

FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

NEWSLETTER

APRIL, 1984.

EDITOR'S NOTES

A.G.M. BUTTRESS, 35th ASCENT

Well here I am again, butterflies dancing in the old tum, but I tell myself its a good night for a climb and no sense in hanging back; fortysix of us on the rope and sometime before 8.00 pm we're off.

The grassy approach slopes go easily enough, chairman's address and the usual reports slip by under foot without anyone getting ruffled and by the time we reach the foot of the climb proper I'm feeling a bit more settled myself.

It doesn't last, the first problem, chairman's chimney stares us in the face and I felt the shakes coming on, still some sort of attempt has to be made, failure at this stage means total humiliation. Once again Barrie Crook holds the key, good old Barrie. Anyway we're off the deck now and commitment is the name of the game. Which reminds me of the job in hand. I look up and there it is, Committee Wall, smooth and featureless and stretching up a long way, but at least its free of ice this year. I swallow hard and make a start it goes..... great.

Most of the pegs from last year remain in place on the difficult bits though Dave Westby seems to have dropped out. Anyway we hammer in Piton Rosecoe and climb on. All the rest are still there - Martin Dale, Dave Greenhalgh, John Wiseman, Don Nichol and Phil Caley. Dave Earle wobbles disconcertingly but finally takes the strain. We're going well now but just when we start to get complacent some loose Roscoe comes whilstling down the crag suggesting the Treasurer might need some protection and we put in a chunky friend, George Parker.

Suddenly we have a choice of routes, something that doesn't often happen and I'm climbing on new holds, Andy Blaylock and Tom Knowles. Then Dave Westby comes to hand and finally a couple of stiff pulls on Mary Aspin's jugs and I'm on the stance wow! (Dave Earle can't handle this and ropes off in disgust.)

We take a breather and have a look around, everyone seems O.K., but there's a long way to go. yet and the next pitch is waiting patiently. Any Other Business Slabs. - Odd pitch this, sometimes the angle seems steeper than others and has been known to cause trouble.

This year it seems in fairly good condition and apart from a few snags in the rope, poses no real problems.

One or two of the team propose to increase subs. - a move we haven't tried for years - but the party vote overwhelmingly to stick to the route as it is and we climb up safely. The next few feet bring problems however with a few squabbles about the best bivouac spots in Scotland and when they should be used. I gathered some people have taken to staying at Pontins at Loch Leven outside school holidays and that this isn't allowed, so its back to the C.I.C. Hut next year.

Then just as I thought the climb was easing, we hit it, or do we? No one seems sure: Everyone on the rope knew it might be there but up till now nobody dared voice an opinion. Does it exist or doesn't it? The mythical Stair Porch Overhang. Debate has raged for some time about this last great problem, thought to have been discovered by the famous Wrea Green guide J.D. Sealey, but never confirmed. Now we cling precariously to the rock directly beneath it. We think? We can't climb over it if it isn't there and we can't climb through it if it is. People start getting impatient and action results. Gerry Senior says it was kicked down ages ago and if it wasn't he's quite prepared to kick it down now and we should stop wasting time. Then with an almost detached air of confidence Piton Roscoe takes the lead and suddenly the difficulty seems to be below us though no one understands quite what was done and if the Porch Overhang might still be there lurking in the inky depths.

Anyway we find a good ledge and take a breather. Jack Jowett has a kindly word with Social Sec., Donald Duck, and reminds him of his epic lead at the Teanlowe Centre, Poulton last November asking if we can expect more of the same in the future. Donald modestly acknowledges this accolade but frankly admits that climbing to that standard is really a bit beyond him and such was the mental and physical strain involved that even now, months later, he has still not made a full recovery.

There's also a bit of discussion about how many people we have on the rope. Barrie Crook can't see why we should be canvassing for a bigger team when we could be getting more out of the team we've got. Still the problems are all beneath us now and we casually ascend the remaining pitches. We all assemble at the top, no one missing and for another year we coil the rope.

N.B. Although AGM Buttress was climbed in fairly good style, aid in the form of copious quantities of alcohol was again used throughout. The Buttress therefore still awaits its first true 'free' ascent. However, by the nature of the climb and those taking part, it is expected to be many years before this aesthetic ideal is attained.

Eddie Craig.

NEW MEMBERS

The following are welcomed as introductory members:-

Ann and Jack Armitage 1 Underbank Cottages, Underbank Road,
Little Thornton. **Lance.** (Clev.867855)

Full Members: Mark Harding
Pete Crosbie
Nick Harms
Steve MacDonald
Rob Lewis.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Peter Latimer 37 Long Meadows, Bramhope, Leeds LS 16, 9DU.
Geoff Kipling 89 Poulton Road, Carleton.
Andy Dunhill 18 Walmsley Road, Leeds 6.
Dave Clarke 23 Oxford Road, Fleetwood (Tel.71828)
Paul Reid 9 Lowes Way, Marton, Blackpool (Tel.64395)
Pam Ruthven 2 Greenhill Cottages, Wagon Road, Barnet, Herts.
Chris Thistlethwaite c/o Kings School, Guttersloh, BFPO 113, Germany.

HUT AVAILABILITY

13-14	April	Langdale
20-22	"	Stair
20-22	"	Langdale (10 beds only)
24-26	"	(Easter week, Langdale)
27/28	"	Langdale
4-6	May	Stair, family
4-6	"	Langdale
11/12		Stair
18/19	"	Langdale
25-31	"	Stair (Whit week)
25-27	"	Langdale (8 beds only)
1/2	June	Langdale
8/9	"	Both, Hut to Hut
15/16	"	Langdale
22/23	"	Stair
29/30	"	Vags Hut, Nant Peris
6/7	July	Langdale, family
6/7	"	Stair
13/14	"	Langdale
20/21	"	Stair

If at holiday time the Booking Secretary is not available, book with Dave Earle but remember that both of them are likely to go away over holiday weekends, so book in advance.

SOCIALS

16th May	Boozy Bike Ride	John Wiseman, Clev.826594 (Buccaneer-
13th June	Football Match FMC v. Ski Club	7.30 Rangers' Club 6.45pm)
11th July	Rounders " " v. " " " " " "	" " " " " "

The Vagabonds M.C. have invited members of the Fylde M.C. to their "Fun Weekend" over the May Day weekend 5-7th May 1984. To be held at Nant Peris, and the events include raft race, orienteering, bike race etc..

Anyone interested, please contact John Sealey, Kirkham 687147.

GROUPIES

The Secretary holds a copy of the booklet "The Groups Travel Organiser" which is full of information for anyone organising group travel home and abroad.

RECLAIM A PATH

Anyone wanting to volunteer for work on path reclamation in the Lake District is asked to contact Conservation Volunteers North West, via the National Park, c/o Brockhole, Windermere, Cumbria (Tel.096 62 3098)

Volunteers are apparently always hard to come by in the Lakes, as, unlike most areas, there are no major towns nearby.

CLUB TOGETHER

The Secretary has received a note from the International Fund for Animal Welfare about the Canadian Baby Seal Slaughter. Anyone who does not agree that these warm, cuddly, wide-eyed and innocent and totally lovable creatures (How's that for unbiased reporting!) should be bludgeoned to death are asked to boycott Canadian fish products in their local shop or supermarket.

A BIT CHEAPER

The "Out and About" shop in Poulton-le-Fylde have made it known to us that they give a 10% discount to local climbing clubs.

They do not stock rock climbing gear as, not being rock climbers themselves, they feel unable to provide the necessary advice.

However, if anyone knows what they want it can be obtained. The quickest service is provided by Troll and Camp.

GLENBRITTLE MEMORIAL HUT

Voluntary wardens for the above hut are urgently required from the end of April to September, preferably for a month, but 2 or 3 weeks will be considered. Free accommodation is provided (separate room) for the warden and his companion and a contribution is made towards his expenses.

Enquiries to J.T.Foster. Tel. No. 0744 894512 mid-week.

B.M.C. RECIPROCAL RIGHTS

Under a new U.I.A.A. Reciprocal Rights Charter the B.M.C. are able to supply British climbers with a Reciprocal Rights Card entitling the holder to discount rates in Alpine Huts. Cost of the card is £9.50.. Further details from Dave Earle or direct from B.M.C., Crawford House, Precinct Centre, Booth St. East, Manchester M13 9RZ. (Tel.061 273 5839)

ALPINE CLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

An exhibition of outstanding mountaineering photographs from the 1880's to the present will be on show at the following venues:

16th April to 30th May	The Williamson Art Gallery, Wirral, Birkenhead.
June to July	National Museum of Photography, Bradford (part of the Victoria and Albert Museum).
July to August	Brewery Art Centre, Kendal.
22 September to 6 October	Aberdeen University.
13 October to 17 November	Bangor University, Oriel Gallery.

Space limitations will not permit the whole Exhibition to be shown in some cases. (Please enquire locally or to the Alpine Club) The address of the Alpine Club is 74, South Audley Street, London W1Y 5FF. (Tel.01 499 1542)

Admission by catalogue - 30 p.

FELL RACING 1983, OR, OF MASOCHISTS AND MEN, OR, RETURN OF THE TOAD

" . . . add set off running across country as hard as he could, scrambling through hedges, jumping ditches, pounding across fields until he was breathless and weary . . . On he ran desperately . . . He did his best but he was a fat animal, and his legs were short, . . . Ceasing to heed where he was going, he struggled on blindly and wildly . . ." "The Wind in The Willows" by Kenneth Grahame.

Yet another unsuccessful season for The Toad. Not a single prize - again - although the guy I passed five yards from the finish of The Pendle won a spot prize for coming 201st. Still, I enjoyed it, poop

poop, and managed to compete in more events than ever before. The highlight of the season for me was, once more, The Kentmere Horseshoe which turned out to be desperate, with ice, snow and blizzards and more than half of the nearly four hundred starters retiring. Kenny Stuart, 1983 British Fell Running Champion said afterwards "I dropped out of this high up in a blizzard. The thing was I'd set off without much clothing and basically I was too frightened to go on. I was losing more heat than I could keep." But more of that later.

Other FMC members have also been active, notably Dougie Brown, Paul Garner, George James and Brian Wilkinson. I bumped into various of these at such events as The Rivington Pike, Blisco Dash, Pendle, Kentmere, Coniston, Ingleborough, Pendleton, Hodder Valley and Rumbolds Moor (where!). Paul appears to be getting very keen, travelling to Arran for the Goat Fell Race followed by the Pens of Jura Race. I gather he finished quite well up the field in these - probably by managing to stay on his feet instead of crag-diving. He developed this technique in the Chew Valley Skyline when he cracked a few ribs and bit a hole in his lip. He perfected the system doing a nose-dive on the descent in The Pendle (but still managed to beat me). Dougie Brown also did the Jura Race but a few hours after finishing he had to be air-lifted to the mainland, overcome by some kind of bug. I wouldn't even suggest that this bug could have anything to do with the fact that the Jura Malt is strong stuff and the race sponsors, MacKinlays Jura Distillery, provided liberal distribution to all finishers. Of course, it isn't necessary to travel as far afield as Jura for events, there are any number fairly close at hand most weekends from April to October and anyone really keen could sometimes fit three or four into a weekend. The full fixture calendar can be obtained by joining the Fell Runners' Association (details at the end of this article).

Back to the Kentmere - as I say the highlight - perhaps because it was one of the rare occasions during the year that I managed to get the upper hand on George, who is literally coming along in leaps and bounds - legs that long should be banned. George retired at High Street in a much chilled state. He also retired in the gruelling Wasdale Race but that was with heat exhaustion with temperatures in the 80s.

The Kentmere was a desperate struggle against the elements. At the start the announcement was made of force eight gales with white-out conditions and blizzarding on top. The previous day some of us had done the Pendle Race and toiled, pouring sweat, up the big end in real hothouse conditions. This lulled Wilks. into leaving his LIFA legs behind - mistake - he was forced to retire somewhere round Kentmere Pike sheathed in ice from the tips of his toes to the top of his shiny head.

The gun fired and off we went. Not a bad start, about 50th through the field gate, but my short (and hairy) legs felt heavy from Pendle and very soon more and more runners went past. Up to the snow line, legs feeling heavier still, not even Jan can help today (readers of earlier Newsletters may recall that our hero tries to maintain momentum on steep ascents by imagining a scantily clad Jan Leeming running in front). At about this point George plodded past - come to think of it George's phenomenal improvement has coincided exactly with my revealing my secret weapon in the FMC Newsletter - "leave it out, George - she's mine - find your own". My words were lost on the wind. I was wearing my cag. and felt in danger of over-heating, no weather problems yet. As we plodded higher, runners began

coming back the other way, first in ones and twos and then whole groups, muttering things like "insanity", "you can't stand up up there" - strange! I found this a little worrying since all the returning runners had been in front of me and were, presumably, fitter. From the Pike it was "heed doon and bash on" with the wind tearing at us from the east. Visibility worsened but the wall/fence simplified navigation to Harter Fell where a great many runners went astray. Small groups were struggling to orientate maps to find Nanfield Pass. Through the spindrift I saw a group of a dozen or so set off in the direction of Haweswater.

Fortunately, I'd been on Harter Fell on an F.M.C. coach meet not long before and I was fairly sure I needed to head more south-west. I did, followed by a couple of others, and to my immense relief, the path eventually appeared through the gloom. Visibility improved a bit on the other side and there was no real problem in locating High Street. The marshalls there deserve a medal - it seems one of them did fall victim to the weather and had to be taken down. Things went from bad to worse for me from thereon. Whether the winds increased or I was just weaker I'm not too sure but, in the more exposed places, it was impossible to stand up and people were clinging to the ground and then crawling for yards at a time. "Poop poops" were conspicuous by their absence. I even needed Jan on the downhills now but could even she help? I'd have to try something else - I know, pretend stoats and weasels and gauntleted chauffeurs and big fat policemen are chasing me. "He quickened his pace telling himself cheerfully not to begin imagining things or there would be simply no end to it. . . . The whole wood seemed running now, running hard, hunting, chasing, closing in round something or - somebody? In panic he began to run too, aimlessly he knew not whither. He ran up against things; he fell over things and into things, . . . " "The Wind in the Willows"

In between the crawls there were sections of stagger but it was on one of the final "cling to the ground" bits, going up Ill Bell that Dougie Brown crawled past, covered in ice. By this time I was pretty bonked and all I could think of was Mars bars and hot sweet tea. Dougie had lost time earlier by unintentionally doing grade six ice climbs in the white-out somewhere round Harter Fell. He managed to take almost 12 minutes out of me in the couple of miles or so to the finish. Still, I did get round in a personal worst time of 2 hrs. 40 mins. 33 secs.; over 48 minutes slower than my best!

My plans now are to recover from the achilles strain, chondromacia patella, lost toe-nails and varicose veins and try again this year. It would be nice to see more F.M.C. members having a go and it's a pity more of the fell runners don't have a go at the F.M.C. race.

Fell Runners' Association:

Membership fee is £3.00.

Enquiries to: The Membership Secretary,
Norman Berry,
165, Penistone Road,
Kirkburton,
Huddersfield.
West Yorkshire,
HD8 0PH.

PRO AND CONTRA

Sunday, February 19th; a brilliant sunny and cold day after weeks of rubbish; conditions at last look promising as we disembark from the coach at Brotherswater and head towards the obvious diagonal gully of

Dove Crag. Six of us ascend it with little difficulty - too easy for some - all snow, hardly any ice, last winter it was the reverse and much harder.

On over Hart Crag in a brisk wind and brilliant sunshine. Everything is frozen, perfect conditions. The Helvelyn group look like the Alps - what a day to be on the hills. Turning off before Fairfield we descend to neglected Hutapple Crag and climb another gully into the still brilliant sunshine. My balaclava is blown away in the wind.

The scenery is still majestic as we drop into lonely Link Cove where Peter points out Pendulum on Scrubby Crag, and it looks impressive. "Gr. 3, probably a lot easier today, you'll probably solo it" he says. Myself and Bob decide to have a go with the (at least psychological) protection of a rope. Peter and Jerry decide to show us how to do it and solo off up the right fork - a bit too bold for us. I run out of rope tantalisingly short of the welcoming flake, but Bob realises what is happening and unties. After initial apprehension we are now excited and Bob sets off enthusiastically. Plenty of time, weather perfect, what joy the mountains can give.

But in that same moment..... "Get down quick, there's an accident, everybody available to the rescue"! Bob insists on going on, he thinks it safer and quicker and he is at the sharp end. As quickly as possible we ascend, but more haste, less speed. Whistles are blowing in the Cove. Let's hope it's not so bad. I get back to the Cove as quickly as I can, feeling apprehensive. Eventually it all comes into view - a deserted pile of rucksacks and bivouac bags and fifty yards away a group of people including Peter and Jerry standing around more clothes and gear. Two casualties - one people are attending to, the other one alone - dead. I realise his head is not the normal shape. Casualties from an inexperienced ridge walking party, hired axes, no crampons. An innocuous looking slope, no crags, not even a gully.

A Sea King helicopter appears and hovers in the Cove. It does four trial runs before it lands, we now know the winds can be treacherous. A doctor emerges and pronounces the body dead. And there's another one up there, also dead. I have forgotten about the first pile of rucksacks - a climber with axe and crampons full of appetite for an ice climb on Hart Crag, never got there. Peter was the first on the scene - no hope, seventy miles an hour.

Two independent accidents in one lonely Cove within five seconds; incredible, but true.

The Mountain Rescue people begin to arrive, firstly from Patterdale, then Penrith and a few from Langdale. We take it for granted that they'll turn up, and they do it for nothing. They've seen it all before. The climber was a friend. We load the bodies on two sledges and set off down steep snow slopes in the gloom, six people to a sledge struggling with gravity and the rocky terrain. Eventually more volunteers arrive and we ask to leave, we've had enough, and a coach is waiting. We are to be escorted down by two from Patterdale and don't complain.

Looking back we see two melancholy strings of lights winding their way down the hillside - almost beautiful - it will take them hours to get to Patterdale.

COACH MEET KIRKSTONE TO PATTERDALE (January 8th)

The coach left the Fylde nearly full so I could look the treasurer in the eye; mind you it took some doing phoning up members and threatening them with good weather and snow until we had a good bus load.

Nearing Kirkstone the hills were covered in snow and most people left the bus by the Inn. Finding the weather cold wet and windy, we quickly headed up towards Pike How and Stony Cove Pike. When the squalls came it was an endurance test walking into a strong northerly wind with lumps in it. Fortunately by the time we got to Stony Cove Pike the squall had ended, to give good visability for the rest of the day. From High Street people took various routes back to Patterdale or Pooley Bridge.

Others walked from Patterdale or Glenridding and covered many hills before congregating in a cafe. Gathering our party from roadside and cafe we sped to the Hollies for refreshments.

John Wiseman