
LMC Newsletter January 2006



Editorial

Happy New Year! Hope you get plenty of outdoor activities in 2006.

This year the social meet has been changed back to the Black Dog in Belmont. This is because the Lord Nelson did not seem as attractive to Members as the Black Dog. Also a new Landlord has taken over the Black Dog, and he

seems more amenable to us than the last one.

Please note the meeting will be on the **first TUESDAY** of each month. In February there will be a members slide show. Bernard will bring his digital projector, so all you need is a disc with your photos. Conventional slides can also be projected, so no excuse! Please contact Bernard on 01254 878365 or e-mail if you are going to bring some slides.

Jim Cunningham

Hut News

Beddgelert

Still no news over the proposed swap of our present hut. We await for Mr Porter to sign.

The roof has recently been repaired, and hopefully it is not leaking – certainly not badly.

If you visit in Winter there may be a chain across the drive. One of the locks on the chain is ours. The key for this is hanging in the hut.

The hut received little use last year, but it is still in the superb position is always was and is quite comfortable. Don't hesitate to use it if you want a weekend in Wales.

The Loft

Now fitted with a new kitchen after a flood damaged the old one. Bernard and others have worked hard to create the "Ideal Home" look!

The hut is hired to other Clubs for about one weekend in four. Check with Dave Sudell to see if it is booked if you plan a visit. The Solitary is always available to Members.

Tyndrum

Chris has organized lots of work on the new Van. It now has a skirt and the plumbing has been sorted. Please use it!

Website

A new website has been written by Andrea Grant and is now open for viewing at our original address (www.lancsmc.org). Thanks to Andrea.

Dave Rundall is taking responsibility for keeping it up to date. If you have any information please e-mail it to Dave. His e-mail address is DaveRundall@aol.com

Penbroke Meet

Dave Sudell
(for Julie who was the meet leader)

A super weekend, the weather just as forecast, warm and sunny (most of the time). Climbing on super sea cliffs in dramatic situations and walking on coastal paths with magnificent scenery. True you need your calm head on, but we are getting to know the area well and in particular where to access the routes by abseil - this is quite important! A good turn out of members, one or two being new to the area - they were very impressed. An excellent campsite with flower garden, swallows, bats and owls flying around. Club BBG on Saturday evening, what more can one ask for?

See you all again next year.

PS Pity about the rain in the North eh?

The Dolly Mixture Meet 2005

Dave Sudell

Members and their friends from as far afield as Boston USA assembled in the village of Campitello in the Dolomites in July/August. We were blessed with good weather and enjoyed a campsite with excellent facilities. The area has brilliant walking, super via ferratas, and fantastic rock climbing. Most of which can be accessed by cable cars and ski lifts, this may be an easy option but it does get you up to (and down from) the interesting parts PDQ!

Lots of adventures were enjoyed along with super food and the excellent hospitality of various restaurants. The beer's fine and the Grappa potent!

Big walks; the rounds of Lankofell from Sella Pass, the Rosengarten from Frommer via the Vajolet towers,etc Via Ferratas; Lichtenfleser Steig, Piz Boe / Pisciadusteig (via Ferrata Brigata Tridentina) / Satnerpass (Rosengartengroup), Boesekofel, Piz da Lac / Cima di Costabella, via Bepi Zac....etc Rock Climbs; 'Little Micheluzzi' and 'The Ramp' on Piz Ciavazes, 'Trenker' and 'North West Arete' on the First Sella Tower, 'Mariakante' on the South Pillar of Piz Pordoi, 'North West Arete' on Torre Firenze, the traverse of Funfingerspitzen (all 22 pitches!)), 'Mikali' on the Second Sella Tower, 'Via Irma' on Piz Ciavazes, 'Piz Kante' on Pordoi (repeat of 30 years ago!) , 'Eisenstecken' in the Rosengarten area (rained off just short of the top), 'Steger' on the Vajolet Towersetc , etc ,some even managed the occasional cragging!

The Dolomites in August can and indeed did, become rather full with one or two traffic jams, but I'm not aware of any one ever complaining of being climbed all over. We even had one guide choose another route rather than join our queue! A couple of folks flew out for a Tuesday/Tuesday cheap flight week from Manchester to Milan and then hired a car. Four hour drive in Italy but very feasible and with minimum problems. I understand that another team were just over the border on the snow and ice of Piz Bernina, hopefully they made the top and will be telling the story.

All in all an excellent meet, more of the same asap please.

Annual MTB Meet. Shropshire

Bernard Smith

As we have come to expect this years meet was efficiently organised by Kev Massey. Accommodation was in the very comfortable Pines Trust Hostel at Bishop's Castle. Sixteen members and their guests attended and a variety of rides were undertaken. The weather on Saturday was foul so most of us stuck to the roads.

However the young guns took to the hills and the mud! The Seven Bells provided the victuals on Saturday evening, amply lubricated by Big Nev's special bitter. Sunday was better so The Long Mynd was the favourite venue for a mixed on/off road trip. Thanks to Kev for an excellent weekend.

LMC Potholing Meet 2005

Richard Toon

Early November saw us once again deserting the daylight for the underground world of Yorkshire, God's Own County.

This year, it was to be Lancaster Pot, which we had visited before but which is worth a second visit. In any case, once you switch your lights off, all the pots are the same!!

We were in force: Will (one-leg) Weale from Wheelton; David (rock-jock) Toon; Jim (picture-me) Cunningham; Julie (school-me) Harold; Vicky (typical student!) Harold; David (gamma-ray) Sudell; Josie (danish-pastry) Smith; Claire (bossy-Newly Qualified Teacher) Smith; Richard (my brother-in-law/very ex-caver) Ramsden; Andrew (his off-the-roof brother) Ramsden; John (I'll-count-yer-money) Toon; Jason (meet-me-meets) Whiteley; Frank (super- bike) Woods; and me (yes, just plain me).

And most importantly, Stuart and his two mates, Ken and Alf!

Bernard (on-ye-bike) Smith and Graham (I've-got-the-money) Welsh stayed on the surface and went for a bike ride (2hours) and waited for us in the pub (8 hours).

As ever, we met in Ingleton at Bernie's cafe at 9:30 for big breakfasts and to pick up batteries, lights and helmets. Then off on a car chase up to Bull Pot Farm. People turned up in funny, old clothes because the pots we are taken down are always dry but we always get wet!!!!

Then across the moors to the entrance to Lancaster Pot, discovered in 1946. What I can never grasp is the enormity of the caves in Yorkshire. Apparently, this Easegill system is over 30 miles long in total. I struggle with guide book descriptions to rock climbs a couple of hundred feet high – just the two dimensions to contend with; up or across. In the 3D underground world, the scope for getting lost is a-plenty. So its with real gratitude that I'm more than happy to trust to Stuart and his detailed knowledge.

This extract from the description will give you a flavour – and, as the guide book says, "it is intended as guidance for the wise, not the obedience of fools".

"It isn't a long trip - it can be covered in well under three hours easily, but it is a trip to savour and enjoy, and shouldn't be hurried."



Minaret Passage, Easegill (from RRPC website)

We took the advice and didn't hurry! So the three hours was more like eight for our team of 17.

"The Lancaster Hole entrance shaft has been comprehensively bolted.....it is a straight forward descent down a magnificent shaft. "

Wow, what a start, with a free abseil straight down. A good first abseil for Vicky!

"Once down, the way on is up onto a traverse ledge, and forward along the high rift to the impressive Bridge Cavern. At the end of this, an easy climb up the left, followed by a short traverse, enters Colonnades Passage with its impressive set of columns, which is well worth the ten minute detour."

Did we do that? I've forgotten already. The route is up, down, around. Walking, crawling, slipping, sliding, wading and watching. It's a real experience.

"In front of you are some deep holes which descend directly to the sump some 30 metres below. To one side are some footsteps on a mud slope."

Walking on friction-free mud, with no belays and big fall potential is nerve wracking.

"Follow the footsteps up the mud slope (a lot more secure than it looks), to a mud choke which is by-passed through a small phreatic window...Follow Wilf Taylor's Passage downstream. This is a super passage, with three particular points of interest. The first is a rope climb (rigged) down into a pool which culminates in a nasty little overhang; this is followed immediately by a superbly rigged rope-climb down an arête; and the third is a three metre climb. All three cause one to pause momentarily at the top!"

Yes sir!!! Sliding down greasy ropes by hand, into the abyss, takes care and some degree of faith.

. And so on we went. Sweating with the effort. Waiting for our turn on the bad bits. Trying out the darkness with the lights turned off. Sharing the odd chocolate bar. Marvelling at the formations. Hoping we would find the exit. Wading in the stream. Squeezing around narrow tunnels. Slithering on the mud. Squirming when the ceiling nearly met the floor. Climbing the twisting caving ladder. Smelling the fresh air. And finally, the easy climb into the darkness of the frosty night.

We flogged back (and forth and back again) over the moor and found the cars and vans eventually. All trust in the Ford Focus, which wouldn't start, was eclipsed as Dave had to abandon his car and call out the trusty AA.

Then the race to the Marton Arms, arriving at one minute to nine.

"Have you got a menu, please?"

"Sorry, we stop serving meals at nine".

"Well, its not quite nine.....!"

"OK, but you'll have to be quick!!".

So those of us already there choose our own meals. We order a random job lot for the others, delayed by the car problem. Then relax to savour a beer from, perhaps, the best range of good beers of any pub anywhere, I guess! When the meals arrive, they are snatched as though we are starving refugees and dispatched in no time.

Just one more job left! Thanks to Frank for transporting the hired gear back into the village, where we left it in someone's back garden!! But it was fairly close to Bernies – honest, Bernie!

(Next day I get an e-mail - "I'm afraid your card transaction was not authorised." – must think the LMC are a tight-fisted scurrilous lot!).

So the end of another super day potholing. Everyone had a good day out. Lancaster pot is a classic excursion with as much variety as you could wish for.

Again, many, many thanks to Stuart, Ken and Alf who led us expertly through the system, rigged the abseil, fixed the ladder out and, most importantly, had the collective patience of Job when we dawdled on the awkward bits.

LMC – Dinner 2005 The Prince of Wales - Grasmere

Once again I publish Nigel's speech for those who didn't go to the Dinner or didn't listen. (Ed)

Chairman's Address

I am afraid that a round up the year has to start on a sad note as Loraine Kemp unfortunately died from a recurrence of Cancer in April. I shall always remember her for the Christmas day formation skiing with nine Toon, Lyle, Smith and Medcalfe Children and the rest of us stretched in a line across right across the piste between Loraine and Jenny all turning together at her command, left! . . right! . . . Then again, late on New Years Eve playing her silly games, contorting round chairs, or picking up cut down whisky cartons with their teeth. Perhaps we should play some later.

Well then, where to start?

Well 99!! Yes, we really have ninety nine here tonight and that's not including the dogs! It must be a Club record and is equivalent to over half the members. If any of you need an application form see American John or Tim! This must indicate progress towards our vision of being the "most welcoming Mountaineering Club".

Congratulations and our thanks to Julie for organising the Dinner. While I present her with some flowers on your behalf I am sure you'll show your appreciation.

Once again I have to apologise publicly on behalf of the Vice Chair and myself for another flagrant breach of the club motto "Leave the buggers!". We found ourselves held up on the North-East Buttress of Ben Nevis in February, a couple of pitches below the Man Trap. As dusk fell and the stars and head torches came out, we realised the crampon we had seen on the traverse in belonged to a member of a team ahead. We not only offered them a top rope on the crux but also waited for them on the summit plateau to drop a rope for the final moves

Now I've got that over, we can return to the happier task of reflecting on some of the highlights of the year

We must start by publicly congratulating David Finn on successfully completing the Bob Graham Round, 72 miles, 29,000 ft of ascent and over 50 Lakeland Hills in less than 22 hours. A magnificent achievement and is it a Club first?? Yes.

Rumour has it that Les Witt and Ian and Pat Aitchison have or are about to complete the Munroes. They are not with us tonight so you cannot buy them a drink. Is there to be a celebration? If anyone hears let the rest of us know!

Andy Grayson has just joined that exclusive group of Club members - Roger, who have summited on Ama Dablam. Personal congratulations (through gritted teeth) from one excluded from the group!

Dave Rundall with David and Richard Toon visited Yosemite and climbed the West face of the Leaning Tower. I gather Richard, after trying to abseil back to the stance at dusk, was fortunate not to have to spend a night swinging 15 ft out from the face. It really does lean that much every pitch all the way for two days.

In Scotland, American John was given an introduction to real winter climbing by Dave R and Richard with a baptism of fire on the Orion Face. Quote from Dave to John in the dark several pitches from the plateau as Richard chipped and felt his way up out of sight above, "This is why I prefer to solo these routes"!

I've just heard that Mike Rosser, attempting the Scottish Sea stacks, climbed the Old Men of Stoer and Hoy but the tides were wrong for Am Buchail. I need to go back as well,, as it was too rough for me to swim out a few years ago.

Are there any others? . . . Yes

I suppose I should also mention the Ski Mountaineering European one-legged Disabled Double of Mont Blanc and Elbrus. Also a great achievement on Elbrus for Bernard "I've climbed higher but none have been tougher" Smith and on Mont Blanc a first for Dave Buchanan. Dave Rundall who has six grandchildren was making his sixth ascent! This photo on the menu of some bug-eyed monster in a Darkvader mask is one I had tried to suppress. Thank you Bernard, you Rat, and thanks to all of you who donated to Comic relief - I made about £1,000.

Our Club meets have been successful too and I hope a brief run through will stimulate some good memories.

Good weather and good turn outs on the evening meets have encouraged new members. This has also produced some memorable weekend meets from Pillar to Pembroke with many quality routes. Building on this success, next year we have designated a couple of meets specifically as new member meets. We have also seen the emergence, from our more elderly "Last of the Summer Wine"

members, of some mid week walking and climbing "cliques" for retirees and semi-retirees.

Christmas and New year saw thirty or so Skiing at Alpes Duez and the Haute Maurienne. This year there are gatherings at St Anton –see Roger, Chevinia see Andy, and Chamonix – see me.

The Ice climbing in Cogne was so enjoyable that we are returning there again in February. I can categorically deny the rumour that Jane has donated my new Quarks as a raffle prize. However do please buy tickets and express your thanks to Bean and Sue for running this. AND thank you all for participating – the stand up Bingo made £170 profit.

Bernard's Bash at Braemar was a blow out on the hills on Saturday and then again a blow out in the restaurant in the evening. Sunday was, however, perfect with snow down to the road. A rare enjoyable Scottish Ski ascent was made by some, with the dog leaping through the drifts trying to keep up. Others had an excellent piste skiing day.

The Easter Ski Tour was in the Oetztal, notable for passing the site of the Ice man, a crevasse rescue, for real, of our newest/youngest member, Claire (welcome to Jane's exclusive Crevasse clique), and culminating in an ascent of the Wildspitz with a glorious 3000 m descent and beer to finish. It was a text book example as the standard set by an American Article on Outdoor Leadership. The subtle group dynamics . . . ; a sustainable pace . . . ; no unilateral decisions . . . ; no disengaged group mindsets . . . ; no challenges to group decisions.

Ulpool at Whit, despite being a bit of a washout yielded a crop of Munroes and Corbets. Others faired better with fair weather climbing at Fairhead in Northern Ireland.

The Wasdale meet seems to have become a Barbeque meet with some good walking and rock climbing thrown in. This now augments our other dining events: Roger's Vice-Chair Gourmet meet was at the Loft with a walk across the Crinkles and My Surprise Feast meet was at Beddgelert, climbing on a deserted Tremadog.. The Wasdale popularity has led to the idea of having another B-B-Q / working week-end meet at the Loft and Solitary next Summer on our new patio.

The Summer saw two groups in the Alps . In the Dolomites fantastic rock climbing and Via Ferratas were enjoyed on, amongst others, the Cella Towers and Vajolet, whilst in the Bernina, there was no "White Hell" when the Pitz Palu was ascended in glorious sunshine.

We have also had Pete and Jennie's Orienteering meet at Brinscal Baths, exercised our right to roam on a long walk around the Trough of Bowland, cycled/mountain-biked around Shropshire with Kev and Yorkshire with Mike, and spent over eight hours underground between Lancaster Hole and County Pot.

At the Pub Nights we have had Slides from Greenland to Patagonia and more are planned for next year when, incidentally, we are returning to the Black Dog, still on the first Tuesday of the month.

A major achievement this year has been the revamping and relaunching of our Web Site and we have Andrea Grant to thank for this together with the input from Dave Sudell. Unfortunately she cannot be with us tonight and so I'd like to present Charles with some flowers for her. I also thought I could unilaterally (which means, for you illiterate barrackers, without consulting the committee!) grant her honorary membership . . . though only retrospectively for the last five years! Incidentally, Dave Rundall will be acting as Web-Master for the ongoing updating, so let him have reports, photos and information to display.

Our Huts in Scotland and the Lakes are generally in good shape: Tyndrum has a skirt now for winter warmth, the Solitary has had roof repairs, and the revamped Loft is popular for bookings and is earning us revenue. A Family this summer enjoyed "the excellent facilities and friendly neighbour" at Beddgelert. The roof only leaks when it rains and we await to see what news there is over the coming months of the possibility of getting off the camp site by exchanging properties with Mr Porter. I have also been spending a lot of time working on a flat in Chamonix, which will soon be suitable for six to nine, though not at the same rate as our huts! End of blatant personal promotion/advertising.

As a result of this sustained absence, Roger has been acting as de-facto chairman and also getting involved with various roof repairs and other tasks. So I'd like to thank him in particular and present him with a certificate of excellence.

Finally I need to thank on yours and my behalf, all the Meet Co-ordinators and Committee Members, particularly the Hut Wardens for all the efforts they have put in throughout the year.

Nigel Lyle
