

THE FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE

February 2016

in this
bumper
issue:



Club Meet Reports galore, plus Gardening in Borrowdale, Dinner at The Villa, Cornwall & Devon re-visited, Turkish Delight, Alpine Adventures, Morocco Update and all the embarrassingly detailed results of our Annual Fell Race



contents

It was great fun putting the last issue of our magazine together and I especially appreciated the enthusiastic response from all of those who sent in such terrific articles and reports. Thank you!

It's always a real privilege to receive contributions from active members who are able to call upon loads of experience and who are happy and keen to share their stories with us.

Just as satisfying though, is hearing from new members making their first tentative forays onto the fells, into the mountains and up their very first rock climbs, because their stories are certain to be every bit as inspiring and just as much fun to read about.

Come to think of it, I reckon there may also mileage to be had in articles from our less active, perhaps more senior members, recollecting that dizzying moment when a love for the outdoors, and especially for exploring in the fells and mountains, first hit home.

So let's celebrate the love we share for soaring ridges onto wild mountain tops, the grand sweep of valleys leading to crags full of challenge and those endless days of pure simple fun in places that so inspire us all.

Oh yes - I almost forgot - that's when you write it all down and get it to the editor before the deadline!

If that doesn't bring you back down to earth, then nothing will. Speaking of which - those of you who've clocked me as an insufferable know-it-all, will delight in my complete ignorance of the word 'fouging' which I now suspect is a bit of franglais, courtesy of Geoff Brindle.

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our FMC Ladies carry on regardless

We thought you'd like to see this nice letter to Darren from Dorothy Jowett.

30th Nov. '15

Dear Darren,
I was so astounded and delighted with the bouquet of flowers. They are lovely and such an unexpected present.
It was wonderful to meet so many old friends who magically remain unchanged. Jack would have been so proud of the climbing success of the Club and of the ever-present warmth and good-will of members.
I really appreciated your after-dinner speech, Darren. I thought it was so well-thought-out and a very comprehensive summing-up of members' different achievements.
I had such a wonderful evening re-newing old friendships. An evening crowned by flowers!
Thank you.
Sincerely
Dorothy Jowett.



cover photo: Martin Bennett
Alan Blackburn on 'Stairway To Heaven' Agouti Crag in the Anti Alas, Morocco.

from the Chairman

We're in the middle of January as I write, and the weekend saw a transformation when our local hills turned white - and we could actually see them at last!

Unprecedented rainfall has hit communities hard, especially here in the North and our hearts go out to all those who have suffered and who we hope will see things return to normality as soon as possible.

Fortunately for us, our huts escaped damage from the storms and floods and I'd like to thank those of our members who braved the elements to check them out.

With record numbers in attendance, our Annual Dinner was a great success and we were honoured to have with us one of our club's founder members, Dorothy Jowett, who many of us had the opportunity to meet for the first time.

I'd like to thank our event organiser Steve as he steps down from the role of Social Secretary. He's set new standards for us and leaves his mark by finishing on a summit of achievement which, for a mountaineering club, sounds about right!

The winter social programme is still in full swing and we've had some great shows so far (ed: see page 21) We meet in the Old Town Hall in Poulton every second Wednesday of the month where everyone's welcome to enjoy a pint and banter with like-minded friends.

Mark the next one on your calendar because it's Emma Twyford showing us how to climb!

The AGM is fast approaching and we'd like to see as many members there as possible, so please come and have your say in shaping the future of your club.

Of course - and what it's all about - let's hope we can all see some winter action in the mountains and if so, that we'll be able to read all about it in the next issue of our magazine.

Darren





Travels in the Maritime Alps

in words and pictures by Dave Earle

The shrill sound of the phone destroyed all dreams of plus beaux villages in the Dordogne and the Lot. It was Mr Penn needing a travelling companion. Apparently the Maritime Alps had more oxygen and better weather than Mont Blanc, and they were calling him.

Dover was replete with lorries and there were hordes of strikers and illegals waiting in Calais. Dunkirk was dearer and slower . . . but it was the obvious alternative.

Somewhere en route to the Alps, the Dijon bypass had got itself hidden behind some road works, but even moi, who'd driven around Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch on his first driving lesson, was forced to retreat from Centre Ville. The route through to Briançon was also shut, so we headed south of Mont Pelvoux in the Ecrins for our first walk. There are several dead end valleys to the south and west of Le Sirac (3441m) which give pleasant walking.

We then drove round to Barcelonnette and south over the Col de la Cayolle to Saint Martin d'Entraunes. This opened up a wealth of walking opportunities, especially from the col, including Mont Pelat, generally regarded as the easiest Alpine peak at 3051m and Cimet (3020m) plus lesser peaks and general high-level rambling in all directions.

'a tough drive'

A trying drive east via Valberg gave us a few days in Saint Martin Vesubie with plenty of routes to choose from. A tough drive, around rather than through Belvédère brings up several possibilities from the Nice hut, including Mont Clapier which I found tough-going under foot.

Cima du Diable is best approached via Col de Turini and Authion and gives access to the Vallée

des Merveilles. Casterino above Tende also allows access to this area where the walking is much easier under foot.

Back at Saint Martin Vesubie, a good road follows the Tinée Valley over the Cime de la Bonette. Mont Ténibre (3031m) can be accessed via the Rabuons refuge. Much more of a flog is Corborante (3007m) and is nearby - if you like ticking off summits in a book.

Barcelonnette has a good campsite and shop. It gives access to the walking from the top of the Col de Vars and also the Col de Larche, aka the Maddalena Pass. The Ubaye Valley in between should not be missed. It too provides interesting walking with several pretty lakes and in the main branch of the Ubaye, the CAF refuge of Maljasset.

'into a Bond villain's lair'

From Barcelonnette, the Col de Vars road takes you north to Guillestre where we found that camping was difficult - the only place on the trip to give problems - but it gives access to Ceillac where there's a spacious campsite at the end of an 'interesting route'. Mr Penn thought we were driving into a Bond villain's lair, or of some other Spectre-inspired outfit. This area, the Queyras, has a wealth of walking to enjoy as well as an interesting road into Italy.

From the Col Agnel you can climb the Pain de Sucre (3208m) - literally Sugar Loaf, like the one in Rio de Janeiro - which a few of us tackled on a long day out on Clive Bell's Ecrins meet, several years ago. You can also make a four-day traverse of Monviso (3841) using huts. Our last trip here took in a route immediately below Monte Granero and Monviso before we headed for home.

Dave



*above: on the slopes of Le Civet, Cayolle
left: Auguile Pierre André, in the Ubaye valley*

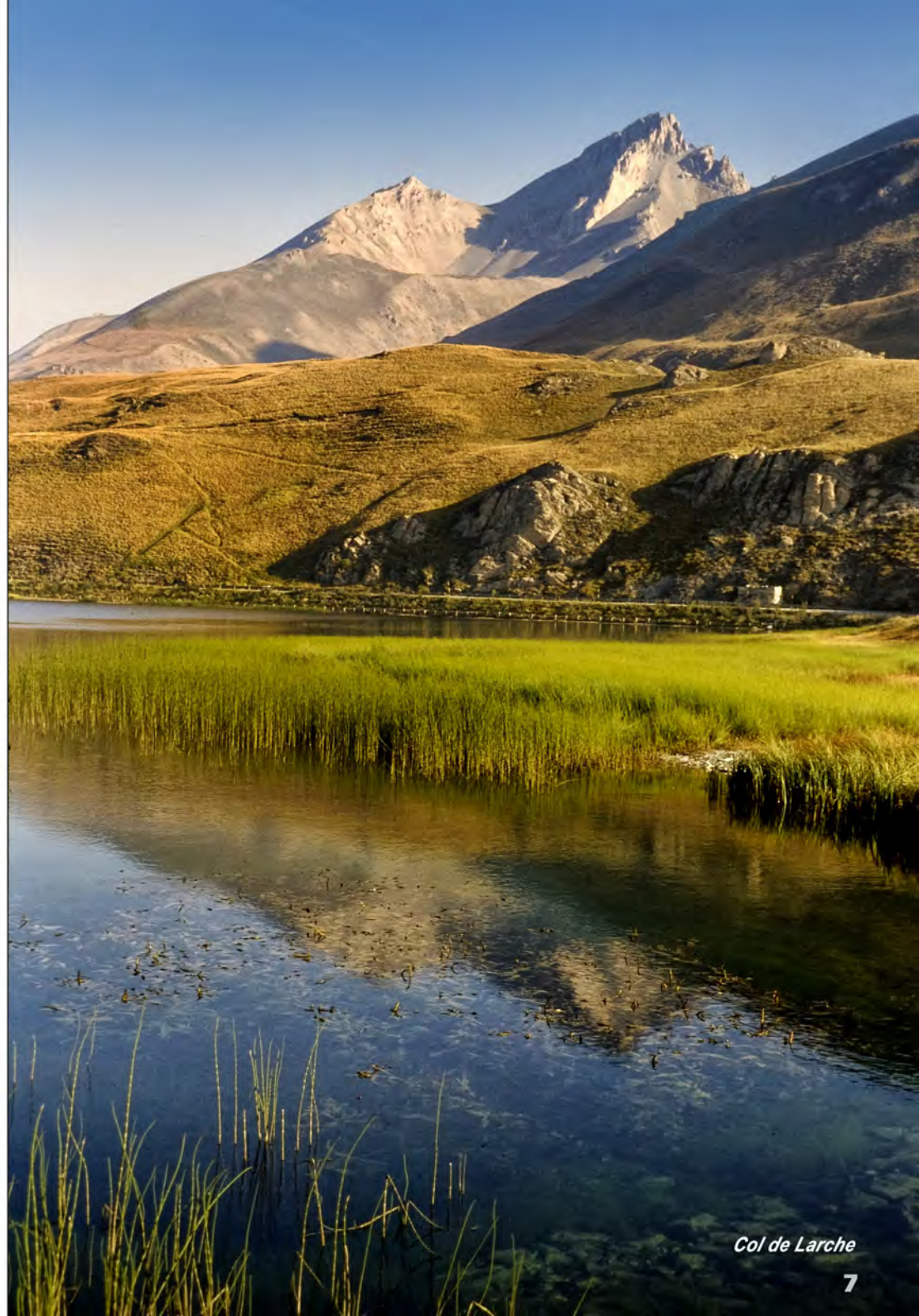
more of Dave's pictures overleaf >

Keen photographers should not miss the sights of Saorge, Lucéram, Coaraze, and Sainte-Agnès or the towns of Sospel or Sisteron with its towering facade of Rocher de la Baume above it (right) - plus a Baden-Powell Scout museum within it - and the Riviera town of Menton.

The Verdon gorge provides a walk of great drama alongside a turquoise river bed - but bring a torch, because a couple of sections go through tunnels.

A tides table might come in handy as well ;)





Looking South East from Tete Frema, Ubaye

Aiguille Pierre André, Ubaye valley



Pic des Houerts, Col de Vars



Tours Du Lac, Cayolle



Chambeyron, Ubaye



La Grande Roche and La Mortice, Vars

LADIES' LITTLE LANGDALE MEET

September 2015

report by Jennie Tolley



Jennie, Mary and Liz enjoying the view from the high point of their walk

A contingent of nine Ladies turned up to enjoy the usual mix of chat, laughter, good food, companionship and (when all else fails) some excellent walks!

Most arrived Friday evening in time to do a short walk in the mellow sunshine. On Saturday the majority of the group walked direct from the cottage over the Tilberthwaite and Yewdale fells in glorious sunshine, being rewarded with wonderful views.

Sunday saw just three of us parking near Tarn Hows and conducting a pleasantly meandering walk over Black Crag and Holme Fell. The views from the summit were panoramic with the surrounding peaks looking perky in the strong sunshine.

The return drive to Lancashire provided further adventures as my car exhaust system did in fact become exhausted and lay down inert on the road! With true FMC indomitable spirit the crew (Jennie and Mary) ingeniously utilised their boot laces to secure the faulty system.

(Whatever happened to the good old days when Ladies underwear and stockings were called upon to fulfil such duties? So much more romantic!)

As ever, a grand weekend - thanks Ladies for the fun and companionship!

Jennie Tolley

WHO WAS THERE?

Jennie Tolley, Pam Ruthven,
Liz Rawcliffe, Mary Aspin, Cherry Earle,
Liz Stevenson, Delphine Stockton,
Pat Bennett, Angela Lovett

FMC Evening Climbing 2015

report by
Martin Dale

This year we were blessed with good weather during the week at least. Although our weekends were not all great, every midweek we were lucky to get out to local crags.

Attendancies were also up on 2014. Several new venues were inserted into the syllabus to hopefully add spice to proceedings. Good weather early on in April meant that meets to the Towers were bypassed by trips out to Denham then Trowbarrow.

Meets in May were slightly disrupted by a club trip to Kalymnos but on my return at Trowbarrow I managed to lead the newly pegged Scary Monsters graded E5. I personally think that E5 is a bit generous now that the pegs are in. E3/4 being more like it.

The meet to Wilton unfortunately clashed with the Committee meal, however some members did attend. Anglezarke proved less midgy than usual but the first new venue, Ousells Nest was a bit spoiled by the nasty little buggers. Also at The Nest, the routes proved to be a bit on the dirty side. The local expert was in attendance and tried very hard to sell the place to us but I'm sorry we won't be returning in a hurry.

A good night then followed at Thorn Crag where my route Raging Horn got an ascent, albeit on top rope. An early team alerted us to the rather freezing conditions up at Robin Proctors, so the meet was switched at the last minute to Giggleswick South, a much more sheltered venue. A big turnout did battle with the Eiger sector.

One member managed to make a mug attempt by letting her bag roll off the ledge. Unfortunately the bag was open and its contents emptied down the rather brambly cliff below. Being the hero that I am, I abseiled down to retrieve the various ladies items that littered the cliff. Joanne also managed to leave her handbag in the pub!

The only meet we had to cancel all summer was to Widdop towards the end of June.

But the next meet proved most popular of the season. Fifteen members & friends made it to a very sunny Robin Proctors.



Shame about the choice of pub Mr Fenna. The beer left a bit to be desired at the Game Cock in Austwick.

Deeply Vale was another new venue. I was slightly concerned to find the crag in the shade but despite the odd midgy and not a huge number of routes to go at, another large number of members enjoyed the crag.

I doubt we will be heading back there but we got a tip off about another crag in the area worth a visit. We were then treated to a very dodgy drive to the pub courtesy of Terry Robinson's satnav. It was touch and go but we made it. It could easily have been a good mug attempt!

We had a lovely night at Witches but strangely only four of us attended. Another new venue followed. Castleberg at Settle proved very popular and we also visited a new pub in Settle.

Troy (right) on the following week also had a big attendance





Troy Quarry

Several members went to Warton Main but only Steve Wrigley and Alan Blackburn dared to tackle Deceptive Bends on the main crag.

6 members went to Chapel Head (right) but it was too hard for most and it is doubtful we will be going back for a while.

A good night at Trowbarrow followed as the nights started drawing in a bit. Joanne managed a good ascent of Coral Sea. A good turnout at Denham, and then some members braved the midges at Brownstones.

The Towers then came into condition! Martin



Sandstone Antics Meet

report by
Martin Dale

September 2015 and a Stair meet with a difference

A small but keen bunch of members assembled at Stair for a bit of a change from the normal cragging options – some sandstone antics!

Saturday was a sunny day for a change! Unbeknown to us it was the beginning of a wonderful period of weather which was to last well into October and beyond. St Bees Head was to be the day's venue. We parked up at Tarnflatt Hall farm and made our way to the cliff edge path. It was a little breezy but dry.

Some fishermen were in evidence below and also a couple of boulderers already in action on the Old Buoys area. I had decided that due to there being one or two St Bees virgins amongst us that we should find the easy way down. This proved to be elusive for a while. A bit of a retracing of steps and I found it. It led without incident to the boulder beach below. We then had to traverse back to the Apiary Wall area along the sea level boulders. This proved time consuming as they were a little slippery in places. We re-assembled below Apiary Wall for a lunch break.

To gain the area we were going to climb on we had to first negotiate a 'bad step' complete with iron rungs and chain. It was a bit wet so a rope was employed. Once we were all up this, climbing could begin! First up was *Twilight Zone* f3, supposedly the easiest bolted route at St Bees! Not so for our team. I put the rope up but it rebuffed all attempts to top rope it. Not a good start! Better options lay to our left. *Fisherman's Friend* f5 is 3 star and deservedly so. It received multiple ascents by almost all the party.

did *Route One* f4 then *Recharge* f6a+. With time running out I flung myself at *Andy's Route* f6b. It was a little bit wet but with some jiggery pokery I managed to top out.

Going back down the 'bad step' proved interesting and mildly amusing for some. We abseiled back down. This was to be Joanne's first unprotected abseil. Unfortunately, she managed to get her foot caught in the groove and turned upside down. Whilst she thought this was highly amusing, I can tell you I was panicking rather! Safely down we said goodbye to the fishermen and made our way back up the knotted ropes of the normal descent path. On the way down we had passed many blackberries however on the way back it was deemed to be too late to stop and pick any!

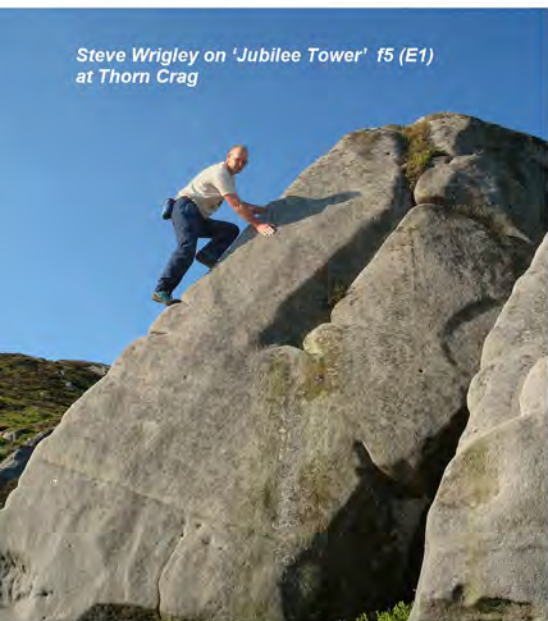
Sunday was overcast and a bit rainy. Most went either for a walk or round the shops. As it was supposed to be a sandstone extravaganza, I was keen to go and have a look at the recently bolted Coudy Rocks at Appleby. Chris Thistlethwaite and Geoff Brindle decided to accompany myself and Joanne to check them out. We arrived at the parking just as it started to drizzle. The Rocks lie in a field just above the River Eden. The top of the crag is shrouded by trees giving some shelter from the elements. The crag was dry but sadly the easy routes on the right hand side were overgrown and filthy. I had little option but to warm up on a f6a called *Buffalo Bill*. This was not the easiest route in the world so everyone declined to have a go on a top rope. Next was *The Sands of Time* f6a+.

This was slightly more amenable as it was a bit slabby and straight up. Chris had a dabble without making much progress. Joanne was adamant she didn't want to climb and was happy just holding ropes, however after much cogging and barracking by the crowd decided to have a go. She was glad she did as she made the belay but not without a bit of cranking.

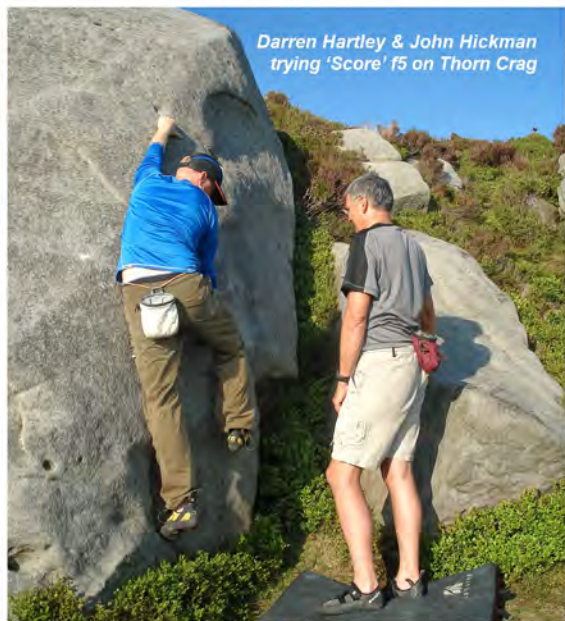
I then was also blagged into getting on the harder routes to the left. *Two Pints and a Packet of Crisps* f6b+, was fallen off then ascended in good style. *Resisting Chiptation* f6c+ was flashed to my amazement but *Big in Japan* f7a was just too big! I did however manage to climb it to within 3 inches of the belay, falling off the very last move.

We then retired to a nice café by the bridge in Appleby for tea and cakes. Chris and Geoff went on their way and we traversed back down to Kendal then back to the Eagle and Child in Staveley for a well-earned beer or two. A fitting end to a different kind of weekend!

Martin



Steve Wrigley on 'Jubilee Tower' f5 (E1) at Thorn Crag



Darren Hartley & John Hickman trying 'Score' f5 on Thorn Crag



Joanne on Fisherman's Friend, St Bees

To its right further fun was had on *Halloween* and *Happy Friday*, f4+ and f5 respectively. These routes have an interesting grass pulling finish! I then moved back left and

The Fylde Mountaineering Club ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This, the 66th AGM in our club history, is the most important event in the club calendar. It's where decisions that affect us all are made, where those who act on our behalf are elected and where our voice and our votes will have a real and lasting impact on the governance and future of our club.

PLEASE READ THE AGENDA & REPORTS ENCLOSED WITH THIS ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT YOU CAN TO ATTEND

Wednesday
February 24th
2016 at the
Old Town Hall
Poulton-le-Fylde

7.15pm for
meeting to
commence
at 8pm

IRRESISTABLY
YUMMY
PIE & PEAS
WILL BE SERVED

The FMC 2015 Fell Race

Forecasts of extreme weather, crashed cars and overseas trips by some of the usual attendees, saw this year's event rather less well attended than usual

Whilst the club's 'holiday makers' and 'poor weather softies' may not - and probably will not - be forgiven for absenting themselves, please spare a thought for Mark and Viv Broughton who narrowly escaped serious injury on their way up to the Lakes.

Their car was hit by an articulated wagon just after Mark congratulated himself for avoiding piling into the car in front that had braked hard for another that had decided to stop in the middle of the motorway. A classic shunt that left Mark and Viv limping their car back home and missing out on one of their favourite club events.

Friday saw Christine (Fry-up) Fry, Leanne (I'm going to be late) Sutton, Caroline Webb, Tom Knowles, Martin Dale and Joanne Leadbetter, as well as newly weds Karen Hicks and me reaching the Stair hut.

As usual, early arrivals got stuck into training early on and had soon polished off a substantial chunk of the wine and spirits supplies, so that later arrivals were forced to head for the pub to catch up with the rigorous demands of our elite training regime.

With our usual handicap secretary absent, I took on the role and sympathetically endured the usual tales of bad backs, sore knees, dodgy ankles and whatever other ailments could be thought up on the spur of the moment.

'definitely not part of the plan'

What I wasn't prepared for though was finding myself volunteered to flag out the course, which was definitely not part of the plan - at least, not my part of it. Was I half hoping that that the weather would turn out so hopelessly nasty that - purely on safety grounds of course - we'd have to call the whole thing off?

Of course not! Morning came and lo and behold, the weather looked workable - not great - but good enough as we welcomed late arrivals Richard and Suzanne Duerdon, Becky and Tony, and Tony's son Matt and his girlfriend Carly.

Although I was sorely tempted, it was now way too late to get myself out of the flag planting job by reminding everyone that my track record regarding navigational skills was not exactly unblemished, so with my trusty helpers Caroline & Karen, we set off to get the job done.

Things soon took a turn for the worse though when, with Caroline's help, we managed to miss the track altogether and soon found ourselves tracing our way up an unfamiliar rocky route at the end of the valley.

Eventually though we reached the ridge, found our bearings and finally managed to mark out the course with our flags.



report from
Dave Hicks

Our combined lack of route finding skills had slowed things down so much however, that we didn't get back to base until 20 minutes after I was supposed to set off on the race itself!

As it turned out, and with a fair amount of the usual slithering and sliding, things went off more or less as intended and we all made it back in one piece.



After hot showers all round, we were treated to an amazing pea and ham soup, and an equally amazing broccoli and stilton one, courtesy of Christine who has now earned a job for life as Chief Soup Maker.

This was eagerly followed by another Christine speciality - her now legendary lemon drizzle cake. The afternoon got gradually wetter and we decided to while it away with the customary retail therapy

around Keswick, followed by beers in the George.

The main event proper began back at base at 7:30pm with starters of samosas, stuffed peppers and onion and spinach bhajjis. This was followed by whopper portions of a delicious Kashmiri Chicken Curry lovingly made by Karen, or for those so inclined, an equally splendid vegetarian curry crafted in the early hours of Friday morning by Leanne.

All of this marvellous food was washed down with far too much beer and wine and then, just when everyone had decided they were full, Christine revealed multiple large dishes of her plum crumble and an absolute vat of custard, all of which needed washing down with even more of the wine.

As if by magic the plates disappeared, the washing up fairies must have been at it - ouch!, sorry Becky, Tony, Joanne, Martin and anyone else who got stuck into that mountain of pots and pans - and hey presto, the room was neatly back to normal.

Our very own entertainment secretary Leanne got to work making sure there was no rest for the over-fed, and soon there was arm wrestling, hand stands, rolly-pollies, and sumo wrestling in full swing. This was followed by a more sedate, if interminably long game of Trivial Pursuit before we all decide to call it night.

'it was felt wise to abandon ship'

As we headed for bed, the weather was on all of our minds and sure enough, the rain forecast for early in the morning arrived bang on time, so it was felt wise to abandon ship as soon as breakfast was downed - ie not quite as early as it sounds.

Tony and Becky were first to leave and it wasn't long before the phone was ringing to let us know there was going to be a struggle getting past Rydal Water, so we'd better get a move on. Further calls followed with updates of more and more impassable roads and ETA's of around three hours to the Fylde. I finished up heading via Cockermouth and Carlisle to get to the motorway - which was quite a diversion!

At the end of it all - and though our traditional visit to the Eagle & Child at Staveley had sadly fallen victim to the weather - I think all of those who'd attended our Annual Fell Race will agree that once again it was another great and thoroughly memorable weekend.



Martin Dale



Tony & Matt Hulme



Richard Duerden



Matt Hulme

As is our Annual Fell Race tradition, last year's winner, Kevan was handicapped out into last place. Nothing personal Kevan. First back to the hut was Richard in an impressive time of 53 minutes, but was pipped to the post - and denied a double win - only by Tony Hulme, who took the mens handicap trophy by arriving one handicapped minute earlier in a pretty decent time of 57 minutes.

Excellent handicapping saw a satisfyingly close result for the women, with only a couple of minutes between first and third places - and Karen taking the trophy.

Well done to all for yet another brilliant, sporting event!

Runner	TIME (mins)	HANDICAP (time)		POSITION no h/cap	RESULTS		
		(mins)	(time)		overall	male	female
Tom Knowles	131	60	71	9	8	5	
Martin Dale	70	15	55	3	3	3	
Leanne Sutton	76	15	61	6	5		2
Tony Hulme	57	10	47	2	1	1	
Joanne Leadbetter	72	10	62	5	6		3
Karen Hicks	70	10	60	3	4		1
Kevan Ebbrell	77	5	72	7	9	6	
Richard Duerden	53	5	48	1	2	2	
Dave Hicks	81	15	66	8	7	7	
Matt Hulme (guest)	50	N/A					

Who Was There?

The Sporting Runners
(see list on the left)

The Club Supporters
Christine Fry, Rebecca Hicks & Caroline Webb

The Guest Supporters
Suzanne Duerden and Matt's girlfriend Carly

Dinner at Home

as recollected by the organiser, Steve Longworth

With no less than 86 of us booked in at the Villa in Wrea Green for our first Annual Dinner on home turf for some fifty years, everyone's hopes and expectations were at an all-time high!

With numbers greater than for quite some time, only an early and unseasonable attack of humbugitis could have stood in the way of us all having a great night out.

But then there always was that possibility, which is why the Christmas pixie scurrying around to welcome everyone - and looking rather nervous - was me, well aware of just who'd be carrying the can if things went awry.



It soon became apparent though that I needn't have worried at all. Our new venue seemed to be to everyone's liking



and from the off there was lots of laughter and banter coming from every corner of the room.



It was gratifying to see old acquaintances renewed, while other less-seasoned revelers were finding their feet and making new friends. And like many of us there, I too met folks for the very first time and was particularly privileged to sit with and to spend the evening in the delightful company of Dorothy who's husband, the late Jack Jowett, was a founder member of the Fylde Mountaineering Club.



Proceedings began with a welcome from Jayne Taylor, head of the Villa functions team, who so helpfully held my hand while gearing up for the event. This was followed by an exceptionally well prepared and beautifully presented meal that was hard to fault, after which we were treated to the usual banter from the floor as appointed members made brave attempts to deliver their carefully-honed speeches.

While practising their oratory for one last time in front of the bathroom mirror, they may have confidently anticipated a hushed, attentive audience for their knowing quips and witty observations. If they did, they really ought to have known better; remembered what happened last year and realised that they too were in for the usual humiliation that's especially saved for these occasions.

not so cockahoop any more!

It's worth pointing out that it was at about this time that the Villa ran out of every last drop of the Cockahoop that we'd ordered! That's right. All three barrels, or 264 pints had gone! . . . and the night still young. AARGH!!

But worry not! With extra Wainwright on tap and everyone in fine fettle, the banter and heckling began with MC Martin Dale doing all he could to call us to order for the important though sombre toasts to the Queen, the Duke of Lancaster and also, to absent friends . . .



before things started to unravel and from then on, to slide unceremoniously downhill.

Darren made the best of his Chairman's Speech by honouring in particular, Dorothy Jowett's long and distinguished association with the club and also the many members who had managed to attend more than fifty Annual Dinners.



As well as stalwarts of the redoubtable 'Over Fifties Club', those of us who'd faced set-backs through ill health or injury in the course of the year were also mentioned.

And then it was trophies time! First up was for the winner of the Annual Fell Race.



This was awarded to Tony Hulme, who's modest 10 minute handicap had caused him no problem at all.

There were the usual mutterings about timing errors (he won by a measly minute) and even a suggestion that he was beasted around the course by his lad Matt, but since the guest runner son got back long before dad gasped home, that couldn't possibly be true.



Peter Roscoe, who presented the trophy, recounted at length the fascinating history behind its origin and specifically, about the source of the wood for its base.

Anyhow . . . after all that, it was time for the Annual Raft Race Trophy, which surprised everyone, especially since the last time we actually had a raft race was in 1990.

Sanity was restored when we realised that the trophy itself had recently resurfaced after many years forgotten and hidden away at the back of someone's cupboard. Maybe it's time to dust it down and reinstate the event?



Next up, standing in for the recently-spliced Karen Hicks, Dave Wood presented the hotly-contested Lush of the Year Award - to Andy Hird for his heroically boozy trip up to Scotland.

Dave & Karen Hicks arrived just in time for Dave to accept The Mug of the Year Award



from Barry Crook, for his many sterling if not always deliberate attempts to ensure he was the only one in the running.

continues overleaf >



and here are a few more to help you remember it by



Could it be that Dave's new bride has turned his brain to mush? Perhaps we'll never know and it doesn't look as though he'll know either!

With the speeches over and trophies in the hands of their new guardians, all that remained was to bask in that curiously gentle winding-down time, as we carried on into the early hours, enjoying each other's company and reminiscing of times past.

And so it was, with a final goodnight to the few remaining stragglers propping up the residents bar (perhaps making an early bid for next year's LOTY trophy) that I finally left the Villa at about 1.30.

With 2015 success behind us, we can now confidently look forward to yet another great Annual Dinner in 2016 where, all being well, I'll see you all again.

Steve

(with a few allowed-for but entirely unhelpful embellishments from the editor)



Update Morocco

in words & pictures by Martin Bennett and photos by Dave Cundy



the story so far . . .

If you've read this journal habitually you'll be aware, by dint of several enthusiastic reports, of a love affair several members have had with a small mountain range in Morocco – the Anti Atlas Mountains.

Begun in 1991 it's development unravelled gradually for 15 years, but then something of an explosion took place when the publication of a slim and rather esoteric guide book and a local road building programme coincided.

The guide book alerted the World to the opportunities; the road improvements made new valleys accessible and the gold rush began in earnest.

The last decade has seen four new guide books plus annual supplements and growing numbers of climbers repeating a plethora of new routes.

The pioneers of new routes continue to stick rigidly to the traditionally protected ethic and for that reason most climbers seen here are British, anxious to escape the rash of bolting that is turning adventure into sport all over Europe.

That's the past in a nutshell, so how are things in 2015?

The answer to that question is, from the experience of my two trips: slowing down. By this I mean that during these trips, both taken at the plum Anti Atlas periods, not only were there less climbers (and tourists in general) operating in the region but also I had less partners to choose from. In past years there have been 4 or 5 members to accompany one on these forays, rising to 7 or 8 by 2014.

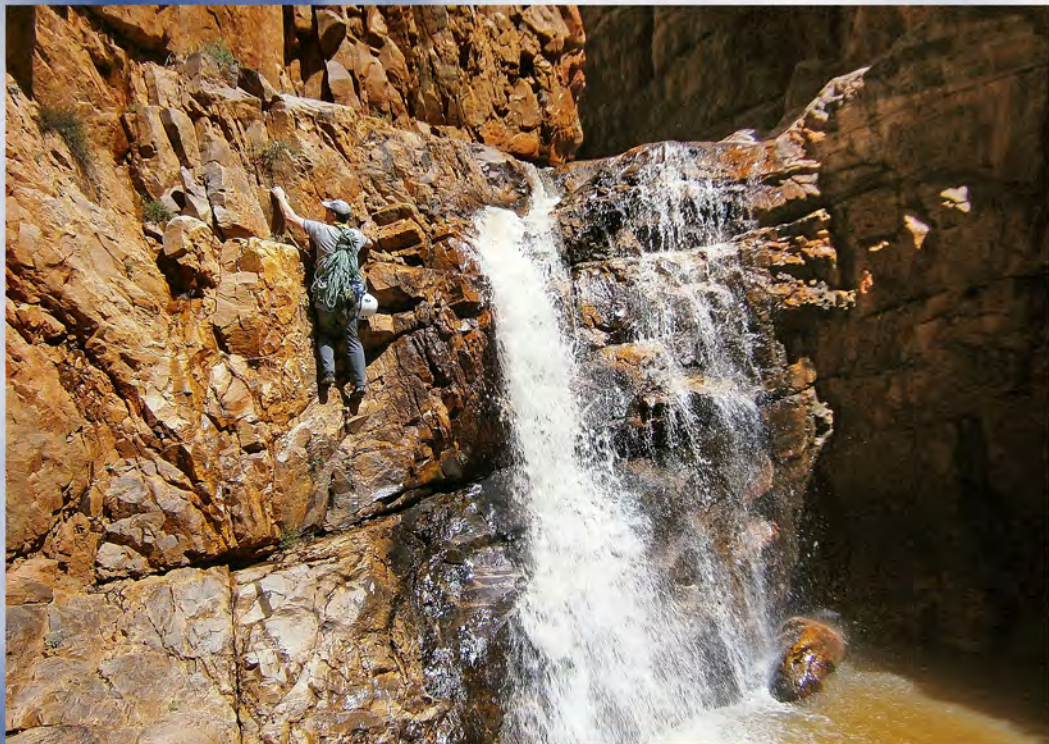
This year there were only two of us on each climbing trip plus Woody and Hal beavering away for weeks at a time researching the pathways to little trod summits.

Less climbers. Less tourists. I think conclusions can be arrived at regarding the causes of these phenomena, but whatever the reason it's led to an increase in the feeling of isolation one experiences on these wonderful climbs in beautiful locations, together with a heightened awareness of the committing nature of climbing there.

continues >



An example of the road improvements. A tyre fire was burned overnight to damage the rock to facilitate breaking it to widen the road into the Tamza Valley. The protagonists were happy to drag the remnants aside so we could drive through – quickly before our tyres melted on the hot gravel, ashes and tyre wires!



In March, my first visit this year, with Simon Fenna, the weather showed a pattern I'd not experienced before. For our first 4 days there was cloud over not only the high summits surrounding Jebel el Kest to the North of Tafraoute, but also to the South.

Happily for us there remained, throughout this time, a hole in the cloud permitting blue skies above The Ameln Valley where there are many many crags and climbs. True, we felt restricted to this one valley for the first half of the trip, but I think you'll see from the following pictures this was not much of a hardship.

After 4 days during which, in the 'bad weather', we managed *only* 750 metres of sunny climbing (!) the weather went back to normal and we spread our wings to the higher valleys to the North of Jebel el Kest, climbing in Afantinzar, Sidi m'Zal and Samazar.

Despite the aforementioned quietness on the tourist front the town goes about it's business as the hub of this agricultural region in the same old ways, it's characters running true to form, market day providing the usual hubbub and riot of colour, as well as the most charming robbers imaginable.

He overcharged me - but I didn't mind

(ed: you make it seem almost a pleasure to be so amiably fleeced)



Our favourite beggar enjoying her morning tea in the sun



My November visit was with Dave Cundy (left: on pitch 2, Crag K, Tower 2) In every way it reinforced my view of the subtle change in the region when viewed as a visitor – quieter than in recent years.

We had 10 days climbing in perfect weather – well - 9 – about 5 days in, without prior decision, we stayed in bed – rest day essential despite the continued sunshine.



above and also on back cover of the magazine: Anergui Canyon to 'Bullfrog Serenade' - an approach and climb combined to make a brilliant day out

Simon Fenna (right) on pitch 3 of 'Vanishing Point' at Adrar Umlil

Simon Fenna (main photo, far right) on 'Right Off' at Tamaltoucht Tower 5

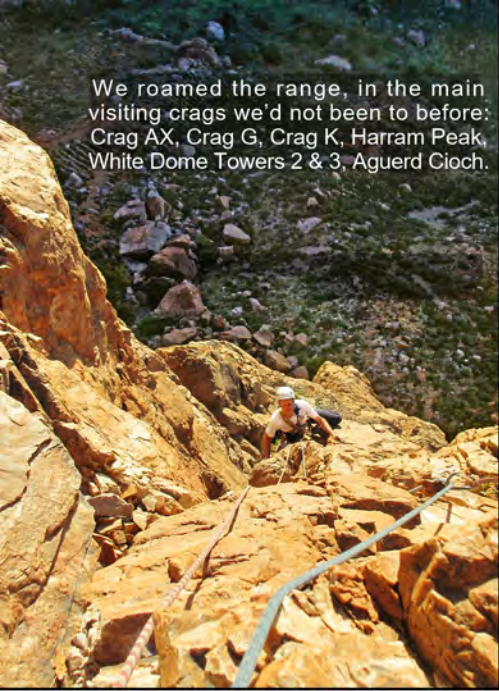


There are no helicopters or rescue facilities and one must be totally self reliant.

To our acquaintances among the locals - business people all - restaurateurs, hoteliers, carpet sellers the lack of travellers, be they climbers, walkers, bikers or shoppers is of course of major concern - their livelihoods are being hit.

continues overleaf >

We roamed the range, in the main visiting crags we'd not been to before: Crag AX, Crag G, Crag K, Harram Peak, White Dome Towers 2 & 3, Aguerd Cioch.



(left) Dave Cundy on 'Lion King' P2 and (below) on 'Golden Compass' P2 Adrar Umllil Tower



(above) me on 'Golden Compass' P1 Adrar Umllil Tower 3

An exception was at Dave's request to make his first visit to 'our' Fylde crag, where we repeated the first pitch of 'Sez Les' in order to make the first ascent of an upper pitch which, combined with a first pitch done earlier with Ali Welsh, makes a new route called Cezanne.

قرملا يلى اعلطتن نחנו
برغمل ايف قمداقلا

And that's what I have to say about Anti Atlas 2015 but I'm hoping this won't be the last sunset I enjoy over there!

Martin

WINTER SOCIALS

a round-up of the social meets so far and a reminder of what's to come

The Fylde Mountaineering Club

invites you to a fascinating evening on



The Fylde Mountaineering Club

invites you to an intriguing evening with



The Fylde Mountaineering Club

invites you to a thrilling evening with star climber



Emma is one of the very best female climbers on the current British scene. Winner of the British Junior Bouldering Championship, Emma has made onsight ascents of high-end classic rock routes and is only the second British woman to climb grade E9. She has flashed both E7 and E8a, headpointed E9 and redpointed F8b-c.

IMPRESSED? You ought to be! OVERWHELMED? You needn't be because Emma also enjoys going hill walking in the Lakes with her family and catching up with her non-climbing friends.

Come along and join us at the Old Town Hall Tavern in Poulton-le-Fylde at 8pm Wednesday February 10th. Everyone's welcome - FREE ENTRY whether a member or not!

EMMA TWYFORD is here at 8pm on Wednesday February 10th at the Old Town Hall, Poulton

OCTOBER:

Mike Howe told us of his adventures following the unique levada paths of Madeira.



DECEMBER:

Dave Turnbull, main man at the BMC, mixed mountain tales with the BMC inside story.



The Fylde Mountaineering Club

invites you to join us as we explore beautiful



The Fylde Mountaineering Club

invites you to join us on a thrilling tour



NOVEMBER:

Dave Earle waxed lyrical about the wonders of Corsica - and the terrors of the island's GR20.



JANUARY:

Dave Bibby, impressed us with his magnificent photographs of winter and summer in Iceland.



OUR GUEST SERIES FINISHES ON A REAL HIGH WITH ONE OF THE VERY TOP CLIMBERS IN THE UK

Emma Twyford is here at 8pm on Wednesday February 10th at the Old Town Hall, Poulton



AND DEFINITELY NOT TO BE MISSED!

Our March winter social is another very special event

It's our Annual Photo Competition which you're invited to enter and - just as importantly - which you're asked to judge as well!

FMC PHOTO COMP 2016

The audience doing the judging worked well last year and will again - at The Old Town Hall on Wednesday March 9th at 8pm so come along and join in the fun!

Competition entry details are in the latest What's On or by contacting John Wiseman

TALKING TURKEY

Dave & Karen Hicks tell it like it is and remind the editor of what was missed

Karen and Dave Hicks arranged a trip to Turkey last October. There were no takers from others in the club so instead, it became a belated and well-deserved honeymoon for them. They spent 11 days in the south, on the Teke Peninsular at the Koyevi Olympos Countryhouse just over 50 miles south of the airport at Antalya.

They rated very highly the spotless but homely, accommodation as well as the food, including fresh eggs for breakfast from the chicken run in the surrounding garden full of wonderful pomegranate trees.



Their trip was an enjoyable mix of sightseeing, relaxing, swimming and sampling the local food and drink. They managed a spot of climbing as well - mostly around Cirali, just a few miles to the north of their base.

The Olympos area as a whole has been a favourite destination for years and for good reason. It's the kind of place where you can follow up a good day on the crags with a short walk through ancient Greek ruins and a swim in the Mediterranean.

The climbing takes in several smaller limestone crags within walking distance of each other. Although not all that consolidated it's more than possible to include two or three walls a day with your pick of about 15-20 routes on each.

The rock quality is generally good and the walls vary from vertical to overhung. The steeper walls often have smaller tufa formations making for fun sport climbing while the vertical walls can be very thin and technical.

Our honeymooners though, stuck to more modest grades and Karen's first lead on *Ticket to the Moon* (right) in the Kabe 2 sector was a grade 4 climb as is *Ocakbasi* (below) to it's left, where Dave seems blithely unaware of Karen's 'relaxed' attitude to belay technique. Let's hope insurance is up to date - especially if he relied on anything as dodgy as this lower-off they spotted at Horguc.



But it wasn't all day in, day out action. They also went further afield, to see the impressive ruins at Termessos (below) just to the north of Antalya



and to its west, the popular climbing area at Geyikbayiri. (right)



Particular favourites though were the harbours at Phaselis about 15 miles north of where they were staying.

They returned here several times, especially to Battle Harbour (left) the most popular of the three, where they found the best beach and amenities.

Makes you almost wish you'd been there as well eh?



from Geoff Brindle, in full literary flow

A Fouging We Will Go!

C'mon Gramps, grab yer climbing gear, we'll do a coupla V. Diffs, then you can be the belay bunny'

Thus I was introduced to the shady world of Rock(garden) Climbing, by the redoubtable Andrew Dunhill. Soon, the Mullah's Fiesta was speeding its way down the curvy lanes below Catbells, heading in the direction of The Bowderstone.

Wearing a dull black rope around my neck, I trudged alongside His Cragship to the slopes above The Bowderstone where we blundered through bushes and across screes until we reached our destination, Woden's Needle.

Uncle Andy then explained the routes to be tackled and we geared up for the assault.



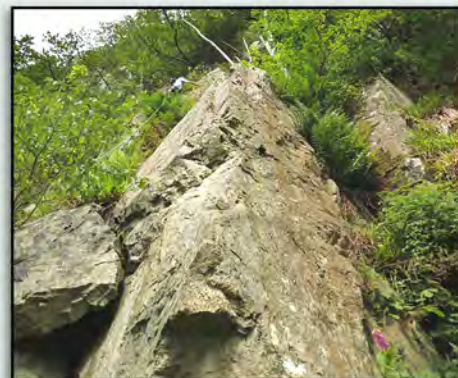
Wearing some incredibly vile puce top (left) rejected years back by a Lincoln hippy, Andy pulled himself up into a fouging stance.

Then the shower of detritus began, and I was soon covered in dead leaves, tufts of various types of fern and bracken, whilst the local flies applied their practised jaws to my ankles. The scenery is reminiscent of Jurassic Park, with Andy the scuttling Velociraptor, attacking the herbivorous growth with a vengeance.



After his gardening session, he returned to find his belayer looking like he had just crawled out of a compost heap, but at least he now removed the offending top. I readied myself to repeat the climb and was soon surrounded by primeval ferns, mosses and other exotica, but I enjoyed the experience and it is definitely good rock and a quality climb with wonderful views across the valley.

Next came a new V. Diff route, just to the other side of the needle, an Andy original:



Kew't Gardens (above) which he conquered with the minimum of fuss, and with very little cleaning required. I found this to be a successful route and well worth the effort.

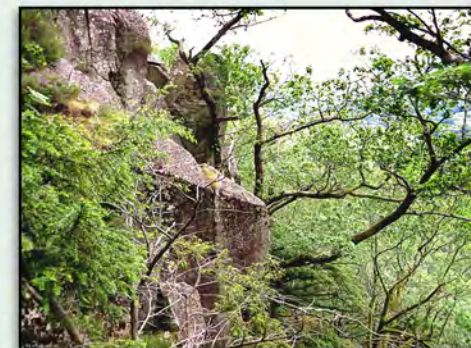


We then moved higher up the hill, to find **Diehard**, HVS. (above) which Andy led with a low-level amount of cleaning and whingeing. 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush' becomes 'two hands in the bush are worth one on the rock' (ed: steady on lad - that nearly got spelled all wrong) as you push and ease yourself through luxuriant stretches of botanical specimens whilst gripping an ill-positioned holly bush with both hands. It's all part of the dedicated Fougier's art.

This was an interesting two-pitch route, which includes some wonderful, ferns and mosses, which unfortunately have old holly leaves hidden amongst them, causing prickly irritation to the sensitive digits of the rock(garden) climber.

Moving higher up again, The Mullah tackled, **Punchline** using a top rope. After rather a lot of cursing he was soon coursing up this 2* route, again with a certain degree of refurbishment carried out along the way. We were lucky to escape a heavy rain shower, which chose the far side of the valley as its drop zone.

Finally we approached **Thor's Ridge** (below)



which was guarded at the bottom by an army of nettles, but, skipping lightly over the stinging patch, The GM soon scaled this herbaceous challenge, accompanied by many a jolly comment as to the level of weeding required.

I followed Our Leader up and once again found this V.Diff route to be curiously entertaining.

And so ended a fougier's delight and time to return to the hut for some vegetarian cocoa and a quick rub down with *The Amateur Gardener*.

Geoff



One of the less demanding climbs in the area.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WHO WAS THERE?

Viv & Mark Broughton
Becky Hicks & Tony Hulme,
Nick Hepburn, Matt Reed
Geoff Brindle, Chris Thistlethwaite,
Hal Rzadkiewicz & Dave Wood
and me, Christine Fry

Well, it looked as though the New Year would be starting about as badly as the old one finished, so ask yourself ...

... to go or not to go - that was the question. Stair for New Year anyone? With all the flooding in the Lakes, would we even get there?

I said I'd put on a buffet, since it was no trouble and I rather liked the idea of us all sitting down to eat together. But as we neared the fateful day, my worries began to grow, especially when some members expressed concern about the situation with the flooding, so I really wasn't at all sure just how many would make it up there. Anyway, in the end, nine of us had signed up to come, so it was 'Game On' and I decided to go ahead, rang the Swinney to see if the road was clear, and checked the forecast for the New Year's weather.

Sunny spells and showers sounded encouraging. If only it were true. Sunny spells my foot, because it persisted down every miserable inch of the way to the hut! I arrived around 4ish to find Matt already there and he reckoned that Nick would be coming later. I wasn't expecting either of them so that was nice - and now we were eleven! Geoff and Chris arrived about tea time - via the Middle Ruddings of course - and it seemed that Mark and Viv and Tony and Becky were busy shopping in Keswick at some place called The George. Never heard of it myself.

But soon, tummies began to rumble so it was time to get the buffet on the go. With Geoff's help the food was laid out, just in time for Mark and Viv, Becky and Tony to arrive followed by Woody and Hal who'd also been shopping at The George. Everyone sat down to loads of food and roasts - I love 'em! - and though I went a bit mad with the spread, I reckon it's better too much than too little!

Hunger satisfied, it was time to partake of some ale at The Coledale, which we discovered wasn't quite as busy as usual for a New Year's Eve, but there were still a fair number in there. Nick finally arrived some time around 10pm - hooray - and only about eleven hours later than planned! After plenty of catching up, laughter and ale it was time for the New Year fireworks. As usual, the display was lovely and lasted almost a quarter of an hour.

Once inside again, more ale and merriment was had, then it was time to walk (or wobble) back



Chris, Nick, Matt and Dave (who's round is it anyway) Wood

to base at about 1-30ish on a clear and lovely starry night, with music & chat back at the hut until about 4am when bed was finally calling.

Friday dawned dry. Amazing! It wasn't a bad day at all! Time to play! Hal and Woody decided to walk up Causey Pike and beyond, Viv and Mark took their bikes up to Whinlatter for some fun in the forest, and Matt and Nick also decided to wander up to Causey Pike and Sail. It was home for Tony and Becky as well as Geoff and Chris though.

Having got up late (ed: really??) I decided to just take my 'bins' and walk into Braithwaite sussing out the wildlife along the way. I did consider walking

by the river and though there were a few people about, it seemed nobody was going down that path and the river was in full fast flow so I decided to stick to the road. It was all very pleasant and the snow on the fells was lovely.

Finally, as I came into Braithwaite, it was brought home to me just how badly these poor people had been affected by the floods. Outside one house there was a washing machine and other possessions, the General Store was empty with plaster hanging off the walls, and the flood defences were all shored up by the river at the bridge.



I do hope it isn't too long before they get things sorted, though I suspect it will take quite some time. A wander up to the Coledale for a nice cup of coffee (yes, coffee) and a bowl of tasty homemade tomato soup was next, then back to the hut to find that we'd all had a nice day. Tea time came and more buffet was had, then later it was time to think about where to go to partake of some ale.

By then, the rain had started again so the Swinney was chosen as the pub of the night. I'd checked it out earlier on my walk. There were two blonde ales and an amber so that seemed OK, but by the time we got there, one of the blondes had already 'gone' but at least there were two other decent ales to go at. But unfortunately, not for long, and before we knew it, the other blonde had run dry as well, leaving just the amber to keep us going.

I did ask if they could put another one on but they said there was none left. I really like the Swinney. It's cosy and characterful but they do seem to let us down sometimes, which is a shame. Anyway, we soldiered on as best we could and had a good night with plenty of laughs all round!

On Saturday, Matt & Nick were off biking in Whinlatter, Viv and Mark were tackling Causey Pike and Woody and Hal were going shopping in Keswick, but the weather became a bit iffy later on, so I decided to head for home.



Despite all the flooding, a great time was had by us all and it was definitely worth going up for.

Happy New Year to you all, and I hope the year ahead is a Happy Healthy and Adventurous one!

Christine

Intro 3

INTRODUCTORY MEMBERS MEET
September 2015 report by Dave Wood

A spell of very reasonable autumn weather provided a much needed opportunity for our new introductory members to sample the considerable delights of Lake District rock.

This intro meet, the 3rd in the 2015 syllabus, was held at Langdale which, unlike Stair, has fewer low level crags that are easy to access.

On the Saturday we headed for Long Scar, high up on the hillside above Wrynose Pass, a crag short enough not to intimidate but long enough to be able to get things flowing.

All three had climbed before but were looking to broaden their experience, and Long Scar with its range of grades in the V.Diff to VS range, provided an excellent opportunity to tie on the front end.

On hand to lend support were: Chris This, Geoff Brindle, Caroline Webb, Dave Hicks, Karen Purves, Becky Hicks, Tony Hulme, Martin Dale, Joanne Leadbetter and her son Sam, plus Hal and me.

The excitement arising from the day's activities dictated that nerves should be calmed by a visit to the Three Shires where we were joined by Simon Fenna and our Chairman Darren Hartley.

An excellent evening ensued, tarnished only by England's capitulation to Wales in the Rugby World Cup.



Our two intro members Andy Ingle (*above right*) and Andy Holland (*above left*) were joined by Neil Baines (*right*) who came along to sample what we had to offer and has now joined the club.



On Sunday we awoke to an incredibly rare event - the second of two dry days! Family commitments having depleted our numbers, the remaining seven of us decided on a combined scrambling and climbing route and where better than Middlefell Buttress on Raven Crag? (*above*)

A rope of three & a rope of four secured our passage and left enough time for us to soak up the remaining sun outside the Old Dungeon Ghyll below.

All in all, an excellent weekend on dry Lakeland rock and our chance to fill the Little Langdale cottage to capacity. Many thanks to our introductory and aspiring members for attending and to the regular crew for lending their valuable support.

Dave

CORNISH CREAM

and a dash of Devon Delight with Andy Dunhill and Nick Hepburn

I've always enjoyed trips to sun-soaked Devon and Cornwall, so Nick Hepburn and I thought that rather than going foreign on our annual summer climbing trip, we'd head for the South West coast instead.

2015 was not exactly sun-soaked, although we did get soaked a few times! We had gales, rain and some interludes of hot sunshine during the latter part of July and early August. Starting on the north coast, we camped at Hartland, an exposed site where for some of the time, our tent was in danger of blowing away.

On the good days, we got some interesting climbing in. On Maer Cliff, we did the 2 star E1 - *Kleptomaniac*, a bold route with in-situ pegs the main protection, which is fine but 22 years of salt corrosion doesn't instil confidence.

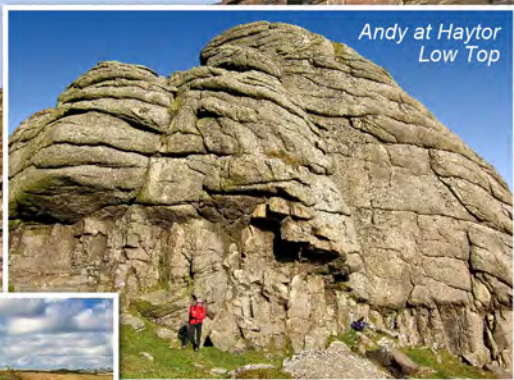
On Oldwalls Point, classic 3 star E1 *Matchless* was safer, though E2 might be more realistic. This was followed by *Coitionary Tales* HVS on Hippa Rock, a good route with a serious grass descent. After that, on an evening visit to Sharpnose, we were still too early to access routes at the seaward end, but a quick abseil to the bottom and climb out on *Out of the Blue* was a reminder of just how good the climbing down here can be.

On one dreadful day, Nick decided to go for a surfing lesson. Most of the schools were closed but he lucked out at Widemouth Bay while I went for a walk along the coast to Bude. I could barely stand for much of the time, it was w-i-l-d!

Hoping to escape the worst of the weather we decided to head for south Devon - which worked - and we managed a couple of days climbing some great routes on Hay Tor - four or five in the VS to E1 category - all of which were worthwhile and good value for the grade. The views here are excellent, but Dartmoor granite is an acquired taste and the tor does tend to catch the wind.

Daddyhole Main Cliff provided more sheltered surroundings where we did *Gargantua*, a 2 star E1 and *Gates of Eden*, an excellent HVS. It seemed strange, gearing up at the top car park with families all around, going for walks or having picnics, but everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. It's a very busy area and many of the campsites were full.

Next on our trip, we headed south to camp at St Just, not far from Land's End.



Andy at Haytor Low Top



left: Andy sussing routes from above on Maer Cliff

Although the weather improved for our second week, we still lost a couple of days, on one of which Nick took to the waves again - on a surf board hired at Sennen.

Crags visited were Chair Ladder (right) Carn Kenidjack, Carn Boel, Zawn Kellys, Carn Barra and St Loy (lower right) Several routes in the HVS/E1 range were climbed, probably most memorably, *American Dream* E1 in Zawn Kellys and *Immaculate Groove* E1 on Carn Boel.

The latter only gets one star but deserves more and we thought an E2 grade more reasonable. The groove proper is sustained and technical, then at the top, a strenuous jam through an overhang proved thought-provoking.

The sun was hot, the sea blue and, adding a bit of spice, the tide was coming in. A classic sea cliff outing! Fish & chips and a view of the fireworks at Lands End sealed the day nicely.

We also visited The Lizard and did a couple of routes on The Hollywood Walls. It's a quieter area with a charm all of its own. Weather was not so kind though and climbs were slotted in between showers. But it was a worthwhile day.

Nick hadn't been to the Blue Anchor in Helston so we had a take-away pizza opposite the pub and he sampled some of their Spingo in-house ales.

Overall it was a good trip and we both agreed it was time we visited the southwest more often . . . but hopefully with kinder weather waiting for us!



folded and contorted strata at Maer Cliff



WINTER WORKING WEEKEND

16-17 January 2016
report by Andy Dunhill



I made a couple of veggie curries for Saturday evening and Joanne and Miss Fryup rustled up cheese & biscuits for pudding.



Following a Fire Risk Assessment we're having a lot of electrical work done and that should be completed soon. There'll be a second new ceramic hob, several new plug sockets with USB phone charging points (no wifi yet!), external safety switches to both showers, new outside lights, new fire exit lights and a few other things.

Saturday morning began bright and sunny but by mid afternoon it was snowing quite hard, so we all went for a walk, though for most, that meant following footsteps in the snow to the pub.

Sunday was cold and clear with snow covering the hills, so the morning was spent clearing up and in the afternoon most of us went for an enjoyable walk over the nearby fells in snowy wintry conditions - a splendid conclusion to a highly productive Working Weekend.

My thanks to all those who attended.

Andy

Another good turnout saw the hut getting a thorough clean-up

OUR CHAINGANG MEMBERS:

Christine Barbier, Geoff Brindle, Barry Crook, Martin Dale, Richard Duerden, Dave Earle, Christine Fry, Dave & Karen Hicks, Mike Howe, Joanne Leadbetter, Chris Thistlethwaite and on the Saturday: Chris Campbell and Caroline Web

Most of the team had been to the pub on Friday evening so it was a late night. Ms Fryup promised to rise early and bring us all tea and toast, but as she turned out to be horizontal champion on Saturday morning, it was chalked up as a major fail on the promise front.

Half the team were tasked to sort out the garden. Jobs tackled included clearing out the stream, throwing the leaves over the wall into the wood, repairs to the dry stone wall and gate, removing brambles etc., washing down external windows, removing the redundant outside lights and taking down the equally redundant Christmas decorations!

Insides of all the windows were cleaned, the bookcase was tidied up and old magazines thrown out, rooms and bunks were cleaned, new shelves were put up in the toilets, pans and crockery were checked and some retired from service, running repairs were made to the curtains in the main dormitory, the toilets were given a thorough scrubbing and supplies were replenished.



All the photos are by Christine Fry or Andy Dunhill

A bit of a stretch but Christine Barbier has got it sorted

Barry, Martin, Joanne and Christine F getting stuck in

Christine B hard at work while Andy is hard at supervising

Joanne's Windowlens moment

Yes, it's redundant Mike... but is it still live?



STICKY NOTE FROM ANDY
The gap at the end of the dry stone wall into the wood has been blocked to keep sheep out of our grounds and us out of the wood, to which we have no right of access or use.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER THE SHOW MUST GO ON

and FMC Ladies *will* meet come fair weather or foul!

After the devastating floods in Cumbria not only ruined homes and businesses, but also washed away roads and bridges the week before, things weren't looking too promising for the Ladies' December Meet.

report by
Mary Aspin

Would we be able to reach the hut and would there be power if we got there? Was the Theatre by the Lake - for which most of us had tickets - affected, and would it be open?

Some anxious calls on the Monday to the Adventure Centre at Stair and to the Theatre assured me that the hut could be reached and although the Saturday performance of *The Snow Queen* had been cancelled, it was business as usual.

The show must go on! Emails to some of the Ladies (especially the cooks!) resulted in a vote to go ahead. Nevertheless, all eyes were on weather forecasts and road conditions during the rest of the week.

Friday afternoon saw early arrivals prepare the post-theatre mulled wine and put up the tinsel.

The latter is usually Liz Stephenson's job but unusually, she didn't arrive until tea time. Being delayed by snow, she only just made it through before the A66 eastbound from Penrith junction was closed.

Because of a bridge closure, the Theatre had to be accessed the long way round via the intersection. It all looked very Christmassy with lights in the trees and a band playing carols. Large buckets were being proffered for donations to the flood relief effort and donations were duly given.

Oh dear! There we were, enjoying a self-indulgent weekend whilst local people were struggling to clean up their homes and businesses.

Saturday morning brought sleet and the tops totally obscured, so no one ventured out onto the fells.

Instead, a walk to Hawes End was decided upon - to have a look at the lake and then carry on through the woods to Nichol End. In anticipation of the worst, Roger Newby, the owner of the marina had managed to empty the freezer and remove some kitchen equipment on the previous weekend, and while the cafe downstairs had been flooded, teas and coffees were available for customers upstairs. He even allowed packed lunches to be eaten. A true gentleman - especially with sunken and damaged boats to deal with at the same time.



Back at the hut, preparations for our feast got underway despite the fact that there was no sign of Gill Fenner, who was due to have arrived that day after a party elsewhere the night before. Since she was in charge of the roasted root veg part of our feast, this was causing alarm, and then, just as we were discussing Plan B (salad), Gill crashed through the door bearing the necessary.

All was well, the menu complete and the cooks were swinging into action. With the table already laid, it was time to uncork the bottles, light the candles and enjoy aperitifs. Eventually, twelve of us sat down to a memorable dinner followed by a Christmas Quiz and carols sung with great gusto; throats liberally lubricated with vino.

Amazingly, next morning the tops were dusted with snow and so Angela, Steph, Frances, Liz Rawcliffe and Gill, after tackling their share of the chores, were kitted up for a trip up Catbells before the rest of us had even finished breakfast.

As a young guest once commented - we ladies know how to party!

Things turned out rather wet and slippery for them, but they made the effort to get out, while those of us remaining indoors finished off and left early for home.

So yes, despite the conditions, we'd all made it and and we all enjoyed yet another successful meet.

Who Was There?

Mary Aspin, Pat Bennett, Sue Denmark, Gill Fenner, Christine Fry, Steph Hope, Angela Lovatt, Liz Rawcliffe, Pam Ruthven, Liz Stevenson, Jennie Tolley and Frances Watkins.



Frances



Angela



Sue



Frances, Liz, Gill & Angela

Anagui Canyon in the Anti Atlas, Morocco

photo: Martin Bennett (see pages 17-20)



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