It was a mad moment; a response to the piss poor weather we'd been having, and the fact that getting out to climb, when the weather is good, in England, is tough. It was a spur of the moment thing. We, John and I, were climbing, as usual, down at the Blackpool climbing wall. We were getting tired of the routes, the routine and the weather. We could do most of the routes, up to and including 7a+, features for feet and were therefore really just going through the motions in an effort to stay fit. It was raining again and I was maudlin over just how terrible the weather was and how it was better in my day - when I was a lad. I blurted out: 'Hey John fancy climbing in the sun; say in Majorca?' The response was affirmative – explicit language was proffered!

Flights were looked at but the prices were too high – Majorca is after all a sought after destination – but this didn't deter us. We looked further afield. We looked at Spain, we looked at the Greek Islands and then we saw Ibiza! Flights about £59! We Google'd 'Ibiza' and 'climbing' and were surprised to see just how much stuff was seemingly out there. The rock 'sounded' good and the number of routes sounded great – everything from 4s and 5s to 8a and above. We looked at Hotels, they were cheap too. We looked at hire cars as well; and then booked all three. Going halves meant that it was about £200 each for flights, a hotel, and a VW Polo with air-con to get about in. Cool! £200 for a climbing trip and hopefully we'd only need food and drink on top.



We carried on climbing at the wall and in the shed; and even upped the pace in an effort to get fitter and stronger. It seemed to be miles away, something that'll happen in the distant future, almost a dream but the day came to pack and get out to Liverpool airport. We'd booked one bag between us – it meant we could carry 30 kilos in one bag and it saved money. All the climbing stuff went in – ropes, quick draws and bits and bobs. We travelled light and easily came under the weight restriction. The taxi arrived fractionally late – just enough to cause me some anxiety – and then we were off.

Our wives couldn't quite believe that we were going, and to a large extent, I don't think we could either. But go we did. The flight and arrival was nothing out the ordinary but the heat was; and so was the search for the hire car. We waited and searched and asked but all to no avail so we jumped in a taxi and went to the hotel/apartment in San Antonio. It was awful. We were depressed and tired. We slept badly too as they all seemed to be partying, arguing or trying to kick the doors in, all around us.

We woke to the blistering sun and the day looked hopeful. Who cared about the room, we were here to climb. On my way out though I hassled the desk clerk and we got a new room in a separate building that was much, much better. Wow things were looking up. We stocked up on pain de chocolate and got a taxi back towards the airport to get our car. Luck struck again – we were given a free up-grade and got a GTI. We set straight off to the cliffs on the south west of the island.



I'd always had a poor image of Ibiza and what it might be like. Being there completely changed my mind. What a place. Buda, so named as some guy painted a Buddha on some rock at the bottom of the cliff, is an amazing location and crag. With 141 routes from 4+ up we thought it a good place to start. It was hot; a welcome change to the UK, but it was 38°! Finding the place was tricky; fortunately we bumped into some friendly people who pointed us in the right direction. The road in to the crag was dust and rock! The walk in though was fine with an amazing panorama as you came to the top of the cliff.



We worked our way down the crag – the topo starts from the top of the crag and works left as you move down to the sea - and the first few routes are 4s; a good warm-up and intro to the rock and the climbing. Limestone – the holds were sharp but positive although surprisingly scarce as you work up through the grades. There are 8 4s, 37 routes

between 5 and 6a, 43 routes between 6b and 7a and 53 routes above that; so there's something for everyone.

We had a great day and were psyched for more, although some of the routes had seemed hard for their grades and the lines were hard to see from the vantage point we had. The topo was taken from a long way back, probably from a helicopter(!), and we were at the bottom of the crag but hey the sun was shining, we were climbing and all seemed good in the world. We climbed till quite late and then went back to the beach, by the hotel, to watch the sun go down on all the topless Spanish babes – this was heaven.



Later we found a restaurant and ate pizza; we then went into the centre of San Antonio and walked back along the sea front passed all the clubs! We didn't participate in any fool hardy partying because we were climbing in the morning on more sandy coloured rock in the sun.



The next morning we were up and out. We'd chosen to do some routes at Santa Agnes; it had a westerly aspect and was supposedly in the shade till the afternoon. It also had a good choice of routes and the pictures in the Ibiza Rock book were amazing.

We drove down twisty single track roads and were soon lost! We tried to follow the instructions in the guide book, and we asked a local, and eventually parked up at the top of another cliff. The walk down looked steep but the bay was amazing.

We got to the bottom and realised we had ended up on the wrong side of the bay but in another great climbing area. It was called Punta Aubarca, it had a NE aspect and had 22 routes: 6 5 to 6a+, 8 6b to 7as, and 8 above that. It was hot, 39°, and we were baking but hey it was better than climbing indoors in soggy England. ;D

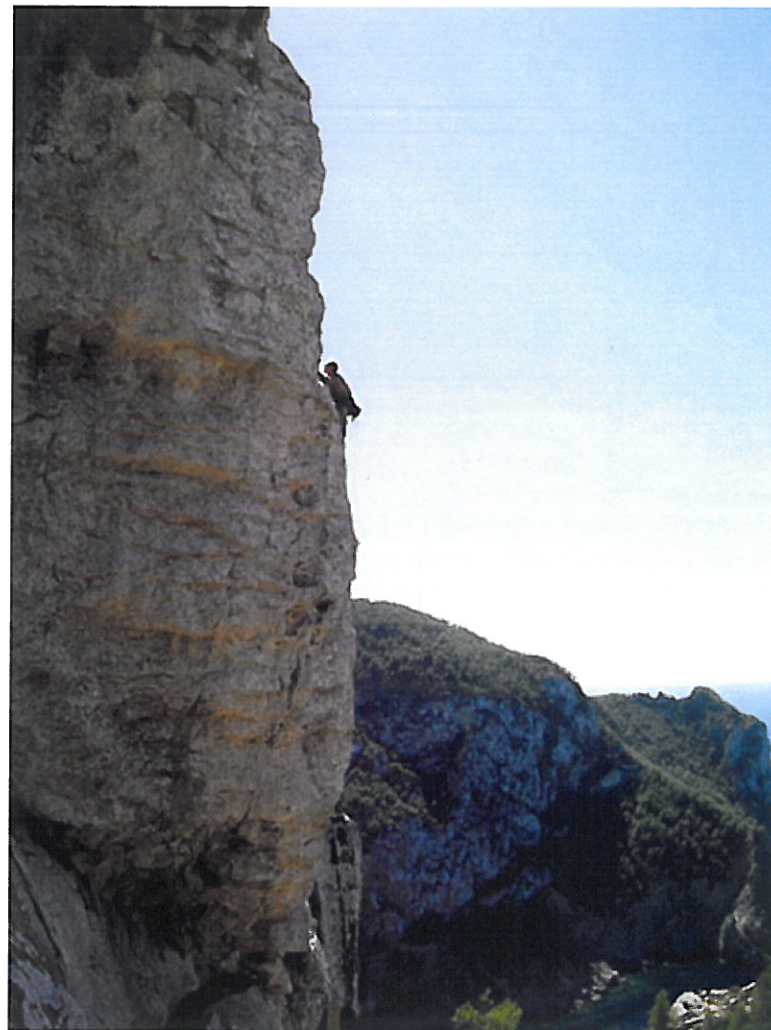


We almost sacked the climbing in order to leap into the cool clear blue sea but we resisted and since John had eye'd up a route at Santa Agnes we worked our way back to the car for another adventure – find the crag! We pished about and in the end it was my phone and the Satnav that got us to the crag. Jesus we'd have never have found the crag without it. The road looked like a farm track to someone's private residence! I wouldn't have taken my car up it; but up it we went. We parked near a house in a clearing and stepped out of the air con into the heat. Jesus! It was going to be a long walk in the midday sun - with lots of water.

We walked for what seemed ages – you all know I don't do long walk ins – but when we got to the top the reward was amazing. The panorama was breath-taking and the rock was in the shade. Hallelujah! It had 5 routes between 5 and 6a, 9 routes between 6b and 7a and 13 above that. Some of the harder routes had been 'created'. There were some spectacular lines, that looked very hard, little two finger pockets, miles apart, but on closer inspection the rock had been drilled and then some kind of silver silicon put in and moulded to make the edges nice and smooth. The lines looked nice but they also looked too hard for us and anyway we hadn't travelled this far to climb on manufactured routes. So we set up camp and set too again. The rock was very featured with lots of sharp edges. The guide book says tape up as the rock can be sharp enough to cut! It was fine, and in fact I liked the sharp edges, nothing like a positive hold! The climbing was



great, the bolts were good, the vistas amazing and the sun was shining. We were the only folk there too. Bliss! The walk back to the car was intense though, it was 40° and we were knackered, and John cut his toe as the ground was non-too flat at the base of the crag; but a good day was had by all. Another evening was spent on the beach and so on. The trip went well. It was a great break; the climbing was good – even if it was damned difficult to find the crags at times – and we got a tan!



John leading American People 6a

Bonfire Meet 5 – 7 November 2010

In spite of a massive advertising campaign the hut was not full for this historic annual event. However six well established members of the club were treated to a spectacular firework display (and one or two less impressive fireworks!) as the sounds echoed round the valley and bright flashes lit up the sky. We were joined later by two further members who missed the



fireworks since their minds had been on global travel. There had been many rockets and firework cakes but the evening was finished off by a delicious cake of the edible kind. As promised a BBQ had been set up by the meet leader but there were few takers for the sausages and lamb kebabs, especially among the vegetarian members! However the leftovers were offered again for breakfast, lunch and again for tea the following day, surprisingly with little

success.

Those who made the effort were treated to fine weather and glorious views with a little precipitation on Saturday – there was a sprinkle of snow on the Crinkles, a little wetter on Wetherlam and the Elterwater walkers avoided the water by a timely return to the hut. On Sunday a sociable group of five took advantage of glorious weather and fine views on a trip over Lingmoor and Side Pike via Fat Man's Agony (an entertaining narrow gap where rucksacks must be removed) returning via Blea Tarn. We were treated to another aerial display by a member with a fondness for aeroplanes who tried to take off but ended up with a muddy elbow and wet backside. The two global travellers went in search of a short walk and pre-holiday shopping and the final member took advantage of photographic opportunities in the Borrowdale valley.



Mike Howe

Bygone Times



The times they are a changing.

Fell Race & Veggie Curry - November 2010

This year's meet did not attract as many as usual as several of the regulars were away doing other things however 15 hardy souls turned up for a bit fun. The worrying thing is that almost everyone was crocked one way or another so there was only one serious runner – John Hickman.

The main focus of the weekend is to see who can con the best handicap out of Mark Broughton & this year Chris Thistlethwaite was the winner with some cock & bull story about a strained calf muscle. He claimed that he would only walk round but he walks faster than most can run!

The injury list was long & sad. Two of the elder folk, Tom Knowles & Geoff Brindle have had knee operations this year so were not really contenders. Geoff just took photos. Christine Barbier just managed to keep up with Tom. Martin Dale moaned about a bad back – too much sitting in his Civil Service chair. Dave Earle complains about everything really (I forget what it was that day as like everyone else I wasn't listening) but still managed to wander round in an unremarkable time. One very odd thing was that he did not finish all his food in the evening, something I've never seen before.

Mark was getting over a cold & Viv didn't have an excuse so won the ladies section. John Wiseman never runs & this is the first year June has given him a pass out to come so it was a warm up for him Clive Bell has had a few heart bypass operations so it's best he does not run as we do not want another heart attack. His mate Steve from BAE was an unknown quantity & put in an average time, obviously intent on getting a good handicap next year. Caroline claimed to have some sort of leg injury (& too much "fatness") but she clearly did not manage to persuade Mark of its seriousness as she was well down the field (*Ed: I didn't claim any injuries...unless lardiness counts*). My excuse was that something made me ill that morning as I was up at 7 throwing up. I did however valiantly crawl out of bed 15 minutes after my start time to plod round in my slowest time ever.

Les Ward kindly came up to act as time keeper as he has for many years. I'm sure there are lots of others who would enjoy the weekend, I assure you fitness or lack of it is entirely irrelevant.

I made a cabbage, apple & fresh ginger soup to warm us up after the race. In the afternoon most people wandered into Keswick for a bit of shopping & a pint or two. I had already made a selection of curries the previous Wednesday & Thursday evenings so as usual we had a feast with lots of wine & beer in the evening.

The results were:

		Time (minutes)	Scratch position
1st	Chris Thistlethwaite	57.15	5
2nd	John Hickman	41.30	1
3rd	Mark Broughton	55.15	4
4 th =	Vivienne Broughton	71.30	6 =
4 th =	John Wiseman	71.30	6 =
6 th	Steve Carnduff	52.11	2
7 th	Dave Earle	78.20	10
8 th =	Caroline Webb	75.40	8
8 th =	Christine Barbier	101.40	11
10 th	Martin Dale	77.55	9
11 th =	Clive Bell	104.20	12 =
11 th =	Tom Knowles	104.20	12 =
13 th	Andy Dunhill	53.20	3



Working Weekend Langdale 22/23 Jan 2011

There was a good turnout of willing volunteers for the first working weekend of 2011.



The original plan involved the removal of the dead tree from the car park and the usual painting and cleaning jobs. However, inspection of the wall at the bottom of the car park revealed that some major rebuilding work was required and in the absence of master builders Brindle and Thistlethwaite the job fell to a right dodgy bunch – so don't sit on the wall if you value your health.

Having got in the mood for moving large boulders the wall team proceeded to remove the large boulders cluttering up the corner of the car park so that you can now drive right up to the wall and while we were doing all of the hard work Mr Bell was having a night on the tiles.



Meanwhile, the kitchen, toilets and dormitories were given a thorough clean and fresh coats of paint were applied where needed.

Jennie Tolley provided catering for lunch and Coronation Turkey for dinner and there were no arguments about hot/cold pie or custard because Andy D wasn't there. Unfortunately for some the post dinner visit to the pub was foiled by it being closed, but Chris had provided plenty of beer and wine for everybody and he even provided the after dinner entertainment with a spur of the moment table dancing routine to (nearly) die for.

Thanks to everybody who turned up and helped out.

Johnny Walkers Tales

Well, would you believe it? The same old friend, who was involved with the Greater Spotted Woodpecker, told me this story.

"Heh! I was woken up early this morning by a hissing sound outside the window. It sounded like noisy Barry with a blow torch."

"Who the hell is 'noisy Barry'?"

"Yer know, Barry next door."

"What the hell would he be doing with a blow torch outside your window first thing in the morning?"

"Well, yer know he does stuff like that! He's got loads of gadgets."

"Anyway I got up 'n I couldn't see Barry 'n I couldn't see anything. Then I heard this hissing again. What do yer reckon it was?"

"An Adder with a loud hailer?"

"No...a f~n air balloon about six feet above the window! This bloke was desperately trying to steer away from the house. I stared in amazement. As he rose he had this strange smile on his face. Then I realized....."

I didn't have any clothes on!"

Johnny Walker

Club Notes

Please remember to inform the Club membership secretary whenever you change your home or email address so that you continue to receive all communications.

Winter 2011

Clockwise from top: Low Water Beck, Cumbria under the snow, Launchy Gill

