

Twelve Members & a Dog

(or: The LMC at play on Pillar Rock)



The day dawned hot and sunny on Church Stile campsite. As is usual on the Wasdale meet we were surrounded by industrious, bustling indecision. We had already made our plans and so breakfast extended slowly lunchwards. Gradually but insidiously the team grew in numbers if not in stature. Slowly at first, but with increasing rapidity, it became apparent that without an imminent departure things would get completely out of hand. A motley crew of twelve members and a dog eventually toiled

up towards Black Sail Pass in the sweltering heat, our passage marked by the streams of sweat.

Reassembling at Looking Stead, we took the traverse path past Robinson's cairn and across the Shamrock Traverse, where we paused for lunch. Ignoring the torrents of abuse being hurled from above by "The Pensioner", we began the descent of the West Gully. A seemingly determined attempt to stone me to death failed and we all somehow survived to gather at the foot of the Old West Route. It now became apparent that the team was of mixed abilities and experience. We formed a sight, not dissimilar to a file of Tibetan refugees, as we wound our way to the top of Low Man. By now we were match fit and soon dispatched the small pitches on the ridge to the summit of High Man.

The whole team, including Oscar the dog, paused here for a second lunch and a team photo. It was now that we heard the distant thunder. As we started down Slab and Notch the rain began to fall, gently at first then with more menace. The large polished holds soon became ice-like and a rope was considered sensible. It was now that we discovered a lack of ability to improvise. "What's a bowline?" "How does this harness go on?" echoed off the gully walls. It was slow, but gradually the team slotted through the Notch and crossed the Slab to level ground. One glorious memory is the sight of Oscar clinging to his master's leg with all four paws as he downclimbed to the Notch.

As the rain had now stopped we returned over Pillar mountain to the Wasdale Head Inn for a well deserved pint after a grand mountaineering day.

Cast; Bernard, Josie & Claire Smith, Iain McClellan, Mark & Janette Braithwaite, Richard Ramsden, Jason Whiteley, Joanne Medcalf, Clare, Petra, Amanda & Oscar the dog.

