

FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1978

Greetings folks! Compliments of the winter season in what is the last Newsletter by this hand; my persuasive powers have taken a battering and I am sorry that the result has been, in most editions at any rate, Rock Follies according to Rick. I'm clean out of ribaldry: Rob Norris and Mick Tolley can now safely park their bath-chairs in the cafe car-park at Tremadoc instead of hiding them amongst the rocks; by the way, George Parker has bought a trophy cabinet; Brian Wilkinson is going back to work at the Bank, he told me "that's where the money is". (his joke - I only write them down); on the next tide Gordon Aspin is sailing to Hollywood to take up the offer to play THE leading role in a new series of "Colombo" (its a gas), they tell me he preferred this to a remake of "DESTROY RIDES AGAIN"; they also tell me Alan Bell used to tour the old Music Halls singing Folk Songs; Dave Earle has got a new job - ski instructor at the Badenoch Hotel (they must have got his name mixed up with that of a Duke or an Earl), Jack Jowett wants the rowdies back at Little Langdale for now that he can get a decent nights kip he doesn't because he now lies awake trying to think of excuses for NOT going on long walks; it has been whispered to me that Steve Halton has taken a vow of silence, (though I'm not certain where to); polite circles tell me that our old friend AndyyDunhill will NOT be profiled in the coming edition of "Lancashire Life" due to an industrial dispute between the various printing chapels - Andy, we know, is a devout Baptist; Easy Rider "Tats" has been banned yet again for being noisy in the dormitories - he was asleep at the time of the offence; after the last Club Dinner, best Little Langdale Hut Secretary we've ever had, Don Nichol, went ahead and banned himself; at the Dinner Pete Roscoe was awarded GOBLET OF THE YEAR (don't worry, Pete, I'll get mine after this lot), remember Colin Green getting his Peugeot 504 smashed to pieces in a spot of dicky parking which resulted in 504 pounds worth of rear-end damage a few years ago, well Colin has bought a new car, an Alfasud, it has no rear-end whatsoever, and is guaranteed to flatten in any shunt.

Well if that lot doesn't persuade you that it's time I went - what will! See you on the hill.

ANNUAL DINNER 1978 DERWENTWATER HOTEL, PORTINSCALE has been booked. It has all the qualifications for a good do and is very popular. Accommodation, dining, comfortable lounge, disco, all under one roof.

AVIEMORE: NEW YEAR

R Reeve

A large contingent of members past and present assembled at this famous watering hole, known of old as Costa del Bevy. The scintillatingly coloured body-hugging gear of the skiers as they left for the piste provided novel conversation for Robbie Mallinson (Vagabonds M.C.) and myself, as we daily trundled off to the Northern Corries.

Day One provided fair weather, if a little windy; there were plenty climbing the easy gullies of Coire an t-Sneachda so we chose ALLADINS BUTTRESS (Gr.4) which went quite comfortably. Ice conditions were not remarkable.

Day Two found us in the same corrie again this time at the foot of ALLADIN'S MIRROR DIRECT (Gr.4) in thick swirling mist and, because there was one almighty gale blowing, we had the crag to ourselves. On this day ice conditions were good and the loose snow had disappeared. At 2 p.m. Robbie took the lead and probed the snowy apron beneath the impressive 25 foot column of vertical water ice to no avail - verdict: Terror-dactyls are a bit tricky on vertical, brittle ice. Given the lead I proceeded to wham my way heavenwards. Shortly, an excellent arm-sized hole appeared in the ice; the drag was that four feet appear to be a lot further when they occur above your head. I've never been able to explain this apparent optical illusion coupled with the strange knacker effect it has on the muscles of the arm. Adopting the motto "when in doubt press on" I arrived shoulder level to the hole and frantically dug in as much body as possible. With right arm well inserted I found that this hole could be adapted to take a superb thread runner; the problem was in the threading, I couldn't take out my arm. Although I was able to think straight the minutes ticked away until at last I was forced to do battle or drop off - or both. Well a second later I was happy to be clipped into and suspended from the thread runner that a second before had eluded me. It proves that on rare occasions cardiac arrest can be a tonic to the system. However, I lost a few points on style by dropping the old ice-axe. What a painful sight it was to see my trusty walloppa winging its way to earth. I gave tight rope to Rob and he retrieved. The last ten feet of ice remained and after one devastating moment when the ice refused the pick the angle suddenly eased to horizontal as the top of the column was reached.

Looking down I could see Robbie stowing his ice axes; he signalled and I realised he wanted the use of my curved jobs so I drew in the rope and lowered these down.

The rest of the route was a very pleasant, easy angled slope which led to Alladin's Mirror, a small col near the top of Alladin's Couloir; we descended this as the night snook down on Coire an t-Sneachda.

Day Three, New Year's Eve, saw Robbie and myself heading for Stag Rocks but thaw conditions prevailed and our projected ascent of Amphitheatre Gully (4) was cancelled. Shelter Stone Crag looked tremendous across the bog of Meur na Banaraich.

John and Barbara Sealey, with Sue, climbed Alladin's Couloir, later enjoying the pleasures of a swim and sauna at the Centre.

John Hargreaves, Fred Snalam, John Hamilton, Phil Caley, Steve Halton, Joe Giblin, Keith Lockett, Chris and Ann Heald and skiers Mike Feeley and Co. plus crowds of other friends made the evenings at the Freedom Inn and the Winking Owl a popular event (which tended to detract from early rising).

#### LITTLE LANGDALE HUT

Since it has been under New Management courtesy of Dave Nichol the place has taken a turn for the better. In fact, thanks must go out to Dave and his teams of workers who have put in hours of effort. Well done, Dave and Co!

Marathon man Robin "Trucker" Norris gallantly competed in the Karrimor 2 week dash; after nearly fourteen days dashing around like a demented ant, brain packed in; sad really, such a young lad, lots of future, loads to give, turn back the hands-of-time, put him in for 'O' level GEOMETRY, get rid of that hackney carriage he towed on his mountain runs, strip down his VOSPER-THORNEYCROFT MARINE COMPASS, toss away that Viking Lode stone, haul him off those addictive LEAD PILLS, no way to treat your God-given REAL ESTATE, get his smokes down from 40 to ten OAK TREES a-day, charging head-on into the 7.30 from Carlisle every night might have been good for the pulse but as a pre-event crash programme it tends to form callouses on the forehead.

#### ANNUAL DINNER DEC. 77

Yet again a very good meal was had at the Stickle Barn, N.D.G., Langdale, followed by festive frolics performed by an array of festering old fetlers (Robin Norris won the Montreux Golden Drawers Award; as usual the script was unintelligible and the audience accepted that it was supposed to be funny - the effect definitely was).

Resident D.J. John Sealey flipped the discs while Fylde members stomped, quaffed and got very sillee.

Representatives of other clubs were: Chester - Colin Green, Malcolm Eldridge; Vagabonds - Heather and Marg. George Parker, for sedan-chair leadership on the hill, won the "MUG OF THE YEAR"; Pete Roscoe was honoured with a wine GOBLET to commemorate Life Membership bestowed last A.G.M.

#### THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE SOUTH OF THE RIBBLE MOB

Colin Green (Chester)

After the first halfway decent winter for years (last year ED) I thought that you Lakes fellers might like to know about the much greater potential that North Wales can offer over the Lakes in the way of winter climbing. The reasons for this are obvious. The area has a much greater proportion of high level north facing cliffs than the Lakes and is generally more rugged.

The north side of Snowdon offers routes of about 500 feet which don't start until about 3000 feet. The grades are in the I, II or III range and the cliff is generally recognised as offering the most reliable snow conditions south of Scotland. The routes themselves are easy to follow but in mist they are difficult to locate. Right Hand Trinity and Lady's and Cave Gullies are probably the best bets at about III or III/IV.

The Black Ladders behind Llech Ddu in the Carnedd's also offers reliable conditions combined with routes of superb quality. The route of the Crag is undoubtedly western Gully which at 1000 feet and Grade 4 is a fairly serious sort of expedition. An early attempt in December with Rick Reeve had its fair share of grip quotient when we simultaneously ran out of ice and daylight at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  height. Retreat the way we had come was out of the question and an epic traverse across the cliff into the unknown and in the gathering gloom finished with a hairy reversal of a 50 foot Grade 3 pitch (at least ED). Moral - don't embark on 1000 foot Grade 4's in the middle of the afternoon in December. A subsequent attempt also ended in failure because of poor conditions.

A route I did get up was Pyramid Gully also on the Black Ladders and which is also about Grade 4. The difficulties although relatively short are nonetheless intimidating and demanding, comprising a 100 foot steep ice pitch with a 40 foot vertical section at the top. Protection is by screws only but I couldn't get any in and by the top of the pitch my mind was starting to explode. There are easier routes on the crag and because the gullies are deep and high they hold snow well. The 3 mile walk from Gierlan is fairly flat and painless.

What seems to have emerged as THE ROUTE in Wales this year is the left hand branch of Clogwyn Du Gully in the Nameless Cum above Ogwen. Having crashed in with an early ascent on New Year's Day I felt pretty chuffed. This short steep gully takes drainage from the whole of Gyder Fawr and being right at the top of the hill is the highest ice climb in Wales.

It offers 300 feet of sustained high angle ice climbing much of it verging on desperate and some of it certainly bulging. It is unquestionably the finest and hardest piece of ice that I have climbed anywhere. General opinion seems to be that the major difficulties are of the order of Grade V but because the route is fairly short it gets IV in Rick Newcombe's excellent winter climbing guide. Protection is by screws only but the stances and belays are good. Be prepared to blow your mind though if you try it and get there early because the word is out about its quality and reliability.

In a hard frost the cliffs round the Devil's Kitchen offer some superb short routes, the classic being South Gully at Grade IV. There are also some extremely vicious looking ice falls some of which have not yet been climbed.

Although this winter has seen plenty of snow it has not been particularly cold, and good conditions have been more potential than actual. The norm seems to be rotten ice where you have to rake about with your axes to find dubious placements. Great stuff for adrenalin freaks but a bit frustrating and somehow unsatisfying.

MR ROBIN NORRIS: The aforesaid gentleman whose name has appeared far too often in these pages (and who is a great sport - keep sending the cheques, Rob) is appealing against the Committee's decision to ban his 2 year-old twin sons from the Huts on a charge of swearing like little troopers. In their defence and to tell the truth, they are only copying the old firm who, according to his lovely wife Dil, 19, becomes paranoid behind a steering wheel. Quietly, she told me that his legs shake and he faces the wrong direction; being not quite sure of what we were discussing I politely laughed as it brought to mind some one else's climbing style. Therefore, may I put in a plea for clemency on behalf of these two young fellows.

#### NEW MEMBERS

Geof and Hilary Salkeld, Andrew Healey, Glyn Rodgers, Stanley Wade, Chris Loveless welcomed into the Club, AND Leslie Mason and John Kinsman and Peter Cadd.

Is Rick Reeve the original male chauvenist pig? Those interested in the activities of the Ladies read on:-

Ladies Weekend 11/12th Nov.

Weekend of Fylde Coast Floods - Jenny Tolley marooned on Larkholme Estate, Chris, Liz, Ida, Pam were thwarted at attempts to get the show on the road.

Energies of some of the frustrated ladies were thus directed towards a new stimulus - an Orienteering Course at Lancaster University on 19th November. Impressed by the National Coach, Tony Thornley, an exercise was undertaken in adverse weather conditions at Wharton Crag. Since this date several of the Ladies have followed up this new venture at Hardcastle Crags and Hawes End Derwentwater.

Not only have the Ladies been active on top of the ground but also below ground! On 26th Nov. the pot-holing meet found 3 ladies making up a party of 6 exploring the Gaping Ghyll System. Flood Entrance was explored, Keith Lockett and Barbara Sealey coped with the keyhole crawl returning via Bar Pot, the other 4 returning the way they had entered.

Sunday, 8th January, 3 ladies were again in action, joining George Parker's gentlemen of the hills. In misty conditions High Street and Kentmere were the target. Are the ladies seeking tips to win the "Mug of the Year"?

Tremadoc Meet 29th/30th Oct 77

Nine attended in poor weather.

Robin Norris

Fun provided by Barry and his virtuoso car-tuning. The remarkable thing is that it actually carried on moving at all, with all that noise: its acceleration hardly existed, being easily outpaced over a standing half-mile by drunken pedestrians, as we "surged" back from the pub. I agree with you Barry that one cylinder was well tuned, but what about the other three?

Cader Idris was ascended by five members on Saturday. The rest combined, on a variety of climbs including Etna, Strangeways, Valeries, Leg Slip; Ray helped to do variations on Pear Tree Variation. Two parties retreated from Leg-Slip ahead of Pete and I; they were complaining of the wet-groove, but in fact was bone-dry.

Sunday was very wet but Pete's "good Pubs guide" found us at Craig-y-Farwen; a lovely little limestone cliff and on the way home too.

Everybody climbed, and the cnag was reasonable despite the rain. Seven good routes were climbed from Diff to H.S. Those "nailed" boots of Jerry's looked just the job.

Fylde M.C. Runners?!

There is quite a lot of us out trying to run but with one exception our efforts in races have been moderate to abysmal failures.

The Karrimore two-day event took place on the Howgill Fells in October. It was certainly a feat of organisation but the course lacked interest, considering the remoteness and beauty of much of the region.

The good result - Martin R and John H came 12th in the B class (Martin R now lives in the lakes and is now a regular at the Fell races there).

And the rest of us.

Stan and I were together again; prospects soon looked bleak however; I had decided to wear in my race ensemble a pair of Dil's knitted tights; well they proved just a wee bit too tight and on the first hill, other teams sniggered past us as Stan and I tore at the indestructable garment - I will not repeat the experiment - nor will Stan!

Then there were Stan's legs; they kept on "going" first one leg; then the other; sometimes both at once. We kept on O.K. but running was spasmodic and finished about 60th out of 300 teams. Then came the final blow - the last checkpoint on our course was 300 yds away from the last checkpoint of another class, and we, together with 50 other teams had registered at the wrong one. Therefore, technical disqualification.

Chris Heald and Anne also took part but lost their way in thick mist on the second day.

Orienteering techniques were more important this year in the event and so Dil and I have joined the growing band of Fylde orienteers which includes Liz R, Chris I and Kath F.

John H. Chris H and I had a go in the Dovedale Dash along with 600 others; what fun to see the fight as everybody tried to use the one set of stepping stones across the Dove; this bottleneck is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile after the start. Our order - Robin, John, Chris.

John Sealey overtrained and has returned to his former sports.

#### SOCIAL EVENTS

Wednesday February 1st. Ski-ing at Rossendale followed by curry at the Bengal, Preston.

Wednesday February 15th. At the Rangers - Peter Roscoe showing his slides of Mont Blanc and district.

Wednesday February 22nd. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING At the Rangers

Wednesday March 8th. At the Rangers - A slide lecture on the first ascent of PHUPARESH CENTRAL in the Himalaya.

Wednesday March 22nd. At the Rangers - Ski-ing slides. Bring yours.

Wednesday April 5th At the Rangers - Members slides of their winter activities, followed by Hot Pot. Bring your slides along.

Wednesday April 19th. Beginners rock climbing meet at Hoghton Quarries. Meet Leader. Dave Sharples. Tel: Garstang 2956.

Contact Dave at the above number regarding any of the above meets.

HUT AVAILABILITY The huts are available to members as follows:

| <u>Newhouses</u> |         | <u>Stair</u> |         |
|------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| February         | 3 - 5   | February     | 10 - 12 |
| February         | 17 - 19 | February     | 24 - 26 |
| March            | 3 - 5   | March        | 10 - 12 |
| March            | 17 - 19 | March        | 24 - 26 |