

## SHREWSBURY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB: COMMITTEE LIST

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### HOUSENOTES

Not much to say this month, except to get out there in the wonderful summer weather we are currently enjoying, it probably won't last. You might however, want to know about the following:

- As we now have a membership of just over one hundred, and its getting difficult to remember everyone's names and phone numbers, you should receive a members list along with this newsletter, if for some reason you don't, speak to Jan.
- As you know, being an SMC member gives you public liability insurance via the BMC. We all hope that we will never have to use it.... but you never know. The committee recently found out though that this insurance would be void if the accident caused was as a result of what your dog did rather than what you did. Quite a few of us have dogs which come out on club events, and so its possibly worth considering whether as a dog owner you might need to make appropriate insurance arrangements.
- See Stuarts High Sports summer events and training list, on the page before the Summer Events list.
- From the beginning of May until the end of the summer,( if you haven't noticed it on the Tuesday night page), there is the option of rock climbing instead of walking /biking/ running before meeting at the pub. If you are new to the game and would like to have a go, come along, everyone is welcome. If you don't have harness and helmet, don't worry, if you ring me or Jan, we can almost certainly find some kit you can borrow.
- Still on the subject of climbing, the Thursday evening indoor climbing over the winter is now continuing outdoors (subject to weather) throughout the summer at various venues in Shropshire and the Llangollen area. If you would like to come along, (all are welcome) just contact Jan or me. We normally meet at Jan's house at 6.00pm.

**Dave Laddiman**

### HOW MANY? ARE YOU SURE? DOES IT MATTER? – Jeremy Adams

I, until very recently knew for a fact that I had ascended 52 munros, indeed so excited was I by this fact that I even wrote an article for this newsletter. I have some rather splendid photos of me with my ice axe held aloft celebrating munro number 50, Meall nan Tarmachan. The memory of that day is still fresh and remembered in finest Technicolor, to quote from the jottings I made in my book; '50, Glorious weather, little snow, but perfect. Couldn't have ordered better weather for number fifty'

If you read my last little piece you will know that I've reached the stage of bagging Munros. I assiduously record the ascent of each, and yes I'm counting up and counting down, I now

have 232 left. On September 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 I stood on top of Stob Ban, my 34<sup>th</sup> Munro, and knew I had 250 still to climb.

And yet none of the statements above are true. I have *not* ascended 52 munros, I did *not* wave my ice axe aloft in triumph atop of my 50<sup>th</sup> munro, I could most assuredly have ordered better weather for number 50, when I stood on Stob Ban I did not have 250 Munros left and nor do I now have 232 still to ascend.

What's this you ask, has it all been a tissue of lies?

Well no, not really, I simply missed a mountain out. Sometime in May 2005 I scrambled to the splendid summit of the splendid Sgurr Dubh Mor on Skye, and failed to make a tick in my book. A forgivable mistake I'm sure you will agree, it was after all in the days before I noted down dates and comments.

But it set me thinking. Mountaineering, climbing, walking, are very often described in quantitative terms; how high, how hard, how far, how long? We rise to the challenge; 50 miles of Shropshire hills in 24 hours, all the Welsh 3000's in a day, The Three peaks in a day, cranking up the E numbers, beating guide book time, failing to beat guide book time, becoming a Compleater, becoming a Compleater all bar one, standing on top of the world.

Am I alone, and I'm sure that I am not, in finishing a walk and, checking the time, find I've knocked loads off the guide time and celebrate my *achievement*, get a sense of pleasure at overtaking some slow moving walker.

However it isn't really about how high, how far etc. I think what this outdoor lark is all about is the sheer unadulterated pleasure and experience of being THERE.

Even when it's hurting and you're soaked to the skin, even when you're scared witless cos you've climbed too far above the comfort of your last bit of pro, even when you've seen a friend fall off a mountain or your ice axe is buzzing like a swarm of angry bees and the lightning chases you down a valley; it's the experience that counts.

It's the memories of a summit hard won, a day of perfect weather, a view that takes the breath from you and there are no words to describe; it's the crunch of snow under your boot and the whooping childlike pleasure of that long swooping glissade that makes you glad to be alive and life worth living.

So does it matter that my 50<sup>th</sup> munro was not bathed in sunshine, does it matter that I didn't even know I was on the summit of number 50? No it doesn't matter one jot, it was the experience of being there and the memories that remain that count.

I'll still keep counting though, but I know that it isn't the how many but the *how* that really matters.

## **NOW FOR SOME MEET REPORTS**

### **MOEL HEOG – 3 February – Matt Akers**

A small but perfectly formed group of 7 intrepid members met in Beddgelert to be greeted with an unexpected amount of blue sky, dotted with a few clouds which were moving quite quickly. We would find out how quickly later.....

As we left the car park in the centre of Beddgelert we crossed some newly laid narrow gauge railway track and some foundations for a new station. I have since discovered that this is an extension to the Welsh Highland Railway that will link the 2 currently independent

lines between Caernarfon and Porthmadog, which is due to open in Spring 2009. This might open up some interesting options for linear walks in the future?!

Moel Hebog was looming ahead of us ahead, looking very impressive with its rocky ridge as we approached from the East. The climb up was quite unforgiving, however the little scrambles and ever expanding clear views helped to distract us from the ascent. As we approached the summit we learnt why the clouds were moving so fast – the Southwesterly wind was fresh to say the least! Jan decided to get on all fours when the gusts began to take her off her feet.

Once we had reached the summit cairn, and had begun to get our sandwiches out behind the conveniently situated wall for lunch we realised that Pete Mac was having a sit down a little further along the summit. As Steph and I queried why Pete had decided to have his lunch on his own, Kim decided to take decisive action and went back to see what Pete was up to. It turned out that Pete was not being anti-social; it was just the fact that the wind had blown his glasses off and he decided that the best tactic was to mark the spot and get help to search for them. Kim found them after a good 5 minutes of searching, and Jan had a handy spare shoelace to keep them in place for the descent.

After lunching and admiring the fantastic panoramic views towards a snow capped Snowdon on one side and the coast towards Porthmadog on the other we descended heading towards the ridge, which continued over Moel yr Ogof, and Moel Lefn. As time was getting on and the wind was not abating we headed North East before Moel yr Ogof, skirting around the impressive cliffs, trying to spot which black hole was Owain Glyndwr's Cave.

The descent took us through forestry, which provided an interesting change of scenery as we wound our way back to Beddgelert 5 hours and 7 miles later.

### **NANTLLE RIDGE – 24 February – Dave Laddiman**

Seems a long time ago now. We (seven of us) met at the Pinnacle Café in Capel Curig to discuss the weather, which wasn't that encouraging. The wise old man (Tony Rogers) reckoned it was not a suitable day for the higher tops, but that the Nantlle Ridge would probably be doable.

As it turned out and as we all expected, it was a good choice. The wind was bearable, the cloud level was mostly above the tops, and there were a few slippery bits on Mynydd Drws y Coed. By lunchtime the wind had blown us to the tower on Mynydd Tal y Mignedd, which was handy, and after lunch we split into male and female groups – the males carried on to Craig Cwm Silyn, just to say they had done all the tops on the ridge, and the females sensibly turned left down into Upper Cwm Pennant and contoured round to Bwlch y Ddwy Elor, where the males caught up with them. It was then a simple downhill through the forest to the cars, and a race to the teashop/bar in Bettws y Coed.

### **CLWT-Y-BEL WORK WEEKEND – 7/9 March – Mike Jones/Dave Laddiman**

Possibly a record turnout, (18 club members), for this annual weekend of mending, painting and improving the club cottage. Although some work outside took place, because of the foul weather, most was done on the inside, and included almost everything from repairing the stove, electrical and plumbing jobs, and plastering, to redecorating and cleaning out the kitchen, Rose as usual created an unreasonably good lunch for us all, and an evening meal in the Vaynol completed a very productive day.

Jan led a small party over Y Garn, and nearby hills on the Sunday, in pleasant weather; while your editor had adventures with his grandchildren in the Llanberis Quarries.

Work Weekend Two took place on the 11/12 April, to deal with a large and long outstanding job - digging a deep drain across the back of the cottage to prevent water ingress in conditions of heavy/prolonged rain. At the same time, half of the drive was resurfaced, and,

(indoors) 16 beds were fitted with slats, so that the mattresses now stay level and comfortable. The participants were Arthur, Mike, Sian, Carl, Judy, and Roger; and they all deserve a big thank you, particularly as the weather was even worse than on the March work weekend!! Quote from Mike 'the bloke with the digger was excellent, and managed the 15 inches of liquid mud very well!!

### **MOELWYNS – 29 March – Jeff Morton Throwing Down The Gauntlet**

On Tuesday night, before his planned walk in the Moelwyns on the Saturday, Big Kev said, "The forecast is for gale force winds and heavy rain".

"Surely not in Wales?" Asked Jeff.

Wrong!

As soon as we put our noses out of Pete's warm comfortable car – guess what?

Gale force winds and heavy rain!

So off we set, up the ridge.

Unknown to the rest of us, (Anne, Jon, June, Pete, Ian, Kevin, and Jeff), Eric had thrown away his LEFT glove!

After about an hour battling the elements, Eric said "I have lost my glove and must go back to try to find it."

As one voice the rest shouted, "We will come and help you search for it."

Anything to get out of the awful weather! – little realising this was exactly what Eric had planned on the way up!

Anne found the glove on the path, but did not tell Eric!

He was so dejected at his loss (nearly tripping over his bottom lip) that he gave Anne his surviving RIGHT hand glove in disgust!

A plan was hatched, whereby Anne gave it back to him, only the cunning part was, she gave him the original lost LEFT glove!

It finally dawned on ambidextrous Eric, much to the amusement of his devious companions!

He was eternally grateful that he did not have to explain to his wife the loss of his glove.

We then retired to a warm comfortable café in Croesor, where Eric bought tea and cakes for us all.

Thanks Eric!

### **COSTA BLANCA – 5-12 April – Heather Smith (and Julian Laidlaw)**

After starting indoor climbing in November with the club, this holiday in Spain seemed too good an opportunity to miss, so off I went!

Climbing started on the Sunday morning on the "nursery" rocks at Sierra de Toix, alongside many other Brits with the same idea. Having already stocked up from the supermarket the previous day, we had no trouble getting organised and out in good time. From Toix there were stunning views, and the limestone crags allowed us to start on easy routes and get used to the feel of climbing outdoors again. With encouragement from Dave, it wasn't long before Chris was leading a F6A+ route which Dave then elegantly climbed demonstrating his bridging technique. *(Julian writes: I think I managed a couple of 4s, but I was so engrossed in watching Chris from the bottom of the cliff that I overbalanced on the rock below: it was only a small drop, and I landed on my feet, but with thin soled rock shoes it still hurt a lot, and continued to do so for the next couple of weeks!)*

The next day we returned to the same area, but it was too windy to climb there so we went round to Toix East. From here Julian went off for the day walking (he managed to visit the old castle) while the four of us got some good climbing done. Back at our high-rise apartment after a good day climbing a beer was very welcome, and all the food we cooked seemed to go down well (particularly the nice fresh sticks of bread we stuffed with garlic).

On the Tuesday we went inland to Sella where we got Julian doing a bit of climbing before he disappeared off on a walk again. I did a bit of leading and got to the top thanks to some

encouragement from a Geordie climbing alongside at a key moment. With rock climbing, it's very rewarding when you are faced with a seemingly impossible situation but then you find a way round it (or up it).

*(Julian writes: that day I did my hardest climb ever, with a lot of encouragement from Dave: however, the others were way above my level and it was then that I decided that rock climbing was not for me.)*

Wednesday was a rest day from climbing, and I did the obligatory walk up the Penôn where the seagulls were busy nesting.

On the Thursday the weather was very sunny most of the day and I enjoyed my best days climbing at Font d

Axia, in a stunning location well off the beaten track (recommended to us by the Geordies we had previously met) – just the sort of place where you're unlikely to encounter other climbers - but as it happened yet more Geordies came along to climb there (but they were nice people and we didn't get in one another's way!). *(Julian writes: after a day resting my sore feet on Wednesday, I did a very leisurely walk up the Penôn with plenty of breaks for quiet contemplation of the view. Then I headed back to the harbour in time to find the others watching the fishermen bringing in their catches).*

On Thursday night J and Dave announced that the weather was at last suitable for an attempt on the Espolon Central Direct (a magnificent 13 pitch 420metre trad route that takes the soaring arête in the middle of the vast south face of the Puig Campagna). They started at five a.m. next morning, which was shortly after Chris got back from a night on the town. Funnily enough, I had accompanied Chris out to a couple of bars that evening thinking it was one way to ensure he came back at a reasonable time and wouldn't be too tired to go climbing the next day. Well, he walked me back at 1am, but went straight back out again!

On the Friday I gave Chris and Julian a terrifying ride as I drove the car for the first time, to the Sierra De Toix (well if the police park in such a stupid place on a dual carriageway they deserve to get their car clipped, and it was far too dangerous to stop!). Julian got out of the car at the earliest opportunity and my driving got rapidly better, so without further incidents we made it to Toix and enjoyed the relative safety of rock climbing (well done Chris, you did some good leading that day). For our final evening, while J and Dave were still completing their climb, we found a nice traditional Spanish restaurant in the old part of Calpe and enjoyed seafood paella, with wine of course. By now Chris had picked up quite a few Spanish phrases which I've asked him to add below.

Quisiera una cerveza por favor. - I would like a beer please.

La cuenta por favor. – The bill please.

Cuanto ése? – How much is that?

No hablo español. – I don't speak Spanish.

## SUMMER EVENTS

<b>8 JUNE</b>	<b>THE ROACHES</b>	<b>Bryan Johnson 07920 804714</b>
	Either a days walk over the moors, possibly taking in Luds Church and/or classic gritstone climbing on The Roaches themselves, which host a wide variety of climbs, suitable for all grades. Car parking at the Roaches on summer weekends can be problematic, so liaise with Bryan for car sharing or meet as usual at 8.00 am at Sainsburys car park.	
<b>20-22 JUNE</b>	<b>CLWT-Y-BEL WELSH 3000s</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 3000ers 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.	
<b>24 JUNE</b>	<b>OVER THE HILL</b>	<b>Dave Laddiman 01694 771439</b>
	The usual mad scramble early afternoon to North Wales to seek out sun kissed rock to climb, or if you are unemployed or retired, make a day of it. The weather washed it out last year so we are due some sunshine this time. Let me know if you are interested in taking part.	
<b>4-6 JULY</b>	<b>CONISTON</b>	<b>Kev Knott 01743 359582</b>
	Camping at one of the sites adjacent to Lake Coniston from Friday night onwards. Saturday will probably involve a day walk taking in the Old Man with a BBQ afterwards. Sunday will probably see another maybe shorter mountain walk.	
<b>20 JULY</b>	<b>BERWYNS</b>	<b>Sian Barns 01586 760611</b>
	Meet at Llangynog car park for a walk over the wild and empty hills of this neglected piece of Wales probably taking in a teashop on the way back.	
<b>1-3 AUGUST</b>	<b>HARLECH CAMP</b>	<b>John Edwards 01743 365766</b>
	A repeat of the well loved formula. Camping at Merthyr Farm on Friday and Saturday nights. Two days to go walking over the Rhinogs or any of the other hills in South Snowdonia, and a meal in the usual pub in Harlech on the Saturday night. Also easy access to climbing venues at Tremadog and the Rhinogs if the weather is appropriate.	
<b>23-25 AUGUST</b>	<b>COTTAGE WEEKEND BBQ</b>	<b>Mike Jones 01743 884529</b>
	The usual relaxed weekend away from the crowds, but with the Snowdonia hills and crags to walk and climb on, as well as distractions such as sailing on the coast. Also the usual BBQ on the Saturday night.	