

SHREWSBURY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB: COMMITTEE LIST

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| | | |
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HOUSENOTES

- **SMC 50th Anniversary clothing.** Steph Williams will soon be sending in the next order so don't miss the boat! Steph – 01743 232561 or kingotheroad@hotmail.com
- **The DINNER. Sept 26th at the Prostar stadium.** The booking form is on the back of the newsletter but please let Jan know of any former members or friends who you think should be informed. We'd like it to be a great reunion and celebration of the Club. NB you must be able to provide their address.
- **Clwt-y-Bel.** Good news for making greater use of the cottage. See below for the new strategy for use of the cottage and also a calendar showing when it is available. However, you will still need electricity cards and the door code from Mike Jones.

Jan Campbell

A STRATEGY FOR USE OF THE CLUB'S HUT

The Committee has long been aware that members wish to have a more predicable and frequent use of the Club's facility at Deiniolen. Access on demand cannot be a realistic option in the foreseeable future. Management of the hut requires revenue of not less than £3,500 per year and even this figure will not allow for significant development of the facility.

The Committee has agreed to implement the scheme described below initially for a trial period until the end of 2009 and then to review the success or otherwise of the scheme. The hut will be made available for use by members on one weekend per month as shown on the availability calendar which can be seen on the Club's website www.shrewsburymc.com or alternatively a printed calendar is available. The weekends will comprise a mixture of Club events as shown on the Club's programme and these events are normally restricted to members which includes partners and other weekends shown are available for members and guests. The member/guest weekends have been chosen not to be in competition with scheduled meets. Currently members do not have to pay hut fees as these are included in the member's annual subscription, other than for the cost of electricity, guests will be required to pay the current hut fee of £5.00 per head per night which is the responsibility of the member concerned.

The calendar on the website will also show when visitor groups have booked the hut and this will be updated as frequently as possible but cannot be guaranteed to show the up to the minute position with visiting group bookings.

HUT AVAILABILITY FOR THE REST OF 2009

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| June 12 th -13 th | Members & guests * |
| June 26 th -27 th | Members |
| July 10 th -11 th | Members & guests* |
| August 28 th -30 th | Members |
| Sept. 12 th -13 th | Members & guests* |
| Oct 30 th -31 st | Members |
| Nov. 13-14 th | Members & guests* |
| Dec. 4 th -5 th | Members |

'Pot luck' bookings. In addition to the above, members can reserve accommodation up to 7 days in advance of a visit subject to space being available. Members will be responsible for signing in guests and collecting hut fees (£5 per night per non member). The door code will have to be obtained and electricity meter cards will also be needed at a cost of £2.75 per 20 kW hour card.

Members can also reserve the cottage for their own large party.
Mike Jones 01743 884592 or 07710 225712

MAY DAY WEEKEND AT CLWT-Y-BEL – MAY 1 - 4 – JAN CAMPBELL

By Friday evening 5 of us had turned up – Mike and Helen Holden, Jean and Seamus (with Jess) and Jan and North Wales was clearly 'full' judging by the amount of traffic crawling up the A5. Jean and Seamus confirmed this fact when they were unable to park anywhere in Llanberis Pass on Saturday and their climbing plans had to be modified. However, Mike, Helen and Jan (with Jess) had a glorious walk from the cottage up Carnedd Y Filiast, Mynydd perfedd and Elidir Fawr with hardly seeing a soul. By the time we were back at base, Judy, June and Mike J had arrived and we were later joined by Phil Latter, John Howard, Sian Barnes, Andrew and Annie; a jolly group who all had different ideas about what to do on Sunday.

Jan persuaded Mike, Helen, Sian and John to follow a 'Rocky Ramble' detailed in a geology of Snowdonia book which proved to be quite energetic but again taking us away from the crowds except for the very end on the Snowdon path back to Llanberis. The 3 climbers we had seen on Cloggy had only done the first pitch and were abbing off – presumably rather cold.

Sunday evening was a bit quieter and Monday dawned wet so some went for retail therapy and some for a walk around Padarn Lake before heading home. All in all a very convivial week end and Jess must have been very satisfied with her first real shepherding job – removing a ewe and her lamb from within the bounds of the cottage.

ON THE ROOF OF NORTHERN AFRICA - ASCENT OF JBEL TOUBKAL, 4TH APRIL 2009 – LARRY KING

Day 1 – Marrakesh to Imlil,

Flushed from our beds by the anticipation of a trip into the Atlas Mountains, we downed the usual Moroccan breakfast of boiled eggs, pithy orange juice, roti bread and lashings of jam, and headed for our transport.

Obstinately opting to tackle this mountain in true independent style we boarded the local bus – four shiny pink faces amongst a sea of swarthy African locals. For two and a half hours, with one change at Asni, we bounced on the intermittently surfaced roads. Ben, my 10-year old son, obviously thinking the same as me, whispered "do you think our packs will still be on the top?" "Of course" I said, but internally I fretted – how would I tell Kim and Steph about losing their crampons and ice axe?

Having arrived in Imlil, we chanced upon some accommodation in the tiny nearby village of Mzike. For 3 days and 3 nights we would have views of the Atlas Mountains, a mattress on the floor, and the same lump of bread for breakfast - all this for £2.50 each per night B&B. With mint tea in hand, we were ready for the ascent.

Day 2 – Imlil to the Refuge

For two hours our very happy kids hopped on and off our mule as we travelled across dry river beds and along stony paths. We passed the hill-side village of Aroumd, before arriving at Sidi Chamarouch, a rough, charming collection of stone huts masquerading as a last-ditch retail outlet. This was where we parted company with Alex, my wife, the kids and the mule returning to Mzike. With the stony path slowly giving way to snow I pushed on for a further 3 hours to arrive, mid-afternoon, at the refuge.

For the record, anyone wanting to tackle this mountain could do the Imlil – Jbel Toubkal summit – Imlil excursion in one long day. For me, however, it wasn't about busting a gut - I wanted to relax and enjoy the undertaking, which included taking in the experience and banter of a night in the refuge.

Day 3 – The Ascent

Wearing crampons and with ice axe in hand, I left at a very respectable 7.30 am for an ascent up the South Cwm. With not so much as a wisp of cloud in the sky, this was going to be a hot one.

Not knowing the route, I temporarily joined up with an Austrian pair and their guide. Realising they would be moving slowly, and that the route was straight forward, I moved on ahead. Three-quarters of an hour later I caught up with 23 year-old Si Mohammed, a businessman from Marrakesh, who was sitting and reflecting on his progress so far. Together we plodded on, sharing stories of our very different lives. With the snow rapidly thawing, we tackled the steep sections and increasing effects of altitude. For me, these translated into little more than a shortage of breath and slowed progress. Whilst this in itself was quite pronounced, I was delighted. This was my first experience of physical exertion at altitude and there was no sickness, no headache, no dizziness, just a general slowing down.

In blazing sunshine, we arrived at the summit (4,167m) three-and-a-quarter hours after leaving the refuge. For a very evocative 50 minutes we sat and reflected on life and death (Si Mohammed and I exchanged stories on the loss of close family members) and the miles of Haute Atlas ahead. In mountaineering terms, I wondered how often one would get the chance to spend this amount of time on the summit.

Job done, we took one-and-a-half hours to retrace our steps through the icy slush of the South Cwm to the refuge. With the paths turning back to stone, I took a further 3 hours to return to Mzike and an excited Ben and Emily running through the village to meet me.

Day 4 – Back to Marrakesh

This time our transport was a battered late-70s 240TD Mercedes Benz, which we had negotiated for little more than the fare on the two local buses. As we rattled back down the hill toward Marrakesh I reflected on the preceding days. Not only had this been a spectacularly enjoyable family adventure but less than 24 hours before I had been standing on the roof of Northern Africa - this was truly as good as life gets.

SEVEN DAYS ONE WINTER - CLIMBING IN ANOTHER WORLD, CALPE, SPAIN – APRIL 2009 – BY ROGER SKEWS

It seemed to be a far off galaxy, light years away from planet Shropshire, where a bunch of SMC renegades, fought the influences of the dark side of the force and chose not to holiday on the beaches, but throw themselves again and again against the steep bolted walls of limestone in the sizzling heat of a winter on the Costa Blanca.

These 13 survivors of the English Winter gathered together in the holy grail that is Calpe, mourning the loss of one of their companions (Martin) to the Dark Lord who did say only two days beforehand "Sorry, it's a mega-emergency, we need you here at work!". He had trained on the wall for weeks and weeks, so we dedicate our routes to him and hope he is still fit enough to do some more later in the year!

Dave (our noble leader), Roger, Jan, Joe, Heather, Jean, Seamus (complete with secret weapon Finn), Richard and Anne plus Matt, Rachael and Tom threw themselves at rock which had wonderful names including Toix (east, west, up & down and for one party, never found !), Font d'axia, Sella, Bernia, Echo Valley, Olta, Penon de Ifach, Gandia and Marin. The crags were all accessed by everything from a three minute walk, to far too long and even longer coming back.

I noticed these friendly SMC folk traditionally shared everything, food, wine, beer, though strangely they also shared their toilet paper !

In true Spanish tradition ? we dined repeatedly in "Mamma Leone's" Italian Pizzeria, carbo loading for the sport rock we had come to enjoy. Cheap good food and excellent house red.

Highlights

Masses of climbs of all grades from Grade 3 (nice and easy!) to 6c(+) (slightly more difficult – some would say a trifle harder than impossible!) with bolts a plenty, and climbed by all.

Pain de Chocolat every morning with breakfast

Never serve a main course of cous-cous when the packet is labelled Semolina !

Two Prats and a Johnny make for a curious sight!

Drinks, food and great conversation for everyone, in several apartments all week.

The impressive Via Valencianos on the equally impressive Penon, was climbed by several SMC parties including Richard's boys and later by a lady in strange winged footwear!

You may have missed one of the friendliest and successful meets of the year, perhaps even of the last 50years! Try to come next year !

Quote of the week

"Seeing Finn in shorts and a tee-shirt makes me feel cold!!"

I am expertly advised that the reverse effect was present in most of the girls looking on !!

Thanks to Dave for organising the accommodation, flights, & cars etc., and all the drivers' efforts to navigate without maps, purely guided by inaccurate shouts from the back seats after each junction.

BLACK MOUNTAINS – 19 APRIL – ANDY BENTLEY

A total of eleven members turned out for a day in the Black mountains, meeting up at the Castle Inn near Talgarth. There were two campers, Steph and Kim, while the rest of us (Pete Cooper, Liz, Jan, Dave, John and Sue Roberts, and Jon and Ann Yeeles, and myself) arrived the following morning. The weather turned out to be fantastic, a far cry I'm told, from the washout suffered by those on the last club trip to the Blacks Mountains, and it encouraged a fairly relaxed pace to the day.

Setting off from the pub car park, we headed roughly south east along a track for half a mile or so and then a long pull up towards a saddle in the ridge that leads up to Pen Trumau and Waun Fach. During this part of the walk the sun was shining although there were quite a few misty patches swirling around us that hadn't quite burnt off. Once onto the ridge, we took a

brief detour south towards another nearby peak Mynydd Llsiau– just to see what the view would be like. It wasn't disappointing – within a couple of minutes we could see across to peaks of the Brecon Beacons rising out of what appeared to be a vast milky sea - and after walking just another 100 metres or so the mist cleared to reveal all the fields and villages between. We took a quick about-turn just short of the top as this was just an aside, and then headed back to where we had picked up the ridge plus a little beyond, breaking for a late elevenses.

Waun Fach was the next summit on our itinerary and the highest point of our walk. It was now easy to see why these hills got their name as we walked across spongy peat beds that on a damper day would have turned the walk into a bog trot. There was however enough vegetation to support lizards, and in fact one of these was brave enough to climb onto my boot. A long leisurely lunch break was spent looking westwards towards Talgarth and the gliding club, where we saw several planes being tow launched. The conversation revealed that at least three of the group had parachute experience and it even emerged that Pete was an accomplished wing walker in his day. Basking in the sun, we were all in danger of sinking roots into the peat below us, until Kim suggested we were turning into ramblers. With that everyone was up on their feet and donning sacks within seconds!

After gradually descending a ridge and then down a steeper rocky bridleway taking us to lower ground, we then walked for a couple of miles on the flat trying to figure out the cause of the many curious lopsided anthill like mounds around us. The final climb was steep but brief and took us to the ruins of Castell Dinas, an impressive (in its time at least) Norman hill fort. From there we dropped down to our starting point where we rounded off the day with a large pot of tea, countless Yorkie bars (a pub so no cakes were available) and a pint or two of beer for the extra thirsty.

SMC LIBRARY – HELD BY JAN CAMPBELL AND AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

A lot of these are very ancient and suitable only for research or amusement, but listed below are all the books we have that can be regarded as “up to date” being from 1990 or later. Please feel free to borrow them.

General/walking UK

Hamish Brown (1988). *The Island of Rhum*. Cicerone Press.

Magnus Magnusson (1997). *Rum: Nature's Island*. Luath Press.

Cameron McNeish (1991). *The Munro Almanac*. Neil Wilson Publishing.

Climbing Guides UK

Gary Gibson & Paul Harrison(1994). *Lundy*. Climbers' Club.

Stuart Cathcart (1983). *Clwyd Limestone*. Cicerone Press.

Other countries

Chris Craggs (2000). *Rock climbs in Mallorca*. Cicerone Press.

June Parker (1997). *Walking in Mallorca*. Cicerone Press.

Kev Reynolds (1992). *The Bernese Alp , Switzerland*. Cicerone Press.

Maurice Teal (1990). *Bernese Oberland*. Crowood Press.

C.Davis (2006) *Costa Blanca walks*. Santana Books.

B.Stansfield (2001) *Costa Blanca – mountain walks vol.2 East*. Cicerone Press.

L.Griffin (2002) *Mont Blanc massif vol 2 selected climbs*. Alpine Club.

Jurg von Kanel (2004) *Plaisir west (rock climbs near Chamonix)* Filidor.

Videos

Safety on Mountains. BMC

DVDs

Winter Essentials. BMC

THE SCOTTISH WEEK, CAIRNGORMS – 14-21 FEBRUARY – DAVE LADDIMAN

Better with crampons.....

Its always popular, hard cases come every year. You have to be keen though. Winter there really means short days and bad weather etc. Also, there is the matter of the accommodation. Not for us the usual spacious tents, set up in a well appointed camp site, or even a cozy bunkhouse next to a pub. Oh no, its now a tradition to stay together in a big old house, and you can imagine how bleak that can be.

This year Crubenmore Lodge, a Victorian shooting lodge near the top of the Drumochter Pass close to Dalwhinnie, was no exception. It stood gaunt and proud, and covered in snow when we arrived. The huge rooms on three stories with large single glazed windows promised cold, and they would have been, were it not for the ruthlessly efficient oil central heating system, and the heavy curtains and deep pile carpets in every room. Oh how we suffered, several bedrooms did not contain en-suites, and the long table in the formal dining room seating 20 people meant that holding a conversation with someone at the other end could be difficult. But we made the best of it. Evening meals were prepared by teams of 2 or 3 club members, and sometimes consisted of only 3 or 4 courses, and only a choice of 4 or 5 wines. But we don't wish to complain, the huge formal drawing room was centrally heated, and had a glowing real log fire, but there was only one large flat screen TV to entertain us if we tired of talking to each other, and listening to Gerry's guitar playing each night. Oh, and the games room only had one full size pool table.

But we had come for the mountaineering, and that was what we got. Although there was a thaw on, there remained enough snow to play in all week. After a massed ascent of Carn na Caim, climbed in the clag, to give us a chance of getting lost on its huge plateau and descended by poly bag, the team split into its interest groups for the rest of the week with the the Munro collectors Munro bagging, the Corbett collectors Corbett bagging (rather more discreetly) while "other hills" were climbed by those who just wanted to climb them, and on one day....they found a goat in a tree on their hill!.... and on another, found the only free ranging herd of reindeer in Scotland. Meanwhile, the mountain biking chapter scoured the forests from Loch Laggan to Inverness in the quest for the best singletracks and MTB trails.

And it really is better with crampons

Late in the week, Bryan, Gerry and I set off for the Fiacail Ridge on Coire an t Sneachda. The clag was down, and there was a lot of snow on the lower section, but when we got to the rocky upper section (not entirely unlike Bristly Ridge, but bigger and higher) there was suddenly an awful lot of thick hard ice on the rocks, which gave a delightful climb wearing crampons. Unfortunately, Gerry hadn't brought his, so Bryan and I dawdled upwards watching him sketching his way up somewhat precariously. But we got on the plateau eventually, and set off for Cairn Gorm and a gentle descent. Then the clag really came in and we could barely see our boots . Gerry stopped. "It was like this when James fell off Craig Meagaidh. We should go back" So we did, carefully, and Bryan and I were able to watch Gerry's precarious **descent** of the Fiacail Ridge. A Good Day.

If you want a list of the SMC's participants in the week, and they came from the far flung corners of Shropshire, Mid Wales, Norwich, Inverness, and Turkey, here it is. See you next year?

Jeremy Adams, Pete McAree, Eric Brayne, Jan Campbell, Mike and Max Blakemore, James Blair, Graham Daly, Tony Rogers, Dave Place, Annie Blayney, Andrew Ashley, Dave and Paula Stanley, Jane Holmes, Liz Carr, and Dave Laddiman.

STAIR WEEKEND – 6-8 MARCH – JUDY PREECE

Since our last visit to this hut, there has been a useful extension built in the entrance which has heating, seating, and access to a new drying room. Excellent on Saturday when we all returned rather rain soaked. Twelve members attending wasn't a bad result considering the

meet was rather hurriedly put together; for three club members it was a first visit, so hopefully they will come again

Saturday. Various routes were walked, including:

Group 1, Cousey Pike, Coledale Hause, Sail, Grassmore, returning via Stoneycroft Gill.

Group 2. Newland Hause, Knott Rigg, Ard Craggs, Sail, and Causey Pike.

Group 3. Rog and I went to Braithewaite via Stoney Croft Gill, Barrow Door, and Barrow Gill.

We discovered a cafe within the village store where a charming young lad made us a cuppa before we returned home in the drizzle around Barrow Hill and paths through farms.

Following the evening visit to the Swinside Inn, the inevitable reminiscences continued back at the hut!!!

Sunday. It was noted that there was not one good hangover amongst the party in the morning. (what are things coming to. Ed) Harry's group went to Ashness Bridge and Watendlath; and Bryans attempt at Sharp Edge was thwarted by icy rocks. Rog played golf in a sleet shower at Penrith, and some headed straight home.

Such a lovely venue, and always so many walks and climbs to do. Hope we get a larger turnout next time.....

SUMMER EVENTS

| | | |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 14 JUNE | SNOWDONIA | Dave Laddiman – 01694 771439 |
| | Walking, scrambling or climbing or even all three, subject to your wishes and abilities. Meet at the Pinnacle Café, Capel Curig to decide on what to do on the day. | |
| 26 - 28 JUNE | WELSH 3000s | Jan Campbell – 01743 236692 |
| | A weekend at Clwt-Y-Bel to go walking and climbing in the North Wales hills on some of the longest days of the year or you could attempt the best mountaineering challenge in North Wales, the 14 3000s with backup from club members if wanted. If you call yourself a mountaineer you have to do this at least once! | |
| 11 - 25 JULY | ARGENTIERE FRENCH ALPS | Mike Jones – 01743 884592 |
| | Join Mike for up to a fortnight in one of the most famous areas of the Western Alps. Argentiere is a fairly small village with a choice of camping and apartment facilities (Mike has done a lot of research, so contact him for all the base camp information). A few miles up the valley from the bustling resort of Chamonix . . . with stunning views of the Dru's and Mont Blanc. The area is a big outdoor playground, with big mountains, high and low level walks, mountain and valley rock climbing, mountain biking, and much more. | |
| 31 JULY - 1 AUG | HARLECH | John Edwards – 01743 365766 |
| | John's well loved camping weekend close to Harlech and lots of interesting walking in the pleasantly unfrequented Rhinogs. Also rock climbing nearby. | |
| 28 - 31 AUGUST | CLWT-Y-BEL WAY FINALE & BBQ | Jackie Eyre – 01743 236877 |
| | This could be a big weekend. Have a few days away from the crowds at Clwt-y-Bel. Walk, climb, sail or whatever you fancy and join Jackie on the last leg of the Clwt-y-Bel Way to the cottage and a BBQ. | |
| 6 SEPTEMBER | CLWYDIAN HILLS | Matt Akers – 01743 236441 |
| | A days walking over the range of hills between Llangollen and the North Wales coast – a location one tends to overlook but a good day out. | |
| 26 SEPTEMBER | SMC 50TH BIRTHDAY DINNER | The Committee |
| | A date for your diary at the Prostar Stadium, Shrewsbury. Tickets to be booked by 30 June. | |

