

SHREWSBURY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB: COMMITTEE LIST

www.shrewsburymc.com

Email: mail@shrewsburymc.com

Chairman	Mike Jones	01743 884592
Secretary	Jan Campbell	01743 236692
Treasurer	Frank Maiden	01743 246904
News Editor	Dave Laddiman	01694 771439
Committee Member	Jackie Eyre	01743 236877
Committee Member	Matt Akers	01743 236441
Committee Member	Steph Williams	01743 232561
Committee Member	Pete McAree	01743 850339
Committee Member	Annie Blayney	01743 367092

HOUSENOTES

It's the club AGM next Monday (January 25th) at The Cock Inn, Hanwood, 7.30 for 8.00 pm. *It's a specially important meeting this year*, as Mike Jones, our chairman is standing down, after running the show for the last forty years, claiming that at 75 years of age, he has done enough. We have to choose a worthy successor. Additionally, a couple of committee members are also stepping down, so we will have to replace them too. It is therefore very important that you all come along and vote for whoever you would like to see running the club. See you there! The Agenda, and last years minutes are at the back of this newsletter, bring them with you.

SUBSCRIPTIONS! As you will no doubt already know, its time to pay your club subscriptions again. As last year its £20, and good value! Make sure you pay Frank or Jackie before the deadline of the end of January, the AGM would be a good opportunity if you have not yet paid!

WINTER KIT. We seem to be having a proper winter this year, so it is important that when we go out in the winter hills we are suitably equipped and prepared for whatever the weather can throw at us. That means warm weatherproof clothing, appropriate footwear, maps, maybe a GPS, and crampons, but most important, an ice axe, and the ability to use it if necessary. If you are not sure about any of this, speak to someone who is.

Note for your diary. Steph Williams is organizing a gorge walk foe us on the 13th June. I understand that kit will be provided. Sounds fun!

If you haven't been to any of Stuart Cathcart's Winter Lectures at the Gateway.....you should. The speakers this winter have all been superb and inspiring. There are two more dates remaining, in early February and March, which are not quite fully booked, so get there if you can, and have a good evening.

Finally, I have to say that this edition is the last NEWSLETTER that I will be editing. I started doing it just over twelve years ago, and this will be the 75th that I have produced. I hope you all got something out of them. I certainly enjoyed doing them, but for a while now have been thinking that it was time to step down, and I am very pleased to say that Steph Williams has agreed to take it on. I know he will do a superb job for us. So, thanks to all of you, especially those of you who have fed me with ideas, articles, photos, and so on over the years. All the best.

Dave Laddiman

Brocken Spectre – Jenny Howard

On Sunday January 3rd I ventured down to Church Stretton with a friend Di to walk on Caer Caradoc and Hope Bowdler. Stunning weather with blue, clear skies, bright sun, snow underfoot and many people out enjoying the day and distant views. On nearing the top of Caradoc we admired the views and whilst looking to Dorrington and Shrewsbury with the sun

behind us, realized that a strange cloud was moving quite quickly towards us a little below the hill. Strange in that the sky was clear otherwise and this cloud was a dark grey yellow colour. We then realised that a Brocken spectre was developing, something I had seen before but Di had not. The characteristic 'glory' rainbow halo emerged and our magnified shadows projected onto the cloud below. It is an optical illusion caused by light scattering back to its source by a cloud of water droplets and is named after a peak in the Harz mountains in Germany. Two people standing next to each other do not see the other's shadow but only their own. Many of you have witnessed this I am sure but some may not. Friends we met a short time after wondered what on earth we were talking about. On returning home later, I heard about the explosion in the town centre and wondered if that was the source of the cloud. Certainly there was a south moving wind at higher levels and the time of day would be appropriate.

Old Members Meet in Catalonia – Dave Stanley

I am still in touch with well remembered club member and former treasurer Keith Dutton. On a recent visit to meet up at his villa on the Costa Brava in Spain, we wangled a day pass from our wonderful wife's Paula and Mary by allowing them to go shopping together, and went for a walk.

We drove northwards past Girona to the mountain village of Oix, from where Keith boldly directed me down a rough gravel road that rang alarm bells all over the place about my hire car deposit! Having parked up I could at last settle down and look at the steep sided wooded valley that the track was in. Off we went over a tumbledown bridge, then a steep slippery woodland path above a large empty gorge. The bridges were especially nice, consisting of branches – well, more like twigs really – locally cut down and placed side by side. Not joined together though and instead of wood preservative had a nice coating of loose bark and green slimy mossy stuff for grip! After a while we finished that and dropped down through a meadow, across the gorge and up a side valley towards an old ruined monastery building. The skill required was to burst through the undergrowth and low lying tree branches at exactly the point that the path went, although you could only deduce rather than actually see it. Still, the system worked, and we arrived at the monastery, looked into the old chapel and entered a mountain refuge built above it. We duly recorded the presence of Shrewsbury Mountaineering Club (properly in the hut book and not urinating on the wall outside, Clwt y Bel Xmas party style).

Onwards and upwards still in heavy vegetation we eventually found the col we were seeking from where we ascended the ridge of El Farran (991m) to emerge from the forest on to a nice rocky boulder summit. We ate our sandwiches in fine but cloudy weather, but then we had thunder, lightning, and torrential hailstones followed by rain. Keith still walks with his giant size John Deere umbrella so I immediately banned him from using it within 20 metres of me even though he had no coat. Down we went as fast as possible.

We abandoned all ideas of bashing our way off the other side of the mountain to make a nice circuit; we simply retraced our steps bearing in mind the lightning position whenever we came out of the woodland on to an exposed area. The path down loosely followed the path up but we did find a ruined farmhouse we had passed by and missed before. Amazingly it was occupied by some hippy type bloke who Keith engaged in a long conversation in Catalan. I just stood there noticing that water was running out of the top of my boots as I placed my feet. I had no idea what they were saying but just hoped it wasn't along the lines of "You've ad it mate, that gorge'll be a deep torrent by now, it'll be three days afore you can cross back, and yum car l'av washed away." Luckily it wasn't. It was just directions as to the best path route downwards from where we were. We crossed the gorge OK and lived happily ever after – well – until that evening when we became aware of the bill for the shopping.

Costa Blanca – 15 to 18 October 2009 – Tony

This was our second trip to Costa Blanca. The first problem was to get inside the luggage allowance set by Ryan Air, 15kg hold, 10kg cabin luggage, a rope alone can weigh about 7 lbs.

On arrival, we set our sights on Marin, 22 miles from Alicante. We sorted out the gear then, after an easy 10-minute walk in, 3 Brits were just leaving so we had the whole crag to ourselves. Climbs worth doing: Jake Mate, and Dalia. If you climb Dalia make sure you climb out of the cave steeply and don't sneak out right. With 5 multipitch routes completed between 4 and 5+ we headed off to the bright lights of Benidorm.

The next day saw rain. This gave us chance to check out routes at Toix, Mascarat Gorge and Bernia. At the end of the day the rain had stopped and there was just enough time to get 5 routes in at Toix (with a 3 minute walk in you cannot go wrong). Opposite Toix is the intimidating Mascarat Gorge - the venue for the next day. Often gazed at in awe as you drive through the tunnels going somewhere else, the towering walls of Mascarat provide some fine, long routes in a weird and exciting setting.

The next day saw sunshine; a late start was agreed to let the Mascarat Gorge dry out. The route planned was Llobet/Bertomeu, 7 pitches with the hardest pitch 5+ HVS. We parked up and walked along the road as quickly as possible, to get away from all the cars and lorries (this was because we went through the narrow gorge rather than taking the guide book route up the dry riverbed). The route had been bolted a few years ago, but there was no guarantee that the bolts would still be there, so a small traditional rack was taken. With 3 pitches done it was time for lunch, then we were ready for next 3 harder pitches: 4+ 5+ 4+. We were now on the main cliff high up in the gorge looking directly down on the cars, lorries and the railway below. The light rack came in very useful, as a lot of bolt hangers had been removed. Climbing the polished HVS 5+ pitch you could look down between your legs at the different generations of road below you and the excellent views of Calp and Toix. At the top we finished our lunch and savoured the views and remarked that we had the whole of the Mascarat Gorge to ourselves.

The last day soon came around; the day started bright and sunny so we headed for Echo Valley to climb Espolon Encantada, a 2-pitch HVS trad route. We had just finished the first pitch when we noticed the big black clouds heading towards us in the distance, so the race was on. With the hard moves done on the 2nd pitch I was just under halfway when it started to rain, what to do?! So down I went, leaving some gear behind and stripping the rest back down to the belay. Another trip to High Sports! By the time we had abseiled back to the start of the first pitch we were soaked through. This was another day with the crag to ourselves; Echo Valley is an area we will definitely be returning to.

Thanks again for a memorable trip, Gerald!

Chairman's Meet – Clwt-y-Bel 30 October to 1 November – Dave Laddiman

Although not too well attended in the last few years, it has always been a very convivial weekend, with club members doing their own thing during daylight hours, and convening in the common room of Clwt y Bel in the evenings to recall adventures done, drink the chairman's whisky and eat his cheese. And this was the last one, at least with Mike as Chairman.

Two club members, Secretary and Editor, decided to start a couple of days early. They were on a mission, to walk the sections of the Clwt y Bel Way they had not so far done, before the years end. They reckoned that this weekend would be their last chance. They were right! Thursday morning saw them cycling uphill in a headwind from Ysbyty Ifan, (where they had parked the car) to the south side of Arrenig Fach. Exhausted, they stashed the bikes and purposefully marched up to the plateau of the Arrenig, as the clag came down on this featureless landscape. Sometime later they emerged on the summit, and the cloud lifted briefly to reveal the glorious wet and untrodden wilderness that is The Migneint. It's the biggest bog in Wales, according to Jim Perrin, who reckons everybody should do it, once. He was right; it's a real experience, (thanks Jackie). Some

hours later, They emerged at Penmachno, slumped into the car, and drove round to retrieve the bikes.

Next morning they were back at Ysbyty, and did the lovely stroll over the hill to Penmachno, where Sec. left Ed.(having completed her undone bits of the CBW). Ed. carried on over the next (very wet and boggy) hills to Dolwyddelan, and up and over a wet and windy Meol Siabod to finish the CYB Way at Capel Curig.

Saturday saw more club members arrive at CYB and spread out over the surrounding hills as the weather deteriorated. As a rest day, the Sec. and Ed. rode the newish cycleway from Bangor Harbour to Ogwen Cottage, very steep at Ogwen, but a fabulous blast downhill all the way back to the coast. Recommended!

The evening was as usual; starting with a meal at the Vaynol at Pentir followed by a retreat to the Clwt y Bel common room for whisky, cheese and reminiscences that only ended in the early hours. Sunday's weather was appalling; almost everyone went home in the morning, apart from a few climbers who drove round to The Beacon for their rockfix.

Bury Ditches – 8 November

This was a pretty informal stroll in our local patch led by Frank Maiden, for those not wanting a big day out at the fag end of the year.

A number of club members turned up, for a walk that took in the Ditches themselves, (A very impressive pre Roman construction, one of the best of the fifty or so similar forts in Shropshire), with super views in all directions. How did they build it without JCBs? From the Ditches the walk made its way eventually to Clun, and its also impressive Medieval castle ruins. A convenient place to finish, with a selection of tea shops and pubs nearby.

Broughton in Furness – 20/22 November

It was the weekend of the worst storms ever recorded in the Lake District; you will all recall the news reportage. The meet was cancelled on the Friday evening. There was no access to the accommodation that we had booked, and if there had been access we could not have reached it as all the roads to it were closed!

Two of us did go anyway, just to see what it was all about. It was wetter and wilder than we had ever seen it. There didn't appear to be a way into Keswick, the bridges were all closed, and the place was almost empty. Bassenthwaite Lake seemed a lot larger than usual, and Derwentwater was up to road level. Most roads were awash, teashops were closed, going above road level would have been extremely dangerous,...and we had the most thrilling day biking on tarmac that we have ever had! Thank goodness for a dry Band B. But we got a nice walk and an easy summit in the Whinlatter Forest Park before we waded home.

Xmas Party at Clwt-y-Bel – 4 December

As usual, a popular and festive event, with Rose providing, as usual, a fabulous feast; and games and lot of balloons, and so on; you know how it goes. Oh, and this year we had a special guest, Rudolph. Annie and Andrew found him resting on the Cantilever Stone, atop the Glyders, whilst they were having a misty walk over the hills before the dinner. They invited him to come along and join the party, and so he did.

New Year's Day Walk – Jan Campbell

The day was bright and snowy, so the meet point was changed from The Bog to Snailbeach to avoid having to drive too much untreated minor road. This was no problem, and a group of 25 people and 7 dogs turned up – it really was 'jump for joy' weather, and Jess certainly did that (see photo). Jons announcement that it was his first official day of retirement was greeted with

cheers and applause. We potted up to Shepherds Rock and then down to Stiperstones, with a walk back along the bottom, above June's house, and through the woods. Afterwards, a sizable group adjourned to Ann and Jons house for refreshments on a 'bring and share' basis, which included a wide range of goodies from smoked salmon to mince pies and Xmas cake, and Bryan brought a bottle of champagne which seemed an appropriate thing with which to celebrate our first meet of the new decade.

SPRING EVENTS

2 MARCH	HIGH SPORTS LECTURE	
	Local spot and mystery guest.	
14 MARCH	THE ARANS	Alenka/Gareth – 01743 360438
	A day out on, or a traverse of, a pair of really attractive hills with a remote feel to them.	
26 - 28 MARCH	CLWT-Y-BEL WORK WKND	Mike Jones – 01743 884592
	Come to Clwt-y-Bel for a day or weekend to help with the annual improvement and maintenance of our club hut. There is always a wide range of work to be done even for those without specific skills. On the Sunday, weather permitting, go climbing/walking on the local grags/hills.	
10 - 17 APRIL	COSTA BLANCA SPAIN	Jan Campbell – 01743 236692
	The annual week based in apartments in Calpe (nice seaside town) within easy reach of almost endless crags of all sizes and difficulties and a range of north Wales sized hills to roam over.	
24 – 25 APRIL	BLACK MOUNTAINS	Steph Williams – 01743 232561
	A day or a weekend camping by a pub in the Black Mountains and close to the Brecon Beacons. Great walking and mountain biking country.	
1 – 3 MAY	CLWT-Y-BEL	Jan Campbell – 01743 236692
	Spend the bank holiday weekend at the club cottage with other club members and friends well away from the clogged up holiday roads but close to some of the best hill walking and rock climbing in Wales . . . and therefore the world.	
14 – 16 MAY	LAKE DISTRICT STAIR HUT	Judy Preece – 01743 873529
	Close to Keswick and Derwent Water this is always a popular weekend so book your place as soon as you can.	