

## SHREWSBURY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB: COMMITTEE LIST

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### HOUSENOTES

Winter draws to a close. It's not been a bad one either; for those who have skied abroad, there has been snow in abundance, and at home, February has been the sunniest ever recorded. One could bitch about the lack of snow in Wales, but hey, we can't have everything. Time to look forward to Spring, where there are a crop of club events coming up. Below, are some notes for your attention.

- There was almost a record turnout for the AGM in January, and the minutes, in full, can be read near the back of this newsletter. Thanks to everyone who attended. Part of the proceedings involved the presentation of the Harry Gregory Trophy, this year hotly contested by a clutch of deserving members, and was awarded to Jean Bollom. (read the AGM minutes for details).
- A warm welcome to two new club members; Damien Glyn, and Heather Smith. We hope you will enjoy getting to know us all, and sharing our experiences in the great outdoors. Also, the return of two former members, Dave Stanley (now resident in that rather flat county - Norfolk), and Martin Dowley – good to see you both back again.
- Steph Williams Adventure Ropes Course at the Albrighton Hall Hotel, which some of us had a fun day testing earlier in the year, opens formally on the Easter Weekend, and we are invited to come along and enjoy it at a discounted price. As it could be busy, make sure you make a prior booking with Steph (01743 232561).
- Also at the Albrighton Hall Hotel, the club hosted a talk by the BMC on “Summer Essentials” on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January. 71 people attended, and we made a profit of £167. We are now considering hosting a “Winter Essentials” for the BMC in the Autumn/Winter 2008.
- The committee, at the last meeting decided that it would aid communication between everyone (now there are about a hundred of us) if all members were issued with a members list, with addresses, phone numbers, and perhaps E Mail addresses; unless there are any strong objections. See Jan's box on the subject below.
- Finally, thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Newsletter in the past. I am constantly amazed at the talent within the club. Keep it coming please; its what makes it worth reading. The easiest way to contact me with anything is probably by E Mail ([daveladdiman@btinternet.com](mailto:daveladdiman@btinternet.com)), but any way is fine, including my address, which is Hotel Cottage, Longville in the Dale, Much Wenlock, TF13 6DT. Also please send in any good photos that you think could inspire, or be of interest. Cheers.

**Dave Laddiman**

## MEMBERS LIST FOR EVERYONE

At the AGM the subject of all members being given a list of all other members complete with address and phone number was discussed. ( See minutes of the AGM) A show of hands on the evening suggested that no one would mind their details being given to other club members and so that is what we intend to do. The list will also include e-mail addresses and will be issued along with the newsletter in May. Anyone who would prefer NOT to be on the list should inform Jan Campbell or Jackie Eyre before Tuesday 29 April.

## A LATE ENTRY FROM 2007, BUT WORTH WAITING FOR . . . .

**There are no smalls when you're Nick-a-less**  
2007 Real Ale Wobble, Llanwrtyd Wells, by Grahame Hughes.

As I sit and reflect on our 2007 extravaganza, the following comes to mind. There were four compelling reasons to bemoan the absence of our timber-turning quad riding mainstay Nick Over:

- Loss of his all round good eggery.
- His 'I'll just drive down here and check out the route' energy saving abilities that keeps the more fantastical plans of the Blakemore/Robson duo in check.
- His tardis-like coffee flask. Generally produced around 4pm when all else has been consumed, it shares similar divisibility attributes to the five loaves and two fishes.
- The camel like role of the quad bike. A veritable masterpiece of architectural derring-do when fully loaded via a clever combination of bungee clips and backpacks, albeit allowing Nick only minimal front and rear visibility.

This last attribute becomes the critical one as the day wears on. Tired limbs make us appreciate the size of contribution that the quad has made; its absence meaning that hills normally sailed up become slogged up. There are no small hills anymore. Our only regrets are that maybe we packed one garment/cake/bottle etc too many. And we have to shoulder the consequence of this all day. Now you may think 'so what'? 'The rest of us always have to carry our own gear when out on an SMC jaunt'. Very true, but how many of these events are Robson designed and Blakemore approved? (i.e. a route based on the necessity of 23 hours sunlight, considered a rarity in Mid-Wales in Mid November). I rest my case. During the day, I would have liked to rest everything else too.

The day commenced with a delightful touch from Nick Passmore who passed splendidly produced and professional looking Roger Parry badges around the group before we set off. Needless to say, they were worn with pride and satisfaction throughout the adventure with Rog's spirit warmly felt amongst the group. (The author can also attest to their robustness, having seen his survive a full wash cycle – 40C and a full spin – coming out gleaming and still attached to the jacket the following day). Thus a splendid turn out (13 of us) stuck two fingers up to the foul weather forecast and set off stoically in to the gloom.

It was good to see evidence of SMC youth in action, Adrian Donnelly bringing along stripling 14-year-old son Joe. Burning tirelessly up long leg sapping climbs, tearing fearlessly down steep rocky descents whilst setting a cracking pace to keep the rest of us wheezing along behind all day. Yes, it will be good when Joe can ride as well as his dad.

Actually, I've just thought of a fifth reason to mourn Nick's absence. We pretty much know where the quad can go. As a consequence, this trip meant trying new paths where the quad would probably not go. This theory proved 100% correct. It was just unfortunate that this same theory extended to mountain bikes and humans too.

The day gradually built towards its anticipated climax, a trip down the long awaited Doethie Valley. Its beauty and bleak isolation had been referred to excitedly earlier on by the

Llandrindodd Nick's whose home proximity allowed them the good fortune to have witnessed it before. And so it was, after six hours in the saddle, we finally turned in to the valley head just a few seconds after the last vestige of daylight had faded, forcing us to walk, scoot and just occasionally pedal for two hours down its (probably) beautiful length. A somewhat monochromatic experience, punctuated by the occasional yelp followed by an unusual head torch trajectory as yet another shadow on the path turned out to be the blackness of a genuine hole. On the subject of mishaps, puppy dog Kurt (having earlier reassured his wife by text that he and Rick had arrived in Amsterdam and were just awaiting the rest of the lads on the next ferry), proceeded to maximize all face plant opportunities through the Doethie. Greeted by concerned gasps from all who witnessed each disaster, Kurt was guaranteed to cheerily observe from each upturned position deep in a bog 'Jeez, it's what the days all about eh boys?' Clearly there are no plans to organize any return events in New Zealand.

So, at the end of it all, two records were set:

The longest day out ever (10.5 hours)

The lowest post ride alcohol consumption ever (1 pint each)

Club members will know, that arriving at the pub so late (11.30pm in our case) is neither clever nor grown up. I guess there's a third record – not a single sore head in the morning. So come on Nick, get on your arse and bring some normality back to proceedings next year. It's terrifying to think that it's now only 9 months away.

## **AND A THOUGHT PROVOKING TALE. ITS AN ADDICTION YOU KNOW!!**

### **On Ticking, Bagging, and reaching fifty. Jeremy Adams**

My first Munro was Aonach Mor and my second was Aonach Beag. February 2004.

It was my first trip to the Scottish mountains, I remember the pleasure of the ascent. I remember the tinge of fear as I walked up slopes, which to me, then, appeared to be treacherous and fearful, waiting to spit me in a death slide to the bottom of the valley hundreds of metres below. I remember the unfamiliarity of the spiked metal on my feet and in my hand. I remember the sheer joy of it all. I remember the mist and the cold. But I don't remember opening a book and making a tick.

#### February 2005. Stob a Choire Mheadoin and Stob Coire Easain

Now it appears I've started to tick my book, no specific date is mentioned but

I AM NOW TICKING MUNROS. No worries, it's just a record of munros climbed, it's just a tick that's all.

#### November 11 2005. Bidean nam Bian and Stob Coire Sgreamhach

Now in my book along side the tick is a specific date and the comment 'winter conditions, solo outing'. My ticking is progressing now I'm pinning down the mountain to a particular day and recording the conditions; where will this lead?

#### September 6<sup>th</sup> 2006. Mullach nan Coirean, Stob Ban, Sgurr a'Mhaim

'Solo, fabulous, mostly dry, slight wind. The Devils ridge is exhilarating. If walking across this doesn't get the adrenalin pumping then you are already dead as indeed you would be if you tripped'. Stob Ban is my 34<sup>th</sup> Munro, only 250 left.

So it goes; the day is recorded, my book is filling with my impressions of the day, and now it appears that I am not only counting how many Munros I've done, but how many I've got left.

#### 11/02/08. Meall nan Tarmachan No 50.

'Mass ascent. Glorious weather little snow but perfect. I couldn't have ordered better weather for number 50'

I crack open a beer, pick up a pen and write in my book. I turn to the index of munros by height and record the date and 50 next to Meall nan Tarmachan. I open my chart and fill in the little triangle, which represents the mountain I've climbed today, and significantly I write; **234 left.**

I do a mental calculation; at this rate I will be 62 years old when I stand on the summit of my final Munro. Unimaginable.

How many thousands of metres of ascent is that? It's 19 years away, almost half my life again. I scour the map for new peaks, there are so many untouched. I don't want to repeat what I've already done, that is wasting time!

It appears then that I have moved from walking up Munros, to ticking Munros, to, dare I say it, **bagging** Munros.

Is this good? Is this bad? Does it matter? Only time will tell. But I'm sure going to have fun finding out!

*Just been flicking an alpine guide to the Valais, reading a route description for Weissmies 4027m, and there next to it is, oh the horror, a **TICK!***

## **NOW FOR SOME MEET REPORTS**

### **NEW YEARS DAY 2008 – Jan Campbell**



A group of 14 people turned up at the Bog car park at 11am for a gentle stroll over to Mucklewick Hill and back via Shelve pool. This was about as much as anyone could face but the weather was good and we hung around a bit on the top of the hill for an extended



lunch period while Jeff broddled his tripod and Jackie tried to help him. A very relaxed sort of meet.

### **Y CARNEDDAU – 6 January – Steph Williams**

The start saw 20 plus of us gather at the cramped parking in Gerlan above Bethesda. The weather was clear with the summits mostly in view and dusted with snow above 2000feet.

We took an anti clockwise route, heading first to Mynedd Du and to little Tilly's first Welsh Mountain – Carnedd Dafydd, where we had lunch. The ground was hard and some put on crampons (Jan had her wee cheese graters with her and they did her proud). We then descended along the Cefn Ysgolion Duon ridge to climb Carnedd Llewelyn, from where, after a spot of bum sliding to get down some very slippery boulders, we enjoyed stunning views out to the Menai Straits and inland to Snowdon and the Glyders. At this point, the group split up, with a few heading for Yr Elen and a short but steep descent, while the majority continued on a longer but gentler descent over Foel Grach.

Everyone came off just as the rain started, with most then heading on to a lovely Welsh Tea in Bettws Y Coed.

### **GRASMERE (ACHILLE RATTI HUT) – 18/20 January – Tim Devanney**

Parking in a river has always seemed a little counterintuitive. However, this was a popular pursuit on the Friday evening and with the absence of any obviously viable alternative the decision was sealed. Larry offered a welcome distraction from the burdensome task of unloading by providing a free ferry ride to the pub. The weekend was already looking up. The anxiolytic affect of a local brew combined with the friendliness of new faces and the familiarity of the familiar meant that arriving had the ease and simplicity that made the weekend so enjoyable.

The annual stock of one of Glasgow's inner city Thresher's had arrived in the kitchen before our return, explaining the dissonance between my companions' apparent dehydration and a relatively early dash back to the hut. The inn, it seemed, was not so much a start to the weekend as a farewell to civilization. So there I found myself, my first meet with the club, promises of snow and wintry weather, unpacking my sleeping bag in a building named after a 20th century Pope. I could not help but feel that this event, as so many like it, had already started to push towards some unknown zenith. I had no idea of what it might be but certainly it was coming. With this in mind there was only one thing to do; join the merry crowd for a drink/planning meeting.

With the morning came news of better weather, the rain had stopped and the forecast was for a relatively dry day. Better weather, in a hut half full of people brandishing crampons, ice axes and full arctic *take no prisoners* kit, acquires fresh definitions. The details of which you may reflect on, but I should, for the sake of completeness, tell you that most of these items went up the mountain anyway. I'm not sure why but if such equipment enjoys the odd view it had picked the perfect day for an odd view. The adventures, peaks and troughs of the days climbing I cannot begin to report; partly because the English language seems inadequate for the task, but more because I was not witness to much of it as some parties set off in different directions whilst others chose indifferent directions.

Returning back to the confines of the shelter however was another thing altogether. Excellent food appeared as if from the good fairies hands. Abundance and indulgence on this scale satisfies the soul, and brings generosity of spirit, and so for those who unfortunately had to cancel, we ate our fill on their behalf. Chefs please take a bow...

Perhaps it was the stimulation due to a full stomach, maybe we should blame the effect of the accompanying lubrication, and it might have simply been a rush of blood to the head. Whatever the cause, there was only the one alternative to the delicate art of conversation that night. It involved significant levels of bending, the sustained tearing of strips off cereal boxes and the gross laying bare of competitive spirit. As the competitors fell, stumbled, strained and tore themselves from the challenge it became clear there would ultimately be one clear winner – Jan. Stretching every sinew in her efforts, and reaching levels of concentration a constipated monk would be proud of, Jan's contortions must have yielded photography with a blackmail potential to fund Northern Rock into the next century. So was this to be the highlight, the pinnacle of the weekend, a room full of cheers as Steph and Annie fixed a spittle impregnated slither of card in their sights and stooped to lick it from a carpet inch deep in mountain, coal and anything else that previous, less civilized climbers may have left? Was it for Annie that moment of triumph when she not only lifted but also replaced said article then thumping the air in her blaze of glory? It may well have been; but for me no. For me, it came after, following a shower, finding clean clothes knowing that when I rejoined the others I'd smell a whole lot better.

Sunday saw no end to the groups' enthusiasm for the routine of the outdoors, after a good day in the mountains, tradition dictated teashops and retail relaxation. Despite the hills happening the night before it seems there are rites that have to be fulfilled. Only those still prone to a little guilt put in an appearance on a hill before a fond farewell to Achilli and onward to the obligatory cake then home.

## SMC SCOTTISH WEEK, KILLIN – 9/16 FEBRUARY

The photos opposite, and the “Scottish Week Song” below, (inspirationally written produced and sung by Cheryl), say it all.

### **‘Mountains in the Sky!’ – to the tune of ‘She’ll be Coming Round the Mountain’**

Well here we are again at Morenish House  
And this year we had an extra guest – a mouse!  
It went munching Jerry’s choccies  
And gave him the unblockies  
And quickly he got voted out of the house!

#### **Chorus:**

**Singing I will if you will so will I,  
Shall we go and climb the Mountains in the Sky?  
Singing I will if you will, I will if you will,  
Then let me drink the Whisky/Vodka/Beer (depending on you preference!) ‘til it’s dry!!**

You need Gladys the Sat Nav to find your way,  
But watch she doesn’t lead you all astray,  
Or you’ll go round and round the roundabouts  
Round that \*\*\*\*\* roundabout  
...I ‘d rather follow fence posts any day!

Where are the crampons Annie wore?  
The ones with pink tassels on galore  
‘cos she went posing on the mountain,  
posing on the mountain *(both with gestures!!)*  
and now she’s not a virgin anymore! *(of the snow type!!)*

Wednesday is always curry night  
Jerry likes to get his spices right  
And if you find a great big chilli  
That looks just like a ...sausage  
...it’s not just food – it’s S&M alright !!!!

Dave was 57 on Thursday  
He was waiting for his friends to phone all day,  
But the only folk to call him  
Were only after his van,  
And he sold that one 3 weeks ago today!

They came dressed like Al Quaeda....ssshhhh!!  
In bally hats and buff scarves they did rush  
Up the hall to find their suspect  
- to find it was only Phil’s hat,  
the hairy one that looks just like a Bush!! *(of the ‘George’ variety?!)*

We’ve climbed lots and lots of mountains here this week,  
We’ve seen Beinn and Meall – the cousins – they’re big peaks!  
We’ve been up and down Tarmachan\*  
Resurfacing, whilst we’ve tanned  
in the wall to sunshine we’ve had all week!!

Well here we are at Morenish again,  
And we haven’t had a single drop of rain!  
The food has been FTB *(Full To Busting! - that’s the clean version!!)*  
And now we must ETD *(Estimated Time....etc)*  
And trundle back to Shropshire once again!

*\*(Annie misheard when told it was called ‘Ptarmigan ridge’ - after the bird!)*

## SPRING EVENTS

<b>29 MARCH</b>	<b>MOELWYNS – SATURDAY MEET</b>	<b>Kev Knott 01743 359582</b>
	Meet at Sainsburys Car Park (by the car wash) at 8.00 am or at Croesor at 10.00 am. If the weather is favourable it could be full tour of Cnicht and all the Moelwyns or if it isn't an abridged version. There is now a nice teashop in Croesor. If you want to go rock climbing, it would be better to meet at Tanygrisiau.	
<b>5/12 APRIL</b>	<b>COSTA BLANCA – SPAIN</b>	<b>Dave Laddiman 01964 771439</b>
	This is getting to be a regular event. As before, we have booked a base at the seaside in Calpe, in order to access the almost endless climbing and hill walking opportunities in one of the most sunsure locations in the Med. If you are interested, contact me as soon as you can so that flights, accommodation and cars can be booked well in advance.	
<b>18/20 APRIL</b>	<b>SOUTH WALES</b>	<b>Steph Williams 01743 232561</b>
	Meet at the Castle Inn (01874 711353) <a href="http://www.thecastleinn.co.uk">www.thecastleinn.co.uk</a> (which has campsite, bunkhouse and B&B) on the Saturday pm, or at the pub car park on the Sunday morning, for a day walk in the Black Mountains. The venue is on the A479 between Cwmdru and Talgarth (GR 317229).	
<b>2/5 MAY</b>	<b>LAWRENNY, PEMBROKESHIRE</b>	<b>Tim Tindle 01691 774554</b>
	Accommodation: field with friendly farmer unique to SMC, 2 miles from Lawrenny (no camping allowed there as it's too beautiful. Wales Village of the Year 2007); or stay at Youth Hostel, B&Bs and cottages or moored boats in creek. Attractions: peaceful upper waters of Aberdaugleddau with seabirds, tides, castles, pubs and award winning tearooms and a selection of pubs and a vineyard. Activities: Walking beside the estuary and of course the cliffs of South Pembrokeshire only 20/30 mins drive away for endless coastal walking and an immense amount of seacliff climbing of grades Diff to E??	
<b>18 MAY</b>	<b>ELAN VALLEY</b>	<b>Sian Barnes 01568 760611</b>
	Meet at Rhayader for a days walking probably taking in a couple of reservoirs, hills and a Roman Fort plus of course the inevitable red kite watching and a tea shop to finish. Alternatively take your bike. There are made bike tracks beside the reservoirs and umpteen bikeable bridleways over the hills (but beware of 'the Monks Trod').	
<b>24/31 MAY</b>	<b>ARRAN</b>	<b>Jan Campbell 01743 236692</b>
	Camping at Lamlash which does not require booking, it's a big site. If you are coming on the Saturday though, you will need to book your ferry (Calmac) as it's a very busy weekend. Other types of accommodation in/near Lamlash include, if you want them, holiday cottages, caravans etc and are currently available. A great place for walking, mountaineering, climbing, biking, golf, birdwatching . . .	
<b>8 JUNE</b>	<b>THE ROACHES</b>	<b>Bryan Johnson 07743 580301</b>
	Either a days walk over the moors, (sadly the wallabies are no more) and possibly taking in Luds Church, or classic gritstone climbing on The Roaches themselves which host a wide variety of climbs suitable for all grades.	
<b>20/22 JUNE</b>	<b>COTTAGE WEEKEND/WELSH 3000</b>	<b>Jan Campbell 01743 236692</b>
	A summers weekend based at Clwt y Bel for walking, climbing etc and also one of the best weekends of the year to do the Fourteen 3000s as there will be lots of daylight, and there will be backup available for those who attempt it. It's one of the greatest days out you could have in Wales, something you would never forget.	